

Opinion: Attacks on LGBT community common

By Melissa Batchelor Warnke, Los Angeles Times

Three years ago, Mark Carson was walking with a friend in Greenwich Village, the Manhattan neighborhood that birthed the contemporary LGBT movement. It was a Friday night in early spring; they wore cut-off shorts and cowboy boots. When they turned a corner onto West 8th Street, a group of men appeared behind them.

"What are you, gay wrestlers?" one taunted. "F--t!" another yelled. "Queer." Finally, one asked the question Carson would never get to answer: "Do you want to die here?" He shot Carson in the face with a .38-caliber revolver. Carson, who died from his injuries, was the fifth openly gay man to be violently attacked in Manhattan in a span of just three weeks. In court, his killer, Elliot Morales, claimed to have acted in self-defense. The defense characterized Morales as "self-loathing," highlighting his fraught romantic relationship with a transgender woman.

A year later, Ali Muhammad Brown used the gay and bisexual dating app Grindr to lure two men to meet him outside of R Place, a popular gay bar in Seattle. Less than 17 minutes after picking them up, he had killed both execution-style in his car. Brown said his mission was "vengeance" for the U.S. killings in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan. He described himself as a jihadi.

In the wake of the horrific attack on the Pulse club in Orlando, the motivations of gunman Omar Mateen will be dissected ad nauseum. The information we have right now points to an increasingly complex case, with myriad potential social and political motivations. International terrorism, however,

is on the lips of politicians and pundits after it was revealed that Mateen pledged his fealty to ISIS. Whatever the particularities of this case, however, the reality is that the threat and realization of violence against the LGBT community are not isolated to a lone Florida club. The scope of the Orlando attack was shocking, but acts of violence against the LGBT community are disturbingly common.

Read the whole story