



HIGH TECH GAYS

P.O.Box 6777 San Jose, California 95150

March 29, 1988

Joseph D. McNamara
Chief of Police
City of San Jose
201 W. Mission St.
P.O. Box 270
San Jose, CA 95103-0270

Dear Chief McNamara:

Thank you for your positive letter of February 8, 1988, regarding bias crime and San Jose Police Department's commitment not to tolerate it.

Unfortunately I have recently received reports from members of High Tech Gays of anti-gay incidents in San Jose which lead me to believe that the problem does indeed exist. In fact one incident is an alleged assault on a gay man by a police officer in late 1987, and attorney Randy Schell (with nine years experience in anti-gay violence cases in San Francisco) is currently pursuing the issue through your office.

Anti-gay bias crime is, unhappily, most often manifest as harassment, which gets passed off as "pranks" or "just letting off steam" by police officers. Statistics are rarely kept (though the Hate Crimes Statistics Act now before Congress would, if passed, mandate the keeping of such statistics). These incidents, frequently on the streets outside of gay or lesbian establishments, are rarely reported, mostly because the victim believes that the police are disinterested or hostile, or because s/he fears the possibility that public notoriety could lead to more incidents.

Positive police training, such as the work begun by Wiggys Sivertsen, is crucial to eliminating the bias which I believe is still harbored by many police officers. Wiggys reported considerable hostility from the officers she saw in class, and for that reason alone I hope you will resume this training. Also, meeting proudly and openly gay and lesbian members of the community is a proven way of dispelling stereotypes and the attendant bias: people who are aware that they have gay friends are only half as likely to voice prejudicial remarks or support bigoted, repressive positions.

In this spirit, I would like again to invite you to address our group, to speak directly to us on San Jose's response to bias crime, and feel free to bring other Officers along with you. We meet at the DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center on the second Sunday of each month. Upcoming meetings are May 8, June 12, and July 10.

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I am also enclosing some additional material I have collected on the subject of bias crime:

1. A news report on San Francisco Special Order 88-06 mandating a proactive role for the police in suppressing bias crime;
2. A letter from Governor Mario Cuomo of New York on anti-gay discrimination and violence;
3. Reports for 1985 and 1986 on Anti-Gay Violence, issued by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force;
4. Selected official statements on anti-gay violence;
5. Anti-Violence Project Update #3, December 1987, from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force;
6. A paper, "Police/Gay Community Relations: Old Problems, New Hope";
7. NGLTF Bias Crime Statistics Packet.

These documents speak eloquently to the reality of anti-gay/lesbian bias and violence in this country; that it is widespread; that it occurs in cities of all sizes; and that concerned police officials nationwide are beginning to understand and develop plans to prevent its ugly presence in their locales.

I will contact your office within the next week or two to set up a convenient date for you to meet with us, or you may call me at (408) 255-6128, eves, or (408) 943-0636, days. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Very truly yours,


Rick Rudy
President, HTG
Board of Directors Member, NGLTF

cc: Ms. Iola Williams, Vice Mayor
Mr. Leo Himmelsbach, District Attorney
Bay Area Municipal Elections Committee (BAYMEC)
National Gay & Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF)
San Jose Mercury News