

CAPITOL REPORT

BY LARRY BUSH



CONGRESS HEARS WHY INS SHOULDN'T BAR GAYS

Foreign lesbian and gay representatives gave members of Congress a briefing July 14 on why U.S. immigration law banning homosexuals has been unfair and counter to international agreements. The testimony coincided with the first International Gay Association meeting to take place in the United States (see story page 9).

The briefing, which had been arranged by the Gay Rights National Lobby, took advantage of the presence of more than 100 lesbian and gay foreign visitors in Washington to raise once again the issue of reform of the antigay immigration exclusion. Although the affair was not part of the official record Congress uses in reviewing the immigration proposals now awaiting action, it nevertheless served as a clear statement of the importance lesbians and gays place on the issue.

It was nice to see that congressional supporters of gay civil rights put a priority on the briefing as well. Six members of Congress showed up to hear the testimony—more than most official hearings draw—including the sponsor of the measure to reform the antigay clause, Rep. Julian Dixon (D-Calif.). Also on the dais were Reps. Phil Burton (D-Calif.), Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.), Bill Green (R-N.Y.), Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.).

The testimony given was a mixture of blue-ribbon representatives of American Establishment groups attacking the ban as outdated and inappropriate, and the personal voices of lesbian and gay visitors who told of their own problems in dealing with U.S. officials.

On the American side, a representative of the Unitarian Universalist Church presented religious views; Greg Day of the San Francisco Lesbian/Gay Freedom Day Parade Committee presented an update on the law and its practical application; and Dr. David Kessler, head of the gay caucus within the American Psychiatric Association, presented that organization's reasons for challenging the outdated medical basis for the ban.

But perhaps the two most important American additions to the testimony this time came from Mrs. Margaret Capron, of Arlington, Mass., whose son Bear is now a Dutch citizen and unable to come to this country to visit his family. Joining her in a first public challenge to the law was Dr. Charles Gordon, a former general counsel of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and author of the most respected textbook on American immigration law.

The foreign testimony was provided by Wenche Lowzow, an openly lesbian member of the Norwegian Parliament; her lover, Kim Friele, who heads a Norwegian gay rights organization; Rob Pistor, representing a Dutch gay rights group that has successfully brought the U.S. law into public visibility in Europe; and Sylbia Borren, a dual Dutch-New Zealand national.

The members of Congress were clearly impressed with the quality of testimony offered, particularly in the first-person accounts of brushes with American attitudes and officials. Lowzow spoke of her contretemps trying to get a visitor's visa: She was first denied it for being lesbian but was then issued an "official" visa because of her standing as a member of Parliament. Her lover, Friele, spoke of having her visa requests repeatedly denied because of her leadership of a gay civil rights organization—which had just won for Norway the first national gay rights legal protection of any country in the world.

According to GRNL, the members of Congress present at the briefing were deeply impressed with the unfairness of the issue and pledged to take more steps to insure that a reform wins full consideration in Congress. If that happens, the briefing will have accomplished a small miracle.

PAGING ALL SCANDALS

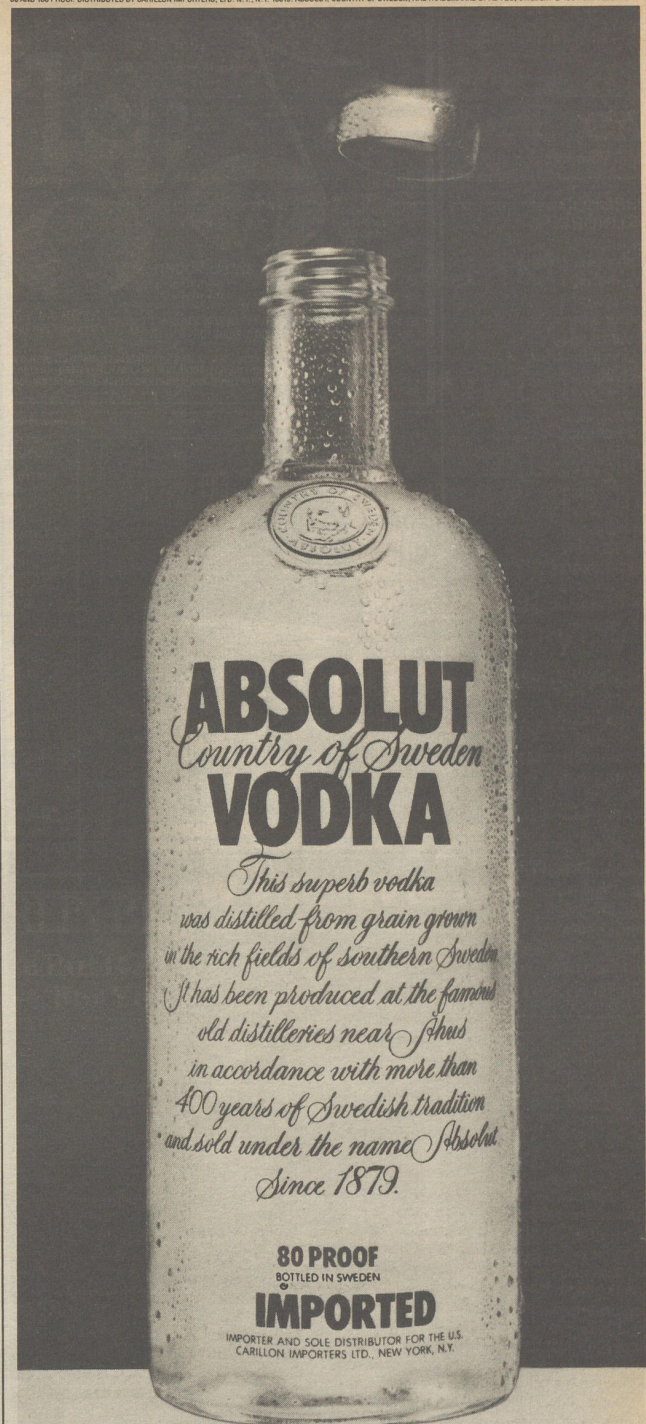
While foreign gays and lesbians were crowding the hearing room to capacity, most Washington reporters were standing in a hallway two floors above, giving extensive coverage to the big "nonevent" in Washington this summer. That, of course, is the story of the alleged sex-and-drug ring involving underage Capitol pages.

Just about everything surrounding this scandal has been a misnomer, including the suggestion that there is a scandal at all. The story ostensibly began when two former pages charged that members of Congress had asked them for sex in return for promised favors, including promotions. This charge should have fallen apart as soon as reporters checked out that pages can't be given promotions, and that no member of Congress has ever even asked for any page to get a special assignment. But checking out facts is too boring, so most of the press has been chasing the rabbits of rumor through Capitol corridors, a pastime sure to exhaust anyone.

It has already occurred to other reporters that there is very little behind the charges of page-boy sex scandals. However, instead of slinking away in embarrassment at having been caught out in such an obviously hokey story, the Washington press corps is now tearing after a story of high government officials using call boys and possibly falling victim to an alleged Soviet KGB spy ring designed to entrap homosexuals in Washington.

Never mind, of course, that there has not been a single instance in the history of FBI surveillance of any gay person selling out his or her country in order to maintain the closet. The mere possibility that such a thing might happen is sufficient not only to keep the FBI involved in gay closets, but also to create front-page stories about alleged Soviet attempts to blackmail vulnerable gays across the nation. If a comparison is needed (and apparently the nation's press corps could use guide dogs to find their way across the street), it would be that most spies sell

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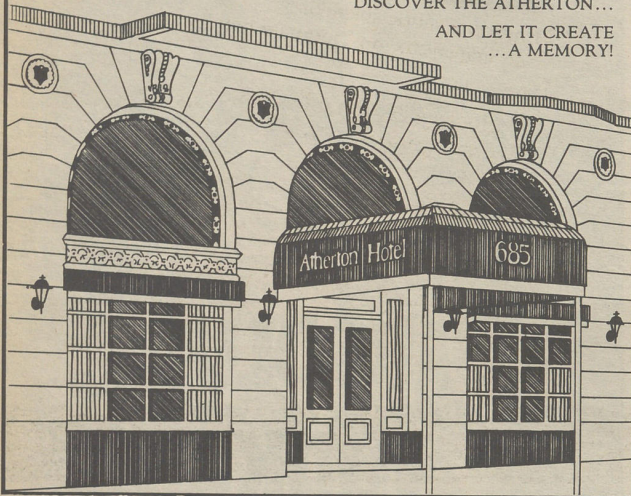
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out their country because they want to make money. Why not, then, have the FBI infiltrate and copy all financial records of everyone with access to classified information, including monthly reports on their mortgage payments and any possible loan defaults. At least the argument could be made that in cases of financial weakness there is more than mere supposition to go on.

Anyway, Washington is now awash with lists of alleged homosexuals in Congress, in the White House and at the Pentagon. One can't help but suspect that circulation of such lists would stop forthwith if they also included alleged homosexuals in the Washington press corps, the D.C. police and the FBI. By now nearly every member of Congress has been included on one or another list, so we may now truly say that there are no innocents left in Washington.

This will not prevent the story from moving still further afield to justify the argument that something was going on that readers should know. The latest chapter has the dread problem spreading to New York City, where for the past three years there has allegedly been "a high-level sex ring at the United Nations involving the procurement of young boys for foreign diplomats." According to one Washington investigative reporter, "the ring is said by investigators to number a dozen permanent U.N. employees, including high consular officials," according to one well-placed source with first-hand knowledge of the allegations.

According to that reporter, the allegations include the story of a foreign domestic worker who was kept at an embassy against her will and sexually abused (sort of a sexual "any port in a storm" approach among these foreign diplomats, it seems) and a rather lurid account of how the ring works. "The normal method of procurement, the source explained, was for U.N. personnel to import a mother and child to work in a foreign diplomatic mission. Sexual advances are made, and if the child is susceptible, the 'chicken' is passed around by the ring. If the mother complains, she is sent home."

One interesting footnote to all this: According to gay sources in Washington, the police informant who assisted in the raid on Washington male escort services is now in New York, allegedly working with a grand jury there on a similar project. Look for the story to open in a theater near you soon.

THE FBI AND HOMOS. CONT'D.

Meanwhile, the FBI has sent a note to Congress outlining how it plans to respond to charges that it has been spying on gays for more than 30 years. First, it will provide information only on files opened since January 1977, thus conveniently leaving out all the files opened before that date and perhaps still open at this time. Secondly, it will research only the area dealing with national security, thus leaving out all the other areas that investigations have allegedly been concerned with. (For example, in *The ADVOCATE* article, Issue 346, it was shown that the Mattachine Society had been filed under organizations that were misusing police uniforms.) Anyway, none of this has impressed Rep. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), who requested the FBI response, and it is expected that he will ask the FBI to get it together as first requested. The

FBI had planned to release its sanitized explanations in about a month.

It should also be noted that during this entire exchange, the FBI has been telling Washington press corps members that it is important to have an FBI presence in gay bars in places like Washington, New York and the Silicon Valley area of California. What has been particularly disappointing is the number of reporters who have responded to this news by saying it makes sense to them.

FALWELL'S FOLLIES

Rev. Jerry Falwell has been in the news again, this time for telling lies. Apparently Falwell sent out a letter asking for donations to replace a radio transmitter tower that vandals had knocked over. What Falwell forgot to mention in his letter was that the entire loss was covered by insurance. Now Falwell says he will tell those who sent money that the dollars will go for improved facilities, but that if they misunderstood and want their money back, they can request a refund.

Meanwhile, another report on Falwell has just surfaced that should interest *ADVOCATE* readers. At the request of the Laucks Foundation, Dr. Walter Capps, a professor of religious studies at UC Santa Barbara, spent a week in Lynchburg, Va., to look at Falwell's work. In a report to the foundation, dated Feb. 4, 1982, Capps describes a Wednesday-night prayer service, attended by more than 4,000 people, which included this episode starring Our Friend Jerry:

"He tells of a gay bar that has just opened in downtown Lynchburg, not far from the City Hall. He asks the song leader if he knows the address. Startled, his sheepish response 'no' brings laughter to the congregation. Falwell tells about the night he and his wife sat in their car across the street from the bar and watched 'all of the strange people going in and out of there.' He tells of the two male associates he had directed to go into a gay bar in Washington, not far from the White House, just to find out what was going on. 'We dressed them up real sweet,' he says, 'got 'em smelling good, had them wear these tight britches, got them sashaying back and forth, and gave them a small camera. Trouble is they got so fascinated with what they saw that they forgot to get any pictures. [Laughter]. You know what I should have done that night? I should have telephoned the bar and said, 'Hello, this is Jerry Falwell. Is my photographer there?' That's what I should have done [more laughter]."

Alka Seltzer, anyone? ●

CORRECTION: In the recent *ADVOCATE* article on the FBI ("Has the FBI Been in Your Closet?" Issue 346), the quotations attributed to Dr. C.A. Tripp regarding the Kinsey Institute's involvement with the CIA were in error. The quotations should have been attributed to a second source, close to Kinsey at that time, and not to Tripp. Tripp maintains that Kinsey did have conversations with American security officials, including those from the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and later the CIA, but does not specifically state that advice was given on the operation of a brothel. Tripp's corrections of the quotations attributed to him were provided to *The ADVOCATE* before release of the story but following printing. *The ADVOCATE* and author Larry Bush deeply regret the error.