

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



The Wisconsin Light

Gays Respond To WISN TV's 'Flirting With Danger' Series

By Terry Boughner

[Milwaukee]- Milwaukee's Gay and Lesbian community watched with bated breath as WISN, TV-12 ran its highly promoted four-part series, "Flirting With Danger," as part of its 10:00 p.m. newscast November 19-22.

The series was publicized as an investigation into Gay life in some bars and cruising areas of the city in the aftermath of the Jeffrey Dahmer serial killings. Reported by Dane Placko, it purported to investigate the "dangerous situations Gays put themselves in."

Prior to the series and before each segment was aired, anchors Jerry Taff and Marty Burns Wolfe emphasized that the report depicted the practices of only a small segment of the city's Gay community.

Nevertheless, many Lesbian and Gay activists reacted with strong apprehension over the effect the series might have on the community, particularly over the possible increase in anti-Lesbian and anti-Gay violence.

There was also anger that Channel 12 would spend its time focusing on the Gay community during the November "sweeps" month when the electronic media seek to gain a wider audience to increase ad revenue. TV stations often focus on sensational subjects at this time to improve their ratings.

Community spokespersons pointed out that most of our bars are very aware of the problem with underage drinkers and have adopted strict controls to handle the situation.

There was anger too at WISN for airing the series at the same time as the Milwaukee School Board was about to vote on the Report on Lesbian and Gay Teens.

Sources at WISN maintained that the timing of the report was coincidental and that there was no intent to hurt the community. Fred D'Ambrosi, WISN-TV's news director, said the station had "every intention of being responsible;" that "every word" in the report would be carefully reviewed and that community spokespersons would have an opportunity to react.

Two "crisis" meetings were held by local activists to discuss the situation. One took place on Friday evening, November 15, in the offices of In Step. It was attended by about 25 Lesbian and Gay leaders representing many of Milwaukee's Gay activist groups. The second was held November 18 at the Counseling Center under the auspices of the Lavender Network.

At both meetings, discussion returned again and again to the Christian Fundamentalist outcry, led by WVCY's Vic Eliason, over the Lesbian/Gay Teen

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School Board Director David Lucey Apologizes for Homophobic Slur

[Milwaukee]- Milwaukee School Board Director David M. Lucey has issued an apology to the Lesbian and Gay community for remarks he made at the School Board meeting on Wednesday, November 20, 1991. At that time Lucey said he did not believe Gay people were either normal or healthy.

In a phone call to the Editor of The Wisconsin Light, Lucey said he wanted to apologize and sent a letter addressed to the paper. The letter reads:

"Following Wednesday's School Board action on the report on the Task Force on Gay and Lesbian Teens, I responded to a pointed 'yes' or 'no' question with an answer that I regret. I want to make this public apology to all Milwaukeeans.

"Contrary to my response to the question Wednesday night, I do not believe, in the words of the questioner, that Gays and Lesbians are 'abnormal' or 'unhealthy' people. In the heat of the

School Board Succumbs To Pressure Of Bible Thumpers

By Jamakaya

[Milwaukee]- Caving in to the pressure tactics of self-confessed Christian Fundamentalists, the Milwaukee School Board on November 20 approved watered down versions of the school administration's responses to a Task Force Report Regarding Gay and Lesbian Teens. (The full text of the Report along with the administration's response is on p. 12.)

More than 800 Bible-thumping, hymn singing zealots, many from outside the city of Milwaukee, packed several rooms of the School Administration Building to listen to the discussion and vote. Some carried signs saying "No More Tax Funded Perversion," "Vote for the Family: Mom, Dad and the Kids," and "Homosexuality Means Hopelessness, Pain and Death."

The religious hymns were occasionally countered by chants of "Two, four, six, eight, how do you know your kids are straight?" and "Hey, hey! Ho, Ho! Homophobia's got to go!" from the small Gay contingent of 30 or 40 people.

Only three Board Directors publicly commented on the Gay Teen Report. Lawrence O'Neil speculated on whether homosexuality was a "mental defect," a "physical defect" or a "biological condition." David Lucey, playing to the audience, repeatedly repudiated the report's assertion that homosexuality could be "normal and healthy."

Speaking to reporters after the vote, Lucey went on to say that homosexuals were neither healthy nor normal and that they should seek psychiatric treatment to "reverse" their condition. The son of

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A "Christian" is transported with religious fervor at the Nov. 20 Milwaukee School Board meeting. The sign reads "Homosexuality Means Hopelessness, Pain and Death."

Vic Eliason Sued for \$12 Million By Washington D.C. Journalist

[Washington, D.C.]- Former United Press International (UPI) reporter Julie Brienza, on November 20, 1991, charged that a group of right-wing religious broadcasters, including Paul Cameron and Milwaukee's Vic Eliason, orchestrated a smear campaign against her designed to compel UPI to fire her because she is a Lesbian and because she was freelancing for the Washington Blade, a Gay/Lesbian newspaper.

Eliason runs WVCY radio and WVCY-TV (Voice of Christian Youth), using them as a platform for all sorts of invective in support of every kind of cause.

In April, 1990, as originally reported in Wisconsin Light, Eliason, a right wing, religious televangelist, and a confessed Christian, discovered that Brienza was both working for UPI and writing for the Blade. Eliason then contacted a number of other "Christian broadcasters" and together they broadcast a continuous series of reports about Brienza, calling her a "mole" and a "double agent" and referring to her employment at UPI as a "case of Lesbian penetration" of the press agency.

Brienza's attorneys have uncovered in discovery, facts supporting the contention of a right-wing religious conspiracy, which include the fact that Eliason, Cameron, Accuracy in Media and other

right-wing broadcasters suggested to their listeners that Brienza should be fired. Further, some urged their audiences to block UPI telephone lines with their demands, which led to UPI receiving hundreds of phone calls from listeners complaining about Brienza and demanding that she be fired.

Calling UPI officials directly, TURN TO ELIASON, PAGE 10

Neglect of Prisoner With AIDS Spurs Call for Reform in Racine

[Racine]- An inmate with AIDS at the Racine County Jail who was given no medication and left to lie in feces and vomit was denied "even the most minimal standards of humane treatment," according to Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP).

Nelson is urging Racine County authorities to develop and implement humane and effective policies for managing HIV/AIDS in its prisons.

Dennis Hill, a client of MAP, was in the custody of Racine County authorities on November 17 and 18, during which time his already precarious health status "quickly and seriously deteriorated."

Hill was stopped by police for swerving in traffic on I-94. He was cited for operating a vehicle after revocation of his license and for resisting arrest. Hill told officers that he was very sick from AIDS, but no effort was made to transport him to a hospital or to meet his medical needs.

When staff members from MAP visited Hill in his cell the following day, they found him to be "critically ill and requiring hospitalization. He was in great pain, was unable to walk, had extremely labored breathing, was partially clothed and lying in his own feces and vomit."

In a strongly worded letter to Racine County authorities, MAP's Nelson said the jail's failure to respond to Hill's critical condition "demonstrates professional negligence and a reckless disregard for fundamental principles of humane treatment."

Nelson demanded an independent investigation into the way Hill was treated at the Racine County Jail as well as an evaluation of the current policies and procedures governing people with HIV disease in the jail.

Nelson called for comprehensive AIDS education for all jail employees and the use of universal infection control procedures by all employees for all

inmates. He called for high quality medical care for inmates with HIV disease and compassionate leave for those in critical condition.

He also called for the firing of any employees who discriminated against inmates because of their HIV status.

In his letter to Racine County Executive Dennis Kornwolf, Board of Supervisors Chair Jean Jacobson and Sheriff Robert Rohrer, Nelson said his recommendations were "not radical, but bottom line, fundamental, humane policies" necessary for the successful management of the AIDS epidemic. He urged the officials to "act swiftly" to implement them.

Meanwhile, the Milwaukee City Jail is reviewing its policies regarding the handling of prisoners with HIV/AIDS after the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin filed a complaint with the Fire and Police Commission.

The ACLU is urging that the practice of identifying inmates with HIV (often written on a card outside the inmate's cell) be stopped immediately. Officers should be trained to treat all prisoners with universal precautions.

The ACLU recommended that specific guidelines on the treatment of people with HIV, from street contact to intake to incarceration, be adopted; that officers receive ongoing training on the nature and transmission of HIV; and that the Police Department develop its own policy on employees with HIV.

The Milwaukee Police Department is expected to submit its own policy proposals to the Fire and Police Commission in December.

AIDS activist organizations, citing the deaths of Donald Woods and Ricardo Thomas, have criticized the State Department of Corrections for negligence and mishandling of prisoners with HIV/AIDS at the Waupun Correctional facility.

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