

## Child watched 'bashing' of her lesbian mother - Denver Post, The (CO) - January 7, 1993 - page 1B

January 7, 1993 | Denver Post, The (CO) | Michael Booth; Denver Post Staff Writer | Page 1B

The 6-year-old daughter of a Denver **lesbian** provides stark evidence that gay-bashing is on the rise in the wake of Amendment 2, according to gay rights activists.

After watching two women beat up her mother outside a fast food outlet last month, T.J.'s daughter now asks her one question before she leaves home: "You didn't forget your Mace, did you Mom?"

T.J. and two other women recounted what they see as

hate-motivated crimes against them at a news conference yesterday called by a group that claims police are downplaying such incidents.

The Anti-Violence Project of the Gay and **Lesbian** Community Center of Colorado says monthly hotline reports of hate crimes against gays and lesbians have jumped more than 200 percent since Amendment 2 passed on Nov. 3.

Denver and Boulder police officials have disputed those claims, saying their own reports and statistics show little or no increase in documented hate crimes since the election.

And spokesmen for Colorado for Family Values, which sponsored Amendment 2, have said homosexuals want to inflate hate crimes to support their claim that gays need protection from discrimination.

The Anti-Violence Project lashed back yesterday, saying it carefully documents all hate crime calls.

The police statistics are lagging because gays are afraid to report crimes to authorities, and because Colorado laws do not adequately classify gay-bashing incidents as hate crimes, said project coordinator Jody Andrade.

"The method of accusing minority groups of fabricating victimization is not new. Like other victims of crimes against persons, hate crime victims underreport - they do not fabricate - violent incidents," Andrade said.

T.J. said she was attacked in front of her two children and pregnant sister on Dec. 23, when one woman grabbed her and the other pummeled her. They knew she was **lesbian** by bumper stickers on her car, said T.J., who asked that her last name not be used.

Police declined to classify the attack as a hate crime, but under pressure from the Anti-Violence Project, did report it as an assault, Andrade said.

T.J. said her 6-year-old is traumatized by the incident. "I'm scared, but you're not going to stop me from living my life," T.J. said. "This is who I am."

Aline, a **Lakewood** woman, said she was pushed off an RTD bus on Dec. 3 by two teenagers who saw her "No on 2" button and called her a derogatory name. One of the teenagers stomped on her before an elderly man helped her off the ground.

The teenagers said she and other lesbians should be put on an island and "blown up," according to Aline and her report to **Lakewood** police. No suspects have been found in either assault.

Andrade said she is working with Denver police on hate crime education and training. It will take at least a year, however, to make significant changes in police response, Andrade said"

Copyright 1993 The Denver Post Corp.