March 11, 2015

NCAVP mourns the death of Papi Edwards, a transgender woman of color killed in Louisville, Kentucky; the seventh homicide of a transgender or gender non-conforming person of color that NCAVP has responded to in 2015.

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) has learned of the homicide of Papi Edwards, a transgender woman of color, in Louisville, Kentucky, who was shot to death at the Fern Valley Motel on January 9th, 2015. Early police and media accounts consistently misnamed and misgendered the victim, and only now are we learning that, according to BuzzFeed LGBTQ, her name was Papi Edwards and that she identified as a transgender woman. An alleged suspect, Henry Richard Gleaves, has been arrested and charged with her murder.

This is the seventh* homicide of a transgender woman of color that NCAVP has responded to in 2015. The other six homicides of transgender women of color are:

- Lamia Beard was found shot to death on January 17th in Norfolk, Virginia.
- Ty Underwood was found shot to death early Monday morning on January 26th, after a woman called 911 to say a car had hit a telephone pole and that her children had heard gunshots. Her loved ones are speaking out, saying that they believe this was a hate crime.
- Yazmin Vash Payne was discovered fatally stabbed to death on Saturday, January 31st at the scene of a house fire in the Van Nuys district of Los Angeles. Payne’s boyfriend, Ezekiel Dear, has been arrested and booked for suspicion of murder in connection with her death.
- Taja Gabrielle de Jesus was discovered stabbed to death on a stairwell in San Francisco’s Bayview District on Sunday, February 1st.
- Penny Proud was found fatally shot on February 10th at the cross section of Ursulines Avenue and North Claiborne Avenue in New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Kristina Gomez Reinwald was found unresponsive in her home on February 15, 2015 and her death is being investigated as a homicide.

*There is potentially an eighth homicide that NCAVP is tracking, an individual with the last name Golec. At this time NCAVP does not have enough information with which to conclude how these individuals identified, however we are continuing to track these homicides and will update when we have relevant information.

NCAVP has responded to 13 LGBTQ homicides in 2015. To the best of our knowledge, seven of the incidents have been intimate partner, family or stalking violence-related and six have been hate violence-related. However, as with all incidents, as we get more information we may find that the homicides has different motivations than originally reported. In 2014, NCAVP responded to the deaths of twelve transgender women of color.

“At least seven transgender and gender non-conforming people of color have lost their lives to violence already in 2015, and this tragedy is compounded by police and media consistently misgendering and misnaming victims.” said Osman Ahmed, NCAVP Research and Education Coordinator at the New York
City Anti Violence Project. “We all must take immediate action to end this epidemic by supporting the leadership of transgender women of color, public awareness and respect campaigns, speaking out against this violence, and protecting transgender people from harassment and discrimination.”

The National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs’ (NCAVP) most recent report, *Hate Violence Against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States in 2013*, documented 18 anti-LGBTQ homicides in 2013. Of those homicide victims, almost 90% were people of color. Almost three-quarters (72%) of homicide victims were transgender women, and more than two-thirds (67%) were transgender women of color.

NCAVP has been working with the Fairness Campaign in Louisville, Kentucky to support the local communities affected by this violence.

"The Fairness Campaign is deeply troubled by the homicide of Papi Edwards. Evidence has made it clear that on the night of Papi's death, they presented as female, and as witnesses indicate, their gender identity may have been the motive of this grisly crime." Said Chris Hartman, Director of Fairness Campaign. "Papi's death adds to the alarming number of homicides involving gender non-conforming people of color this year, and it should put us all on alert to ramp up protections and support of one of our most vulnerable LGBT populations."

NCAVP is a resource for anyone who experiences violence. For more information, or to locate an anti-violence program in your area, please contact us at info@ncavp.org or visit us online. Join NCAVP in our efforts to prevent and respond to LGBTQ and HIV-affected violence. To learn more about our national advocacy and receive technical assistance or support, contact us at info@ncavp.org.

If you are a member of the media, please contact:
Sue Yacka, New York City Anti-Violence Project: syacka@avp.org or 212-714-1184
Chris Hartman, Fairness Campaign: chris@fairness.org or 502-640-1095

NCAVP works to prevent, respond to, and end all forms of violence against and within lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) and HIV-affected communities. NCAVP is a national coalition of local member programs and affiliate organizations who create systemic and social change. NCAVP is a program of the New York City Anti-Violence Project.

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