



OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF QUEER YOUTH IN AMERICA

A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY BY
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All photographs (except as noted) were made using Nikon camera equipment on either Fuji NPS/NPC or Kodak Portra B&W film. The film was digitized using a Polaroid 4000 film scanner and the images edited using Adobe Photoshop 6.0. The book layout was produced in Quark XPress 5.0 and the final output was generated on an Epson 1200 inkjet printer using Lumijet two-sided glossy paper.

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INTRODUCTION

On December 31st, 1993 20-year-old Brandon Teena was brutally murdered after having been raped and beaten a week earlier. On October 12th, 1998 21-year-old Matthew Shepard died due to severe injuries caused by a brutal beating and torture. On January 19th, 2000 19-year-old Alina Marie Barragan was strangled to death then stuffed into the trunk of a car. What these three individuals had in common is that they were young, queer and were murdered for no reason other than being themselves.

In 2000 the number of violent incidences against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (l/g/b/t) youth, 22 and younger, increased by over 48 percent from the previous year, even though the number of incidences against all l/g/b/t age groups increased by only 8 percent¹. A report just released by MTV and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) revealed that more than 80 percent of l/g/b/t youth say they have been the victims of harassment in school². It goes on to say that words such as “faggot” and “dyke” prevail in high school vernacular as a way of conveying hatred and disapproval. As a society we are becoming less tolerant and more violent against those that we deem to be “different”.

Our youth are at risk and while organizations such as gay-straight alliances (GSAs) have had a positive impact on reducing school violence and harassment, there are still many schools without such organizations. Education is the key to tolerance and understanding and it is hoped that even in a small way, this project will help contribute to that education.

¹ ANTI-LESBIAN, GAY, TRANSGENDER AND BISEXUAL VIOLENCE IN 2000 - A Report of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs

² 2001 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY - A survey commissioned by MTV and the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network