

# The For Ideas FORUM

## Atlanta killings require community response

by Dallas Denny

The murders of three transgendered persons in Atlanta during a one-month period is a matter of grave concern. Whether or not the killings are related, they must be stopped. We hope and trust that law enforcement officials will take immediate and thorough action to find the perpetrator(s) and put a stop to these tragic deaths. We urge Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson to make a public statement deploring the slayings and promising prompt action by the police.

Atlanta is not the only city where transgendered persons have been killed in number — nor were these the first such murders in Atlanta. The sad fact is that murders of transgendered persons — crossdressers and transsexual persons — are all too common. And there will be more unless society learns that transgendered persons are people too. One need only substitute words for other members of society for “transsexual” or “crossdresser” to see just how our society devalues transgendered persons: “Three Children Murdered in Inner City.” “Another Dentist Found Dead on Interstate.” Would the police take immediate action if those were the headlines? Of course!

The horrible fact is that because of one or more unknown parties, three human beings in Atlanta are

no longer alive.

Transsexual people are particularly vulnerable to hate crimes. Due to their often ambiguous appearance, which is attributable to their transition process, many present easy targets for ridicule or abuse. It is difficult for them to change their victim profile, for their body habitus is often at odds with their gender identity and their social role. Unlike the case with other sexual and gender minorities, transsexualism provides visual stigma which pervades every waking moment, even when the individual is trying to blend in.

We must increase vigilance on

the part of our community. Transgendered persons must learn to look out for themselves. But we must also press law enforcement officials to protect the rights of transgendered persons and to speak out against hate crimes against all sexual and gender minorities.

Please express your concern about the Atlanta murders by writing Mayor Maynard Jackson, City Hall, 55 Trinity Ave., SW, Atlanta, GA 30335-0300.

⇒ Ms. Denny is executive director of AEGIS, the American Educational Gender Information Service of Atlanta, a Renaissance affiliate.

## An international appeal

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the world. Then I would set off for Cali in Colombia.

I have heard this week that IFGE has now kindly listed Turkey and Pakistan — half a month after Turkey's leaders are arrested and Pakistan is facing its third season of riots against, about, and for minorities.

I have been, as the U.S. has it, “bad mouthing” IFGE. I do not apologize for what seems to me to be a necessary spur to remove red tape that should not have been necessary. Ordinary caution is one thing, but a bureaucracy like any government's is another thing.

In South Africa, Thelma Pine, the Phoenix overseas coordinator and International Gender Transit Affinity (IGTA) associate, informs me that she has established a link in Latvia. The U.S.S.R and its expatriot republics are opening up at last. Gays have established contact, but so far my letters to the only gay group listed by GE go unanswered. Can anyone in the U.S. make contact and gain some TV/TS/CD/GT links in Russia through them?

—Phaedra Kelly  
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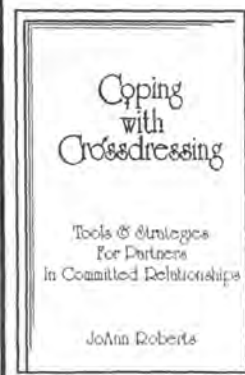
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