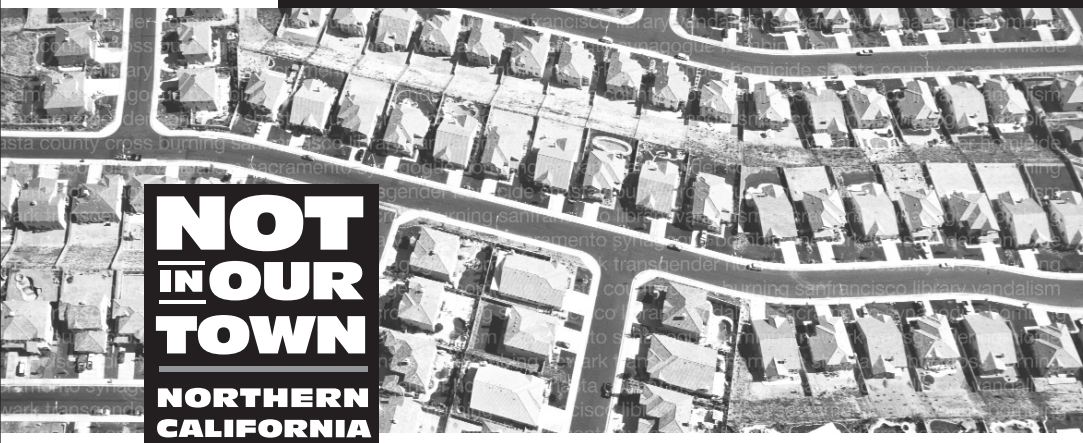


Hate Crimes in America



**NOT
IN OUR
TOWN**
**NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA**

When Hate Happens Here Premieres April 8 at 9pm KQED 9

According to the FBI, a hate crime is a criminal act, threatened or attempted, by any person or group of persons against a person or group or the property of a person or group in which the offender is motivated, in whole or in part, by bias toward the victim because of the victim's real or perceived race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, or national origin. Some states have expanded this definition to include gender and disability. A specific penal code section must be applicable in order for the act to be prosecuted as a hate crime. Hate crimes include, but are not limited to, threatening telephone calls, physical and attempted assault, vandalism, property damage, destruction of religious symbols, including cross burnings, and fire-bombings.

In 1990, the federal Hate Crimes Statistics Act (HCSA) was passed. HCSA encourages states to report hate crime data to the FBI. As required by the 1990 law, the FBI annually releases the totals of hate crimes reported by state and local law enforcement agencies around the country. Under HCSA, these totals included only hate-motivated crimes based on race, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity and national origin. The federal Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1994 expanded the definition to include people with disabilities and women.

References:

www.fbi.org; www.ncjrs.org

The FBI's 2003 HCSA report documented a total of 8,706 hate-motivated criminal offenses for the year. Of the total, 63 percent were offenses committed against persons and 36 percent were offenses committed against property. Racial bias motivated more than half, at 52.5 percent; religious and sexual orientation bias each accounted for 16.4 percent; ethnicity and national origin bias prompted 14.2 percent; and disability bias spurred 0.5 percent of offenses. Nearly one-third of all the crimes were committed in or near residences.

These official numbers are alarming—but they greatly understate the severity of the problem. The numbers reflect only those crimes that state and local law enforcement agencies reported to the FBI. And the Anti-Defamation League reported that in 2003, more than 5,000 police departments failed to participate in the HCSA report. These numbers also reflect only those cases in which victims reported incidents to local law enforcement agencies and the agencies subsequently classified these incidents as hate crimes. For whatever reason, local agencies do not always classify a hate crime as such. And in many cases of hate crimes against immigrants, language and culture may be barriers to victims' reporting to the proper officials. This is further compounded if there is a history of disenfranchisement and intimidation by local and state agencies.

LESSON PLAN

The theme of the film
Not in Our Town
Northern California:
When Hate Happens
Here focuses on hate crimes that occurred in our own backyard of Northern California. Search the newspaper for an article that documents a criminal act that is based on race, religion, sexual or gender orientation, ethnicity, or national origin. How did the community respond to the act? What else could have been done?

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