



I know this evil exists

By Julianne Wasilausky

I was outraged, then saddened when I read about the murder of Angie Zapata. She was only 18, and hadn't yet learned the do's and don'ts about Internet dating.

The facts reported in the news say she met her killer via an Internet dating service. It was their first date. Her bludgeoned body was found July 17.

The brutal murder is being treated as a hate crime by the authorities in Greeley, Colorado, where it happened. The New York Times reported from affidavits that the killer had said he believed he "killed it."

The reports say the accused killer, Allen R. Andrade, became enraged when he discovered Angie still had male genitals. She had been living as a woman for six years. Her family, friends, church members and those she knew around town accepted her as a woman.

I'm angered that narrow-minded bigotry exists in our world. But I accept it and know that because this evil exists, we T folks whether transgendered, transitioning, or transsexual have to deal with it. We have to be aware of prejudice, discrimination, hatred, and the danger to our personal safety.

If she had lived long enough, maybe Angie would have learned to be more careful about whom she went out with, and what she does on a first date. She might have learned to get to know that person she met online, before agreeing to meet in person. She might have learned to set up the meeting in a public place, and to let friends or family know where she was going and who she was going to meet. She might have learned to be selective about where, when, and with whom she was going to have sex. But she was only 18.

I've been through the mill, I think, when it comes to Internet dating. I found the Internet is a great way to meet prospective partners who are compatible in all those important areas: education, economic status, life experience, spirituality, politics, art, music, hobbies, interests, and leisure time activities. I've been careful. And I've been rewarded with having some cherished long-term loving relationships thanks to the Internet.

True, for every 200 people you correspond with, maybe 10 of those turn out to be someone you actually enjoy when the time comes to meet face-to-face. And of those 10, maybe only one will be someone that you might form a romantic relationship with. I've said many times, "You have to kiss a lot of frogs."

I've always been careful about whom I schedule a meeting with. It's been my nature not to engage in sexual activity with someone unless I've known them awhile and know that they have sincere feelings for me, and I for them. For me, that doesn't happen on the first date.

For some, sex is "playing" in the same sense that partners might meet

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Angie Zapata, murdered at 18



▼ SUNDAY, SEPT. 14 2-4:30 PM

Marc Adams and Rod Gambassi from Heartstrong — Marc Adams is the author of *Preachers Son*. He has been a popular PFLAG guest speaker before, and we're happy to welcome him back along with Rod Gambassi, author of the new children's book *The Boy Who Wanted to Be a Dancer*.

More information is online at <http://www.windowbooksonline.com/wbo/FriendsAndFamily.html> and <http://www.heartstrong.org/>

▼ SUNDAY, OCT. 12 2-4:30 PM

Don't Ask, Don't Tell — A special presentation by retired Admiral Alan Steinman from the Servicemember's Legal Defense Network who will show the film *Ask Not*, with a discussion to follow the film.

See <http://www.asknotfilm.com/>

Note: Change in our meeting format: the film will start at 2:30 p.m.

▼ SUNDAY, NOV. 9 2-4:30 PM

It's STILL Elementary — We will show the follow-up to *It's Elementary*, with a discussion to follow. As for the showing of the original film, we may slightly change our meeting format to allow time for viewing and discussion. Watch for details in the Nov.-Dec. issue of *Heartbeat* and for announcements on the email alert list.

See: <http://www.groundspark.org/>

More information on all our programs is on our website: <http://www.pflag-olympia.org/>

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Wednesday afternoons for a good game of racquetball. Good game, shake hands, same time next week. I don't condemn that point of view. I'm just not built that way.

Because I'm transsexual, I have also had to deal with a special kind of "coming out", where I tell my new potential partner about my gender history. I've always felt this was a "need to know" issue. If it is apparent that I am about to enter a serious relationship with someone, I need to tell them. If it's a relationship without the potential for intimacy or romance, then I don't feel obligated to tell.

There is obvious risk in this, since some people will accept you for who you are, and not give a tinker's damn about your gender history. And some won't. They'll excuse themselves and hurry away. Some will be articulate and regretful about rejecting you because you are transsexual. Others will not. I've experienced all of these.

I understand how the prospect of "telling" could lead to sweaty palms and general anxiety. But it's necessary if you're going to have a truly open and honest relationship with someone.

I've had all kinds of rejection in my life. Even though I've grown accustomed to it, know when it's going to come, and accept that there are people who can't accept me, it still hurts, each time it happens. I understand why someone might want to avoid the "telling." I'm 60 years old, and accept that it's something that I need to do, if I'm going to enter a serious

relationship. I catch my breath, and get on with it, taking the risk, knowing that there is a 50 percent chance that things will be OK, and a 50 percent chance that they will end.

Dear Angie, you wanted love and acceptance. You tried to find them in the way you knew how. And now you're gone, without ever really learning how to get them.

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PFLAG

Olympia, Washington

MEETS at 2PM on the second Sunday of each month at First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia (except in August when we have our annual picnic at a local park.) It is handicap-accessible.

DIRECTIONS: from Sylvester Park on Capitol Way and Legion Way, go 12 blocks east on Legion Way to Boundary Street. Turn left around the church. Park in the lot at 5th Avenue and Boundary and enter through the glass doors.

Letters, articles and requests for literature are welcome.

Mailing address:

PO Box 12732; Olympia, WA 98508-2732

For information or to discuss personal matters with an understanding parent and experienced PFLAG member, phone numbers are on our website.

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