No Victim, but Poz Perp Put Away

November 11, 2008 By Peter Staley

I stand with most of the activists quoted in the excellent article in this month's POZ Magazine about the increase in the criminalization of HIV-positive people around the world. Money quote:

> "These laws are a throwback to the myths and prejudices that marked the very beginning of the AIDS pandemic," says Scott Long, director of advocacy group Human Rights Watch's (HRW) Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Program. "It's sad and sick that we are having to refight those old battles now."

In a recent issue of Gay City News, there's a report of an HIV+ man with mental illness who's been locked away even though the courts can't point to a single "victim" (someone he might have infected).

While I agree with Edwin Cameron's quote in the POZ article that "criminalization is in general warranted only in cases where someone sets out, well knowing he has HIV, to infect another person and achieves this aim," the case outlined in the GCN article doesn't even come close to meeting this standard.

In far too many courts around the world, stigma trumps science.

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