

Dare

VOLUME 2, NUMBER 5

TENNESSEE'S GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSWEEKLY

FEBRUARY 3-9, 1989

Doctor who claimed he got AIDS from surgery dies

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

Nashville surgeon Harold Dennison died Monday from complications brought on by his battle with AIDS.

Last week Dennison's family acknowledged his condition after weeks of speculation regarding his health. News of Dennison's death came in a brief statement issued by his family which read:

"Dr. Harold Dennison passed away this morning at Baptist Hospital. . . A memorial fund for medical research is being established."

Chief of surgery at Nashville's Baptist Hospital, Dennison may have contracted the deadly disease as the result of being splashed in the eye with contaminated blood during surgery.

Meanwhile, officials with the Tennessee Department of Health and Environment and the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control both denied rumors that special hotlines had been established to gather information about other possible means of transmission.

"That's not true at all. We're conducting business as usual. We do not discuss any individual cases and no such hotline has been set up," said Bernie Ellis, the state's coordinator for AIDS surveillance.

"We do not comment on individual cases," said CDC spokesperson Chuck Fallis. "There is no special hotline. It would be impossible for us to set up hotlines for every case we encounter."

Baptist Hospital officials are examining operating-room records to determine if Dennison did indeed become infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in the

course of duty. If that method of transmission is confirmed, Dennison would be the first surgeon stricken with the disease as the result of an operating room accident.

Current figures list eight doctors — including four surgeons — who have been diagnosed with AIDS and whose infection mode has not been "definitively" documented. Those eight physicians have been listed in an "undetermined risk" category, according to data supplied by the CDC.

CDC records also show some 18 cases nationwide of other health care workers who have contracted HIV through occupational exposure to the virus, mainly through accidental needlesticks. However, CDC claims that the possible risk to health care workers is less than one percent.

John Lamb, an orthopedic surgeon on staff at Baptist, said in a televised interview Monday night that the CDC has misled health care providers about the dangers of possible infection.

Lamb told reporters last weekend that Dennison's family chose to go public with the news of the illness in order to focus debate on the controversy surrounding universal testing.

According to a report in Tuesday's *Tennessean*, Dennison's daughter Susan, a surgical nurse who often assisted her father, claims to remember an incident during which blood splashed into her father's eye during surgery.

Although Dennison had apparently suffered from ill health for much of the past year, resulting in the drastic curtailing of his practice, he was not diagnosed with AIDS until early

continued on page 5



Janet Flanner was a Paris journalist in the 20s. See *The Incidental Tourist*, page 6. —PHOTO BERENICE ABBOTT

BULLETIN: Karen finally will see Sharon again

AFTER ALMOST FIVE YEARS, Karen Thompson and Sharon Kowalski will finally be reunited this weekend, *Dare* has learned.

Doctors at the Duluth, Minn., Miller-Dwan Clinic have agreed to a visit between the two women, at Kowalski's request. Kowalski was moved to the clinic, under judge's orders, two weeks ago.

The two women have been separated since an automobile accident in 1983 left Kowalski seriously injured. Following the accident, Kowalski's father Donald Kowalski was granted guardianship of his daughter and has refused to allow any contact with Thompson.

Although Donald Kowalski retains guardianship over his daughter, he may no longer dictate who may visit her under the terms of the judge's order. Thompson will be the first visitor to the clinic, although Kowalski's parents have also been invited for a later visit. •—JEFF ELLIS

Tennessee counselor charged with rape of 6-year-old patient

by JEFF ELLIS
Managing Editor

A Nashville man who works as a counselor at a state-operated residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children was charged Monday night with raping a 6-year-old patient.

Walter Frederick Durst was arrested after the child's mother and Metro detectives obtained a warrant charging the man with aggravated rape.

The boy's mother filed a complaint last Sat-

urday night which was followed by an investigation by Metro Police who in turn consulted the district attorney's office and obtained the warrant.

A spokesperson for the state Department of Mental Health and Retardation said an internal investigation into the charges is currently under way. The department operates Cumberland House, a facility for younger children, and Crockett Academy, a facility for emotionally troubled teens, at 3411 Belmont Boulevard.

continued on page 5

New Memphis gay club vandalized, windows smashed

By STUART BIVIN
Editor

Vandals attacked a Memphis gay club early Thursday morning, January 26, destroying \$4000 worth of windows before making a getaway.

Chaps, part of the new Numbers complex at 598-600 Marshall in Memphis, opened its doors in December, according to David Bullimer, general manager of Chaps. The club had a complete new security system including glass-breakage sensors.

"We're going to send the bill to Rollins [the company that installed the security system]," Bullimer said. "The glass breakage alarm just didn't work. It happened between 7:15 and 7:45 Thursday morning, and I didn't find out about it until that afternoon."

Attempts to reach the security company at press time were unsuccessful.

The vandals apparently were not interested in theft. Bullimer said there was no evidence that the club had been entered.

"We think someone came by and just took a hammer and broke out the windows," he said, adding that he could think of no motive for the attack, although he added, "It might have been the competition."

Bullimer said owner Lamar Jones plans to replace the now-boarded windows with solid walls. The walls will be covered with murals outside.

"We'd planned to do it all along. Now we'll just do it a little sooner," Bullimer said. "It's more private now, and no one can look in from the street and see who's here." •

I N S I D E

This week's Dare



Ex-ex-gay Fisher taking on the ex-ex-closeted, page 5.

It's heart to believe it's the ideal Valentine. Snaps, page 9.



Teenage confidential—out in the blackboard jungle. One in Teen, page 10.

"I still remember that autumn day
when Lexie and I became friends..."

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the true pain and joys of adolescent love."

—Carol Seajay, in *Feminist Bookstore News*

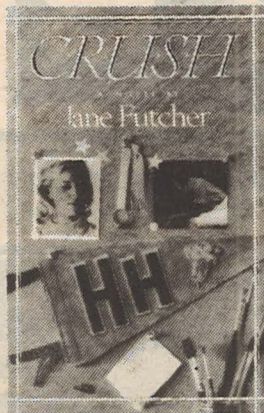
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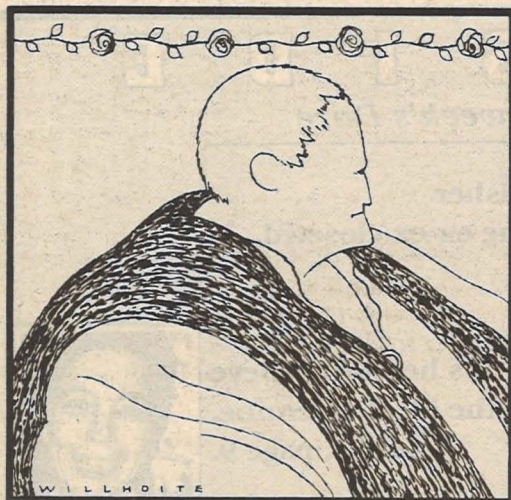
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by Terry Boughner

Gertrude Stein is just one
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people you'll find in this
history of gays and lesbians
from ancient Egypt to the
present. Fifty vignettes of
both well-known and lesser-
known historical figures are
handsomely illustrated by
caricaturist Michael
Willhoite.

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D A T E S

MEMPHIS

Mondays

Gay Alternative Hour Radio show, WEVL-FM 90, 6-7pm.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Tuesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
5:30 and 8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Wednesdays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Thursdays

P-FLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) Support group, St. John's
Episcopal Church, 322 S Greer. 1st Thursday only. Info 901 761-1444.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
5:30pm. Info 901 272-9459.
Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda
Center. 8pm. Info 901 276-7379.

Fridays

Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
5:30 and 10pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Saturdays

Twisted Sisters (ACOA) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center. Noon. Info
901 276-7379.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

Sundays

Agape New Life Church Sunday School, 9:30am. Worship service, 11am. Info
901 276-1872.
Holy Trinity Community Church Worship service, 11am, 1216 Forrest Ave.
Info 901 276-9443.
Into the Light (Women's Alcoholics Anonymous) Meeting, Memphis Lambda
Center. Noon. Info 901 276-7379.
Phoenix (Gay Alcoholics Anonymous) Open meeting, Memphis Lambda Center.
8pm. Info 901 272-9459.

NASHVILLE

Mondays

Gay Overeaters Anonymous Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters.
MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.
Nashville CARES HIV+ Education/Support Group. 6:30pm. ARC/AIDS Support
Group, bimonthly. 6:30pm. Family Support Group, bimonthly. 6:30pm. Info 615-
385-1510.
Lambda Group Closed Alcoholics Anonymous meeting for gay men and
lesbians, Unitarian Church, 8pm.
MAGNET (Married and Gay Network) Support group for married gay men. 1st &
3rd Mondays only. MCC. 8pm. Info 615-320-0288.

Tuesdays

Al-Anon Closed meeting, MCC. 6:30pm.
Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS Support Group. 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting, MCC. 8pm.
Gay Cable Network Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 9pm.

Wednesdays

Sex Addicts Anonymous Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC.
5:30pm.
Nashville CARES ARC/AIDS Support Group. 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.
MTSU Lambda Association Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee
State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Murfreesboro. 7pm. Info 615-
890-3787.

Thursdays

Gay Overeaters Anonymous Open meeting for lesbian and gay overeaters.
MCC, 5:30pm. Info 615-327-4614.
Nashville CARES Visualization Group. 6:30pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Vanderbilt Lambda Association Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt
students, faculty, staff and alumni. President's House, Peabody Campus, alternates
weekly with Film Series (see Special Events). 7pm. Info 615-297-5352.
Alternatives (Alcoholics Anonymous) Closed meeting for lesbians and gay
men, MCC. 8pm.
Lesbian Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA) Meeting. 8pm. Info 615-385-
4776 or 615-352-5823.

Fridays

Sexaholics Anonymous Closed meeting, MCC. 5pm.
Gay Parents Support Group Meeting, MCC. 1st Friday only. 7pm. Info 615-
831-2941 or 615-320-0288.
Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group Meeting, Belmont United
Methodist. 7:30 pm.

Saturdays

Nashville CARES HIV/ARC Support Group, bimonthly. 4pm. Info 615-385-1510.
Metropolitan Community Church Mortgage Meal, all you can eat. 7:30pm.
SS.
Gay Cable Network Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television). 8pm.

Sundays

Metropolitan Community Church Worship services, 11am and 7pm. Info
615-320-0288.

Special Events

Friday, February 3

Mardi Gras Ball Party and dance, Towne House Tea
Room, 167-1/2 8th Av North, Nashville. Food, drinks,
and costume contest. Sponsored by Metropolitan Com-
munity Church. 8pm-1am. \$5 donation. Info 615 228-
8571 or 615 320-0288.

Saturday, February 4

Party Hors d'oeuvres, Memphis Gay Coalition. BYOB,
potluck. Party room, Bryton Tower, 1271 Poplar, Mem-
phis. 8pm-11pm. Free. Info 901-324-GAYS.

OUT & ABOUT IN THE SOUTH

PrideWeek'89

Sunday, February 5

Pride Week '89 Planning meeting for Nashville's
celebration of Lesbian and Gay Pride Week '89. 1pm. Info
615-297-4293.

Monday, February 6

T-GALA Meeting, Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance,
Towne House Tea Room, 165 8th Av N, Nashville. 7pm.
Free. Info 615-297-4293.

Thursday, February 9

Brown-bag Lecture *Panic in the Greenwood*, discus-
sion of E.M. Forster's *Maurice*, led by Charisse Gendron.
Sponsored by Vanderbilt Lambda Association. 118 Sar-
ratt, Vanderbilt, Nashville. 12:10pm. Free.

Sunday, February 12

Feminist Book Circle Discussion of Rita Mae
Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*. Unitarian Universalist Church,
1808 Woodmont Blvd, Nashville. 5-7pm. Free. Info 615
385-4283.

Tuesday, February 14

Out and About Ball *Valentine's Day* Dance Warehouse
28, 2529 Franklin Rd, Nashville. Sponsored by Tennes-
see Gay & Lesbian Alliance. 7:30pm. \$6 per person. Info
615 333-2215.

Thursday, February 16

Film *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, sponsored by Vander-
bilt Lambda Association. 220 Garland Hall, Nashville.
7pm. \$1 donation. Info 615-297-5352.

Saturday, February 18

Seminar *Loving Yourself Unconditionally*, Susan
Taranto. Sponsored by Gay Women's Social Group,
Memphis. 7:30pm. \$2 donation. Info 901-324-6949.

Your nonprofit event can be listed free in *Dates*. Write
to *Dare*, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, or
phone 615 292-9623 and leave a message. Please
include information about time, location, cost, spon-
sor, and a contact person's name with address and/or
phone number for verification. Deadline noon Tuesday
for publication next Friday.

BRIEFS

from STAFF REPORTS

Alabama judges ask HIV-positive prisoners to phone in pleas

THREE JEFFERSON COUNTY, Alabama, judges last month asked prisoners who are HIV-positive to waive their right to appear at their own court hearings and instead to enter their pleas by telephone instead.

Judges Mike McCormick, Jack Montgomery and O.L. "Pete" Johnson said their bailiffs are fearful of contracting AIDS from inmates who might become violent and bite or scratch them in the judges' courtrooms.

Charles Collins, a board member of Birmingham AIDS Outreach, said that AIDS experts agree that the chances of contracting the disease from a bite or a scratch are very slim.

So far, at least three HIV-infected inmates have agreed to the request, including John Louis O'Neal, who said his lawyer "told me to do it over the phone because he didn't want to make the judge mad."

O'Neal, however, is reportedly taking legal action to prevent the judges from continuing the practice. •

Atlanta lesbian/gay rights ordinance introduced by mayoral candidate

FULTON COUNTY COMMISSION Chair Michael Lomax told Atlanta's lesbian/gay newspaper *Southern Voice* last month that he is on the verge of introducing sweeping legislation that will ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and HIV antibody status.

The language contained in a near-final version of the ordinance prohibits discrimination in "employment, housing, public accommodation, public transportation, public services, governmental services and health care services offered any place in Fulton County, Georgia."

Lomax declined to speculate how his fellow commissioners would vote on the ordinance. Members of a citizen's lobbying group in favor of the ordinance, however, feel that a favorable vote of 5-2 or 6-1 is an almost certainty.

Lomax told *Southern Voice* he had not discussed the matter with the other commissioners, but that he did feel that the ordinance would be given a fair hearing.

"THE BOARD HAS BEEN very affirmative about human rights issues and anti-discrimination," he said. "My view is that the human rights initiative that we are going to undertake here around sexual orientation is not going to be differently viewed than others we have undertaken."

Lomax earlier announced his intentions to run for mayor of Atlanta in 1989. •

Noted activist/author dies in Philadelphia

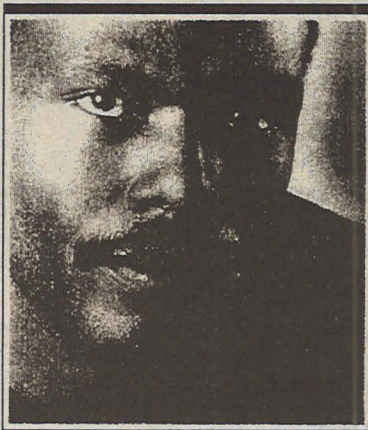
PHILADELPHIA ACTIVIST/AUTHOR Joseph Fairchild Beam died last month after a brief illness.

Beam had, for many years, worked to create a stronger movement of black lesbians and gay men. He was the first editor of *Black/Out*, a magazine serving the black gay and lesbian community, and for three years served on the board of directors of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (NCBLG).

In 1985, Beam began work on a collection of writings and artwork by black gay men. It was published 18 months later, under the title *In the Life*. Although a number of works had already been published by and about black lesbians, Beam's was the first anthology ever to focus on the experiences of black gay men.

At the time of his death, Beam was compiling material for his second collection, *Brother to Brother*.

"Joe already had made a great deal of progress on that book, and his parents were highly supportive of what he was doing. We still expect to publish it," said publisher Sasha Alyson. •



Joseph Beam, activist and author

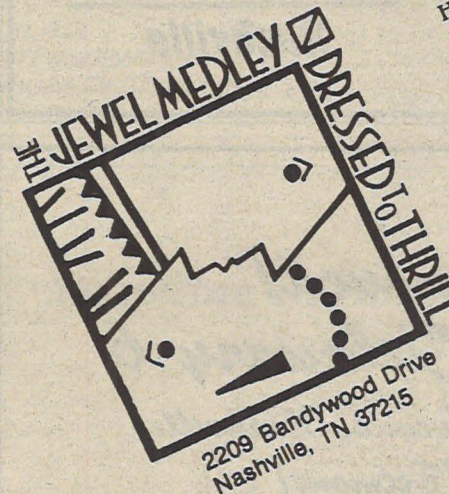
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LISTINGS

Groups

Advance (political action committee of the Tennessee
Gay & Lesbian Alliance)

Box 24181, Nashville 37202

615 385-4283

Agape New Life Church

901 327-4145

Aid to End AIDS Committee (ATEAC)

Box 40389, Memphis 38174

901 762-8401 or 901 485-AIDS

American Gay Atheists/Memphis

Box 41371, Memphis 38174

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Hedy Weinberg, Director

Box 120160, Nashville 37212

615 256-7028

Lesbian & Gay Anti-Violence Hotline

615 256-7028

Black and White Men Together

Box 41773, Memphis 38174

901 327-3753 or 901 452-5894 or 901 726-1461

Conductors

Box 40261, Nashville 37204

Dare

Box 40422, Nashville 37204

615 292-9623

Feminist Book Circle

Box 120372, Nashville 37212

Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition

Box 40982, Memphis 38174

Gay Alternative (radio show)

Box 41773, Memphis 38174

Gay Athletic Association

Box 22914, Memphis 38122

901 744-7312

Gay Cable Network/Nashville

Box 22011, Nashville 37202

615 254-8250

Gay Women's Social Group

901 324-6949

Human Response Council

901 275-3536

Kinship (Seventh Day Adventists)

Box 171135, Memphis 38187

901 274-6160

Memphis Center for Reproductive Health

1462 Poplar Ave, Memphis 38104

901 274-3550

Memphis Gay Coalition

Box 3038, Memphis 38173

901 324-GAYS

Memphis Lambda Center

241 North Cleveland, Memphis

901 276-7379

Metropolitan Community Church

131 15 Ave North, Nashville 37203

615 320-0288

Mystic Krewe of Aphrodite

Box 41822, Memphis 38174

Nashville CARES

Sandee Potter, Director

Box 25107, Nashville 37202

615 385-1510

AIDS Crisis Line

615 385-AIDS

Nashville Women's Alliance

Box 120834, Nashville 37212

615 366-0555

National Organization for Women

Box 40982, Memphis 38104

Box 120523, Nashville 37212

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays

(P-FLAG)

Box 172031, Memphis 38187

901 761-1444

Phoenix (Gay AA)

901 272-9549 or 901 276-7379 or 901 454-1414

Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA)

Box 24181, Nashville 37202

Tennesseans Keeping Abortion Legal and Safe

(TKALS)

Box 120871, Nashville 37212

615 297-8540

The Personals (computer bulletin board)

901 274-6713

Tsarus (Leather-Levi Club)

Box 41082, Memphis 38174

Vanderbilt AIDS Project

Suite CCC5319 Medical Center North

Vanderbilt University, Nashville 37232

615 322-AIDS or 615 322-2252

Vanderbilt Lambda Association

Box 121743, Nashville 37212

Tennessean appears on CBN to refute ex-gay claims

By STUART BIVIN
Editor

Greg Fisher, a Nashville editorial assistant and member of the board of directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), appeared yesterday on the Christian Broadcasting Network's cable talk show *Straight Talk*.

Fisher, who at one time lead a counseling group for the Nashville ex-gay group Arrow, and Sue Hyde, NGLTF Privacy Project director, appeared on the daily talk show along with members of the ex-gay movement. The group Arrow is now known as Promise, and operates out of the Christian Counseling Service on Woodland Street in Nashville.

The ex-gay movement is an evangelical Christian movement that claims to "heal" lesbians and gay men of their homosexuality.

In a phone interview Wednesday, the two told *Dare* from NGLTF's Washington, D.C., offices that their reception was pleasant, although both criticized the ex-gay movement.

"They treated us like we were visitors from Mars...I think it's [the ex-gay movement] de-

pressing. It's really sad that these lesbians and gay men feel so oppressed by their culture that they try to change such a basic part of their identity," Hyde said.

"Although they claim to be able to change people's sexual orientation, you have to qualify the word 'changed,'" Fisher said. "When I was involved, it meant that I had been able to abstain from having sex with members of the same sex. If you press them on it, though, they will admit to having temptations, lustful thoughts, that kind of language."

Other guests on the show were Sy Rogers, executive director of Exodus, a leading ex-gay group; Jo Ann Highley, a leader of the ex-gay group Life; and Elizabeth Moberly, author of *Homosexuality: A New Christian Ethic*.

Fisher said that the first question he was asked was whether he practiced anal or oral sex. "I told him it was none of his business, that he was trying to talk about sexual predisposition rather than sexual orientation. I did say that I'd tell about what I did in bed if everyone else on the program would tell what they did," he said. •

...Dennison dies of AIDS

continued from page 1

January of this year. He suffered from a recurring eye problem which led to blindness in his right eye despite a corneal transplant last year. The eye infection was thought to be caused by shingles, an ailment common among people with AIDS.

The incubation period for AIDS—from initial infection with the HIV virus to a diagnosis of full-blown AIDS—is believed to be in the neighborhood of five to seven years.

The disease is transmitted through HIV-infected blood and other body fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions and mother's milk. Primary means of transmission are sexual intercourse, needles shared by intravenous drug users, from mother to newborn or contaminated blood products.

AIDS attacks and weakens the immune system and the body falls prey to a host of opportunistic diseases.

Dennison's death Monday from pneumocystis pneumonia brought about renewed pleas for universal seropositivity testing at Baptist Hospital. Sources there have indicated privately that such testing will be the rule at the hospital in April, following a vote by the hospital's staff physicians.

If the plan is implemented, all patients at Baptist will routinely have samples of their blood tested for the presence of HIV antibodies.

ies.

Ironically, Baptist and staff physician Lamb are defendants in a half-million dollar lawsuit filed in late December by a Nashville man who claims he was tested by Lamb for HIV-infection without his knowledge or consent.

The man, referred to only as "John Doe" in court documents, seeks some \$500,000 in punitive damages and an unspecified amount in compensatory damages as a result of the December, 1987, incident.

The man claims that during a visit to the Baptist emergency room, Lamb ordered HIV tests without his consent. When the test results were found to be positive, the man said Lamb abruptly informed him of the results and failed to offer counseling.

Since the incident involving John Doe, Baptist apparently changed its policy to require the knowledge and consent of the patient before such tests can be administered.

Abby Rubinfeld, attorney for the plaintiff, said last week that attorneys for the hospital have yet to respond to the lawsuit.

"But that's not unusual. Lawsuits tend to take a long time," Rubinfeld said. "But I'm very optimistic about the outcome."

Funeral services for Dennison were held Wednesday at West End United Methodist Church with burial in Woodlawn Cemetery. •



...counselor charged with rape

continued from page 1

Durst has been on staff at Cumberland House since 1985, as a psychiatric teacher/counselor. He was placed on leave of absence pending the investigation's conclusion.

According to the warrant, the six-year-old boy told investigators that Durst had raped him. Police refused to say when the incident

occurred, but an examination performed at Baptist Hospital Saturday night confirmed that the child had been raped.

Durst's arrest followed by less than a week the arrest of Kevin Ray Howse, a nursing service employee, on charges of sexual assault and giving cocaine to female teen-age patients at Vanderbilt Child and Adolescent Hospital. •



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Steven Davidson, L.C.S.W.
Dorothy Stockard, A.C.S.W.

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Saturday, February 11

9:30 p.m.

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Solita Solano, in 1929. —PHOTO MAN RAY

JANET F *the Incidents*



By **SHERRE DRYDEN**
Book Editor

PARIS, Janet Flanner and Solita Solano decided, was where they would write their first novels. They settled down together at the Hotel Saint-Germain-des-Près in the rue Bonaparte, close to the Seine, the buses and the cafés. They stayed 19 years.

Janet was the daughter of a prosperous businessman and an Indiana Quaker who, Janet said, "oddly enough, barnstormed one season as Little Eva in a post-Civil War Tom show." Janet's older sister Maria became a musician and composer; her younger sister Hildegard, a poet.

In 1912 Janet entered the University of Chicago, but after two years was asked to leave Green Hall Dormitory for being a "rebellious influence." She became the "first ever cinema critic" for the Indianapolis *Star* and made speeches favoring woman suffrage. At the end of World War I she went to New York where she tried "unsuccessfully to learn to be the writer I had for twenty-five years already wished to be..."

One of Janet's first friends in New York was journalist Solita Solano.

Solita was born in New England. Described as "strong-willed, inquisitive and independent," Solita spent three years in the Philippines helping survey and build coral roads instead of going to college.

Back in the U.S., Solita went to work as a cub reporter for the Boston *Herald-Traveler*. She was soon promoted, becoming the first woman to hold the position of drama editor for a major U.S. daily. In 1920 she went to New York as the drama editor for the *Tribune*.

WHILE IN NEW YORK Janet (with Jane Grant) founded the Lucy Stone League, an early feminist organization. She also married an Indianapolis banker whose name she never took for her own nor disclosed publicly. By the time Janet and her husband were divorced in 1922, Janet and Solita had toured Greece, Crete, Turkey and Vienna together, and settled in Paris.

Almost immediately after arriving in Paris, Janet and Solita became part of the community of lesbian writers. They became friends with Sylvia Beach, then in the process of publishing James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and found their way to Natalie Barney's salon. They were serious about their work, too. Solita's first novel, *The Uncertain Feast*, was published in 1924 and her second, *The Happy Failure*, a year later.

Janet's only novel, *The Cubical City*, was

published in 1926. Janet used the novel to criticize American sexual puritanism, particularly the double standard of conduct for women and women. Elements of Janet's own life, and the lives of the women she knew in Paris, enter the plot.

Janet, like the other women who went to Paris, had found it necessary to leave home to find the freedom she needed to be able to express her passion, which was lesbian. Her heroine Delia's passion is heterosexual, but her escape is the same. As Delia tells a friend who criticizes her:

"I didn't leave home to have lovers. But I left home to be free. And I won't give that up - until I have to. . . Passion is natural."

Although *The Cubical City* is interesting in its examination of the "new woman" as a sexual being, it is a minor part of Janet's contribution. In 1925 she began a 50 year career as chronicler of French and American life in Paris.

Janet wrote regularly to her friend Jane

LES
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Janet Flanner, in 1929—PHOTO UNIVERSITY OF TULSA MCFARLIN LIBRARY

LANNER:

mental Tourist



Grant, who showed the letters to her husband, publisher Harold Ross. When Ross's new magazine, *The New Yorker*, started on October 10, 1925, one of the features was Janet's "Letter From Paris." In that and over 700 columns that followed Janet covered cultural events and trends in modern literature, fashion, sporting events, nightlife, fascinating trivia, bizarre crimes and the activities of history-making individuals.

AT FIRST GLANCE, it may seem that Janet kept her private life separated from her public career as a journalist. Shari Benstock, in *Women of the Left Bank* comments:

"That Flanner herself was a lesbian is carefully hidden behind her professional role as a journalist and beneath a smooth and sometimes ironic prose style. . . Among her letters and memorabilia left to the Library of Congress there is virtually nothing that betrays her sexual orientation, for instance, or that reveals anything about her long-term association with

Solita Solano."

To be sure, Janet did not write about herself. But throughout the Paris letters runs a subtext that must have been as decodable to homosexual women and men in 1927 as it is today.

Harold told Janet, "I don't want to know what you think about what goes on in Paris. I want to know what the French think." But once she was done with the death of dowager Duchess de Rohan and the arrest for espionage of Mme. Lydia Stahl, Janet felt free to talk about the activities of her friends.

Consequently, *New Yorker* readers learned of the publication of Djuna Barnes' latest novel and that a woman who "specialized in banned plays" proposed one based on *The Well of Loneliness*. They met Sylvia Beach, Margaret Anderson, Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas. They knew that Dolly Wilde was known to show up at parties dressed as her famous uncle, Oscar.

IN A COLUMN about Radclyffe Hall, Janet used the word lesbian, told readers where in Paris they could get a copy of *The Well of Loneliness* and how much the book would cost. She announced Dadaist poet Tristan Tzara's marriage to "a wealthy Swedish industrial. Or his daughter, rather."

A 1930 letter on fancy-dress balls describes one given by Elsa Maxwell and the Honorable Mrs. Reginald Fellowes. Elsa Maxwell went as Monsieur Briand and Stanislas de La Rochefoucauld as Mademoiselle Marthe Letellier, "the famous beauty." Designer Coco Chanel, Janet continues, "did a land-office business generally, cutting and fitting gowns for young men about town who appeared as some of the best-known women in Paris."

It is impossible to imagine that anyone, even in the 1920's, who was remotely familiar with homosexual subcultures would not at least be suspicious about the extent of Janet's knowledge and the frequency with which references appeared in her columns.

Not only the folks back home read Janet's column. Her friends in Paris saw them, too, and for the women Janet wrote about it was frequently the only serious consideration their work received.

Janet's support strengthened the lesbian community because she was one of them. It validated their work because of her membership, through Harold and *The New Yorker*, in the mainstream, male world. And it subverted that world because Janet made her own loyalties clear, at least to those who understood. •



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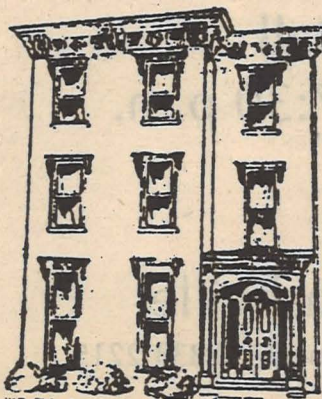
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FEBRUARY 3 - 9, 1989

SCREENS

Torch Song Trilogy

by JEFF ELLIS

Managing Editor

Torch Song Trilogy is much more than a "gay" movie — it's a touching, compelling, often heart-wrenching, almost universal love story.

Harvey Fierstein's award-winning Broadway triumph is brought to the screen in a film that's sure to be a hit with lesbian and gay audiences and may well prove to be a major crossover favorite with straight moviegoers.

But reviewing *Torch Song* is difficult — it's not easy to critique one's own life. The film's strongest point is the universality of its story and rarely, if ever, will lesbians or gay men see the film and not see themselves.

It is a deeply moving and genuinely affecting portrait of our community, using the ever-present themes of loving, coming out and battling society's bigotries to create a mosaic of pride and affirmation.

Fierstein's screenplay definitely pays homage to its stagebound predecessor, but it transcends the play's obvious limitations by widening the scope of its view. The effect of the trilogy remains intact despite the

absence of curtains. Instead, Fierstein artfully dictates the film's actions to interpret the evolution of his characters, guiding them along in a natural progression through life.

Fierstein plays Arnold Beckoff, a gay New Yorker whom we first meet in his late 20s and with whom we share a nine-year odyssey. We first see Arnold as he is creating the persona of his alter ego, Virginia Hamn, a drag queen with a torch song to sing.

Arnold's romantic entanglements, or the lack thereof, provides the basis for much of his self-deprecating humor and his unique view of gay life.

Or is Arnold's outlook so unique? How many of us can identify with such lines as, "A thing of beauty is a joy till morning"? That, and other such truisms, is what makes *Torch Song* so involving — you can imagine yourself thinking, if not saying, the same outrageous lines as Arnold.

Into Arnold's life comes bisexual Ed Reece (played with the perfect blend of bravado and insecurity by Brian Kerwin). Ed's an endearing, sexy blond and Arnold's attraction to him is obvious, but just under the surface you know he's a jerk just waiting to happen.

Arnold promptly falls in love, only to be heartbroken when he encounters the woman Ed is dating and so finally sees the self-destructive nature of the relationship.

The next man in Arnold's life is a young model named Alan (charmingly played by the fresh-faced Matthew Broderick). It's easy to see how Arnold could become so enamored of Alan, but Broderick's not so pretty as the screenplay would have you believe.

Alan's youthful ardor, mingled with a hint of naïveté and just the right amount of cynicism, quickly melts Arnold's reserve and the two

become lovers. The warmth and affection between the two men is presented naturally and matter-of-factly: they speak as lovers speak and fight as lovers fight.

Into the almost idyllic love affair, comes a complication introduced by Ed's fiancée Laurel (played by Karen Young in an amusing, down-to-earth and very real performance). She invites Arnold and Alan to Ed's farm in upstate New York for a weekend filled with sidelong glances and one-upsmanship. The result is much as you would have expected, with a fillip of scandal to spice the action.

Throughout the course of the film, the specter of Arnold's mother is felt. Convincingly played by Anne Bancroft (with whom Fierstein starred in *Garbo Talks*), the mother's role is at first perceived as almost caricature. The mother is at first easy to write off — you either think she is funny because she's so stereotypical or you hate her because she's such a shrew.

But Bancroft goes beyond those easy generalizations to present a

richly textured portrait of a mother whose children didn't turn out as she expected. The scenes between Arnold and his mother are painful, both from your involvement in the story and from personal experiences.

Appearing as Arnold's co-stars at the slightly seedy drag bar are Ken Page and the late Charles Pierce. Page (who starred in the original Broadway production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*) is thoroughly likable and plays the best friend we'd all like to have. Pierce, as Bertha Venation, is bawdy and tawdry, all false eyelashes and real talent. When the three men go shopping for dresses, believe me, you'll love it!

Torch Song Trilogy has been criticized in some circles for the absence of any mention of AIDS and for the presence of a scene in a gay bar's orgy room.

But there *was* life before AIDS. And orgy rooms are a part of our history, no matter how personally repelling you find them. Hindsight is wonderful, but a clear vision of a time past is much more intriguing.

In those earlier times we were much more innocent, perhaps naïve, maybe even stupid. But we can still remember those times.

And thankfully Harvey Fierstein gives us the opportunity to examine our lives onscreen, saving us the pain of introspection by letting us live vicariously through Arnold.

Fierstein the writer is superb, unerring in his ear for dialogue and for creating memorable catch phrases.

Fierstein the actor is wonderful, mugging his way through the comedic scenes, tugging at your heartstrings during the dramatic ones.

Fierstein's vision of *Torch Song Trilogy* and his determination to bring it to the screen in its unadulterated, uncompromised form, provides us with a landmark screen event. •



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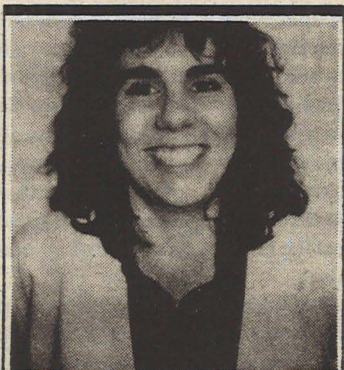
Linda Goss - "Anyone."



Lisa K. Manis - "Having somebody that could love me and treat me the way I'd like to treat them. Peace, love, and happiness - unity for the world - you know, stuff like that."



Annette Franke - "J.J. And she is ideal!"



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Dare

Tennessee's Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly

Dare

Tennessee's Lesbian and Gay Newsweekly
From the Heart of the American South

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SOAPBOX

Pity the dying, not the dead

by CAROLE CUNNINGHAM
Staff Writer

WORD THAT SURGEON Harold Dennison, Jr. died Monday of complications resulting from AIDS is cause for mourning and for reflection. The shock waves felt by the Nashville community over Dennison's illness have been exacerbated by the understandable illusion that Dennison's life was furiously stripped from him by the AIDS virus in a matter of weeks. The seeming rapid decline of Dennison's health in concert with the daily testimonials by colleagues and friends of his unflagging dedication to his patients and profession has made the injustice of his suffering seem all the more inexplicable. And in the face of inexplicable suffering, friends and family insist on finding a culprit. If Harold Dennison's death from AIDS is a "crime," reason tells us a "criminal" must be responsible.

As investigators painstakingly search for answers about the cause of Dennison's infection with AIDS, some colleagues of Harold Dennison have already reached their own conclusions about the criminal and the crime. Patients not screened for HIV positivity are the culprits, say a number of Dennison's colleagues.

YET ACCORDING TO THE ADMISSIONS of those same colleagues and his own daughter, with whom he practiced medicine, Harold Dennison treated patients without observing the universal precautions recommended by the Centers for Disease Control, the American Hospital Association, and scores of professional medical associations. Harold Dennison practiced medicine in the absence of reasonable precautions, with puzzling disregard for the absolute fatality of AIDS.

But the tragedy of Harold Dennison's battle with AIDS has not ended with his death. The life of Dennison — a veritable paradox wrapped inside an enigma — is now being used to perpetrate another crime — a crime against reason and a crime against patient

rights.

Using the death of Harold Dennison from AIDS as an example of why physicians and hospitals should institute universal testing of patients is a shameful use of his death and a shameful excuse for his dangerous medical practices. Even if he was exposed to the AIDS virus in the course of his medical practice, Dennison would not have been spared his life had his patients been tested for AIDS, because he refused to take the precautions that would

If they want someone to pity, they will not pity the dead, they will pity the dying, and turning their pity into action, they will tend to the needs of the ill...

have saved his life even if he had known a patient was HIV-positive.

SADLY, THE ARGUMENT Dennison's colleague, orthopedic surgeon John Lamb, is using to support universal testing of patients only works if there is universal testing of physicians — because if Dennison did indeed contract the AIDS virus during the course of his practice (and the evidence is still inconclusive) by means of his refusal to protect himself through universal precautions, his continuing refusal to practice those precautions after his exposure has indeed put his patients at risk.

But the case of Harold Dennison proves with cold precision exactly why universal testing is not the answer for physicians or for patients who want to minimize their exposure to the virus. We may never know the reason why Dennison practiced medicine in a way that endangered his own life and perhaps the lives of others. And only Lamb knows the reason why he would observe a colleague taking life-threatening risks without counseling his friend about the dangers he was taking. Knowing who has AIDS and who doesn't does not prevent the spread of the virus: changing behaviors, practicing universal precautions in health care settings does.

WE DO NOT DO JUSTICE to the death of Harold Dennison by doing an injustice to the living. If Lamb and others truly care about the living and the preservation of life, they will practice the precautions known to save both patients and physicians from exposure to the AIDS virus. They will not sacrifice the patient rights of privacy and confidentiality on the altar of their personal convenience.

They will realize that the doom Dr. Harold Dennison met was not unique, but common — a product of either ignorance, fear, or stubborn human nature. And if they want someone to pity, they will not pity the dead, they will pity the dying, and turning their pity into action, they will tend to the needs of the ill, search for a cure, and protect themselves and us from the ravages of ignorance and the cruelty of hate. •

Dare encourages you to express your opinion in this space, and welcomes your letters. Submissions over 500 words will be considered for the Soapbox space. Names may be withheld on request. Unsigned letters and defamatory material cannot be published. Please write to Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204-0422, and include signature, phone number and address for verification.

ONE IN TEEN

Coming out at school

by PATRICK HILLS
Contributing Writer

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY that I made a big step in my coming-out process this week. Let me explain what I mean, but first, I must give some background details. I am a member of the Nashville Youth Network, which is a youth empowerment group. Way back in June, during Lesbian and Gay Pride Week, the Nashville Youth Network participated in the march and rally. We also print a paper which is given out to students at most Nashville schools. In this paper, I wrote an article about the week's festivities. I was daring and used my real name. Maybe not a good idea, but I did it, anyway.

A this point, you might be thinking, "Well, that was way back in June. Why is he talking about this now?" Good question. Due to some complications — we lost our editor — the paper didn't come out until this week. Dated news, but important for teenagers to read. Most of the

classmates I gave a copy of the paper were unaware that Pride Week had taken place.

Most students did not see this as an update of an event that occurred in the summer. All they saw were the words "lesbian and gay." They would then quickly notice my name and begin reading further, laughing constantly. Next, they would go into shock and stare at me for an hour or two. This is only one of the many scenarios I witnessed during the day.

MY FAVORITE SCENARIO was in homeroom when I passed out the paper to everyone in the room. One girl read it out loud and then immediately glared at me and said, "Nuke 'em."

She then went to our homeroom teacher and showed her the article and expressed her disgust to the teacher. As I left homeroom, I overheard the teacher say in a quiet, surprised voice, "You mean he's gay?" I immediately

broke out in hysterical laughter.

In Chemistry, a friend passed out the paper at the beginning of class. The teacher found it difficult to teach class due to the various jokes and discussions about my article. What surprised me the most was that they insulted and joked about lesbians and gays with the full knowledge that I was hearing every word they said. I guess ignorant people don't have much tact.

I am amazed that teenagers are so troubled by the fact that I wrote this article. It also upsets me that no one realized that there were many other articles about different subjects. Many assumed that it was a publication by lesbians and gays. There is one good thing out of this, though. My ad for the teen support group was in there as well. I hope that I will get some responses from that. •

PAGES

Curzon in Love

Curzon in Love. By Daniel Curzon. Pound Ridge, NY: Knights Press, 1988. 232 pp. \$8.50, paper.

by **STUART BIVIN**
Editor

TAKE A little Noel Coward, a little Somerset Maugham, and a little Richard Burton (the one who translated the *Arabian Nights*, not the one who married Liz Taylor Fisher Todd Hilton Wilder Burton Burton Warner) and use their styles to frame a gay pulp novel, and you get *Curzon in Love*.

Daniel Curzon, a professor of God-knows-what at City College in San Francisco, writes about — what else? — the sex life of a San Francisco writer. The surprise is that he doesn't do it very well. Curzon has written much better stuff than this waste of good trees.

His short story *Two Bartenders, a Butcher and Me*, published in *Christopher Street* magazine's terrific 1980 fiction collection *Aphrodisiac*, was a straightforward evocation of the impersonal seventies-style big-city bar scene everyone moans about missing these days. Still, it was direct, simple and effective. In other words, the polar opposite of *Curzon in Love*.

Pity poor Coward, Maugham, and Burton. These three guys have got to be doing flips in their graves. Not because Curzon has used their styles to tell a homosexual story. But because he had the effrontery to mimic them, and then to *thank* them by name on the dedication page.

A random sampling of what you should miss:

(This is what Curzon calls "grubby realism")

Although he was attracted to men physically, and liked the fact that these creatures had penises, the penis itself rather disgusted him. Such a state is a cross to bear for a homosexual. Curzon was willing to acknowledge his neurosis, if that's what it was, but it seemed to him that other people just didn't see as well as he did. Otherwise, how could they go into raptures over that reddish pole with unsightly veins up and down it and a pee-hole in the top?

Or this, alleged to be à la Coward:

"We can still do that. How about now?" Curzon booked a finger through Jean-Michel's belt and pulled him toward the French door.

But Jean-Michel would not budge. "Not now. Someone might come in."

"Well, tonight then. In bed." Curzon's words were getting him excited. "Full-bodied man love." He touched Jean-Michel's crotch.

Or this, from the supposedly Burtonesque section:

Curzon told Ja of his recently drowned diminutive love, and Ja listened with many deep sighs and expressions of tender understanding. He himself had a love that had not fulfilled itself as he had hoped. It was a man older by some ten years, given to unseemly ways as well as extreme sloth. This man would spend many days and weeks gazing into a crystal ball in the corner of the domicile they shared.

"Domicile?" Spare us.

JUST FLIP through and plop a finger down anywhere. You are guaranteed to find something awful no matter which page of this dreadful thing you turn to. That is, if you can make enough sense out of it to form

some kind of an opinion.

Bad writing is one thing, but *Curzon* is made even more difficult to get to because it is riddled with typographical errors — on nearly

every page — and the text is printed in heavy black type that looks like someone was trying to stretch a 100-page book to fill up 232 pages the way high-schoolers write big and double-space to pad out reports to the required five pages.

All the horrible things about this book aside, it's not quite a total loss. It does have some fun moments, and Curzon does occasionally find his

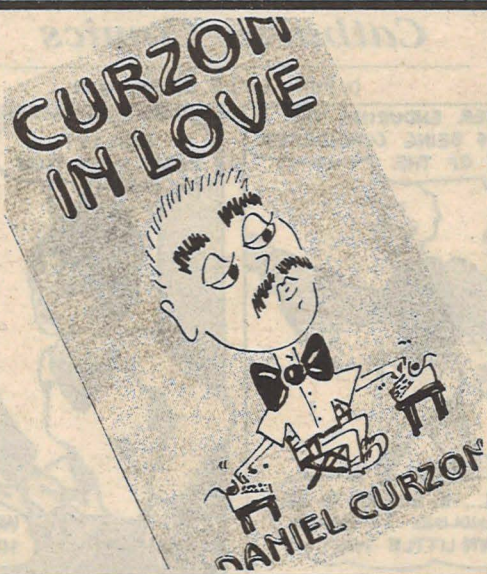
stride with his sharper attempts at dialogue.

You get the sense that this may be that retaliatory novel everyone daydreams about writing: the exposé of all those rotten people who've hurt you and are now laid bare for all the world to see how nasty they are. It's not that the book is vicious, the characters are just flat and one-faceted.

The story itself is one of those no-story stories: it's hoped that the reader will find the telling such fun that the lack of a tale will be excused. An interesting proposition in the hands of a better storyteller, it is deadly in Curzon's.

Still, *Curzon in Love* has an eye-catching lavender cover with strange cartoons. It might be fun on the beach come summer — it's not often you get a chance to feel intellectually superior with sand in your shorts. •

The surprise is that he doesn't do it very well. Curzon has written much better stuff than this waste of good trees.



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QUOTES

Talk, talk, talk

"It will be basically an entertainment show. We will not be doing panel discussions on the Middle East. We will not be throwing furniture or doing lesbian nun segments."

—Wheel of Fortune host Pat Sajak about his new CBS latenight talk show.

"It's such a nightmare. I keep thinking we'll wake up and it will all be over. But I understand how gay people feel now because they're saying I'm gay. You want to fight. You want to sue. You want to kill—but you can't. I now understand what it's like to be black, to be Jewish, to go through a holocaust. I'm afraid that a holocaust could happen again [to] people who are different. The prejudice that happens in the name of God is scary."

—Former PTL preacher Jim Bakker on *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show*.

"They had to go into the jungle, grab some fuckin' monkey and fuck him in the ass — and bring us back the fucking black plague of the '80s. Thanks, guys. Because of this shit, they want us to wear fuckin' rubbers....These fucking pricks. Do we like rubbers, guys? We hate rubbers. We fuckin' hate 'em!"

—Comedian and former Pentecostal preacher Sam Kinison on his Warner Brothers debut album *Have You Seen Me Lately?*

"Give me a break. Do all your jokes have to be

medically correct? What am I responsible for? Who am I responsible to? Everybody? How come when Archie Bunker nailed everybody, it was funny — but when I do it, it's not?"

—Sam Kinison, responding to criticism of his remarks on AIDS and gay men.

"As Christians we must not judge that a person with AIDS is being punished by God for sinful conduct."

—James Niedergeses, Roman Catholic bishop of the Diocese of Nashville.

"The most important aspect for the success of our show is not to point up that there are gay people on *Brothers*, but for the public to see, week after week, gays and straights interacting in a normal fashion."

—Actor Phillip Charles MacKenzie, who played Donald, the gay brother on the cable network Showtime's *Brothers* series. The show has since been cancelled and will be syndicated.

"So, AIDS is not only a killer of people, it also is a killjoy of clowning."

—Rita Rucin ("Reinbo the Clown") in a letter to the editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, complaining about the shortage of rubber for clowns' sculpting balloons caused by the surge in demand for condoms and rubber gloves.

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