



Give the People Light and they will find their own way.

The Wisconsin Light

Madison Voters Face Critical Choices On April 7 Ballot

Analysis by John Quinlan

[Madison]- Progressive control of both the Dane County Board and Madison School Board is at stake in the April 7th election, according to Gay and Lesbian political activists. Coming at the same time as the presidential primary, this is not an election which Gay and Lesbian voters can afford to miss.

School Board Race Endorsements

In the school board races, three incumbents face candidates sponsored by the conservative Citizens Advocating Responsible Education (CARE) committee. Incumbents Jim Fullin, Jerry Smith, and Paul Dvorak face a CARE-sponsored opponent. All three candidates have been endorsed by MTI Voters, the political action committee of the teacher's union, Madison Teachers, Inc.

While the local chapter of Gay and Lesbian Education Employees (GLEE) does not make endorsements, GLEE co-founder Jack Siebert confirmed that he and most of the Lesbian/Gay educators he knows will be supporting Fullin, Smith and Dvorak.

Voters in the Madison school district have the opportunity to vote in all three races. According to Siebert, MTI Voters was less enthusiastic about Dvorak than Fullin or Smith, but chose to endorse him because of the extreme conservatism of his opponent.

CARE Gay-Baiting

Issues facing Gay and Lesbian youth and families have played a part in recent elections involving many of the same players. In the 1990 school board elections, controversial CARE co-founder Earl Kielley was blatantly homophobic in his rhetoric, trying to stir up voter resentment about district programs which seek to promote better understandings of Gays and Lesbians, and people of differing backgrounds.

Early in the 1990 campaign, a McCarthyesque photo of Kielley waving a copy of a directory of Madison's Gay and Lesbian organizations made the front page of Madison's *Capital Times*. Kielley said that the directory should not be made available to school counselors, and then went further, defining homosexuality as "aberrant behavior" and likening it to "pedophilia and prostitution." He also issued blanket condemnations of multi-cultural curricula in the schools — especially those that affirmed the lives of Lesbians and Gay men.

Leaders of Madison's Lesbian and Gay community, working in a progressive coalition with the Jewish community and people of color, responded with a highly successful get out the vote campaign. One Gay man who worked the phone bank that year remarked that he'd never seen such enthusiasm in an election by Gays and Lesbians. As a result, many people who didn't ordinarily vote in school board elections were mobilized, and both Kielley and another conservative were soundly defeated.

Voter Backlash

However, in 1991, CARE changed its tactics — having learned its lesson that a message of blatant intolerance wouldn't fly in Madison. Despite this, Kielley and other archconservatives continued to pull the strings. CARE exploited confusion about the school district's newly redefined holiday policy, which was drawn up to clarify the fact that religious celebrations of Christmas and other holidays weren't appropriate in the schools.

As school board members later admitted, the holiday policy had been poorly explained to teachers and the public, who wrongly interpreted it as banning any celebrations of holidays, such as the performance of Christmas music at band concerts. The results were disastrous.

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St. Patrick's Parade Controversy Flares In New York and Boston

By Jamakaya

[New York, NY]- Hundreds of Irish Gays and Lesbians participated in a lively protest march prior to New York City's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade after a federal judge and the city's Human Rights Commission found that the parade's organizers, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, had the right to exclude the Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO) from the event.

In Boston, where for the first time Gays were allowed to march as a contingent in the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Gay marchers were attacked by hooligans who threw smoke bombs, beer cans and insults. Eight people were arrested.

In Milwaukee, self-described "Gaylic" members of Queer Nation marched up North Avenue in the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 14, brandishing pink shamrocks and "Veto Norquist" stickers. The stickers referred to Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist's recent veto of city funds for the Lesbian/Gay Pride Parade. They encountered numerous mayoral bodyguards, but no harassment from spectators.

New York City

Carrying signs declaring "Pluralism is Nothing to Fear" and "Inhospitality is the True Sin of Sodom," and chanting "Hey, hey! Ho ho! Homophobia's got to go!" Irish Gays and Lesbians rallied outside the Plaza Hotel and marched up Fifth Avenue an hour before the big parade began.

In an unprecedented display of support for the Gay and Lesbian community, many prominent politicians in New York either boycotted the St. Pat's Parade or joined the Gay protest.

True to his pledge, Mayor David Dinkins, a strong advocate for the Irish Gays who actually filed a discrimination complaint on their behalf with the city's Human Rights Commission, refused to attend because of the Gays' exclusion.

Dinkins was recovering after a recent hospital stay, but indicated that had he been healthy enough, he still would not have attended. It is the first time since 1923 that the Mayor of New York City has not attended the parade.

Others joining in solidarity with the Irish Gays included: City Council President Andrew Stein; Council member Tom Duane, a Gay man; Comptroller Elizabeth Holtzman; Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger; State Attorney General Robert Abrams; and many others.

Former Mayor Ed Koch and Sen. Alfonse D'Amato marched in the parade.

The Legal Battle

The Irish Lesbian and Gay Organization (ILGO) was formally excluded from the parade after its appeals to the city's Human Rights Commission and federal court failed.

On March 13, Judge Rosemarie Maldonado found that the parade was a place of "public accommodation" from which the Gay group had been unlawfully excluded. But she ruled that forcing the Ancient Order of Hibernians to accept the Gay group against its wishes violated the Hibernians' First Amendment right to freedom of association, a right which Maldonado said superseded the Gay group's claim.

On March 16, Federal Judge Pierre N. Leval also ruled against ILGO, but on more narrow grounds. He declined to rule on the constitutional question of whose First Amendment rights were paramount. Instead, he ruled that the Gay group had no right to vault ahead of other groups on a waiting list of would-be participants in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. He also said ILGO had sought an injunction to stop the parade too close to the time of the event.

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BE CAREFUL WITH THAT ICE PICK, CATHERINE!— Catherine (Sharon Stone) is poised to strike while Nick (Michael Douglas) doesn't know quite what to expect in the long-awaited, much debated film *Basic Instinct*, now playing in theatres nationwide. Our reviewer found it to be — surprise! — another sordid chapter in Hollywood's shameful history of misogyny and homophobia.

'Basic Instinct' Arrives With Misogyny and Homophobia Galore

Commentary by Susan Schramm

The press kit for *Basic Instinct* includes a variety of promotional photos, one of which, favored by the straight media, depicts stars Michael Douglas and Sharon Stone wrapped in a "steamy" embrace. Another one — my personal favorite — features bisexual homicide suspect Stone, ice pick in hand, stabbing away at a block of ice in preparation for drinks with lust-smitten cop Douglas. It has a faux sinister quality bordering on camp, not unlike the film itself. I'm tempted to post it on my refrigerator door with the cautionary inscription: "Lesbians and ice picks — a dangerous combination." But of course the truly worrisome combination is Hollywood and Lesbians.

There's been a lot of controversy surrounding production of *Basic Instinct*, which has the distinction of featuring not just one, but three, homicidal bisexual or Lesbian women. The film has been the target of vigorous protest by Lesbian and Gay activists, who object to its vicious stereotyping.

Director Paul Verhoeven (*Total Recall*) claims their disruption was minimal, and blithely stands by his production. Even when scriptwriter Joe Eszterhas, who met with activists, proposed to alter the script, Verhoeven refused to budge, claiming any change would damage the "integrity" of the film. Uh-huh. The characters' sexuality, he has stated, is simply "there," and is "not an issue."

Homophobic Sleaze Intact

So now, with all of its homophobic sleaze stubbornly intact, *Basic Instinct* has arrived. Just how bad is it? Well, don't cancel your plans to spend a pleasant evening defrosting the freezer (with or without ice pick) to see this

movie. It is mediocre at best, even if one discounts the significance of the "non-issue," which of course won't be discounted here.

Granted, it's a slick production, and with a \$49 million budget (including a record \$3 million script), one might expect as much. But it often plays more like a shallow, lurid farce than like the "erotic psychological thriller" it purports to be.

The "thrills" include plenty of blood, violence, rough sex, an air of free-floating testosterone, and yes, even car chases. (One thing to be said for those dykes: they sure do lead a mean car chase!)

And for those of us who've considered forsaking politics for pleasure, the touted "hot sex" is all **het** sex — the Lesbian elements are here to serve a darker, less obvious purpose.

Just what might that purpose be? First, here's a very brief rundown of plot dynamics:

Ice Pick Murder

The film opens with a scene like something out of "9 1/2 Weeks Meets Psycho." A bout of the aforementioned hot sex climaxes with the graphically bloody ice pick murder of an aging rock star by the sensuous, unidentified female astride him.

Prime suspect is Catherine Tramell (Stone), who'd been engaged in an emotionally detached but very physical affair with the victim. She is taken on by police detective Nick Curran (Douglas), who's determined to match wits with this "brilliant and evil" seductress in her penchant for "mind games," and who is quickly if ambivalently seduced by her. As more homicides occur, and past homicides emerge, additional suspects

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