Killer of Gay, HIV-Positive Man in the Bahamas Acquitted

February 9, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The killer of a gay, HIV-positive man in the Bahamas in 2004 was acquitted recently of the murder, The Nassau Guardian reports. The killer accused the victim of attempted rape and used the "gay panic defense" successfully.

The details of this case are sketchy, but the outcome is clear?a gay, HIV-positive man is dead and his killer is free because homophobia was deemed acceptable by the judicial system of the Bahamas.

Matthew Shepard's killers tried to invoke the "gay panic defense" but weren't allowed to by the judge. Without the refuge of such a defense, his killers are serving life sentences in prison.

Although HIV was a side note to the Bahamas case, I can't help but wonder if AIDS phobia played a role in the killer's mind. In the Matthew Shepard case, unsubstantiated claims of him being HIV-positive were made after his death and were never confirmed. However, I also can't help but wonder if AIDS phobia played a role in his murder.

Whatever role HIV phobia may have played in either case, I'm saddened by so many people believing that LGBT people deserve death as punishment for the crime of being themselves.

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