

**BULLETIN**  
A man who was HIV-tested  
without his consent filed suit  
Thursday against  
Nashville's Baptist Hospital  
and a local doctor.  
Full details in next week's  
Dare.

# Dare

Merry Christmas,  
Dare-ling

free!

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 40

THE GAY AND LESBIAN NEWSPAPER

DECEMBER 23-29, 1988

## ACLU Hotline Tolls TN AIDS Discrimination

By DEBORAH BURKS  
Staff Writer

In addition to documenting discrimination and violence against gay men and lesbians in Tennessee, the hotline established by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has also collected information on AIDS-related discrimination. A year-end summary of hotline calls reveals that 13 such incidents have been reported to the hotline since its creation last March.

The reported incidents, occurring mainly in Nashville, Memphis, and Chattanooga, include employment termination, refusal of housing, denial of health or life insurance, and discriminatory treatment by courtroom personnel — all based on the individual's real or suspected HIV-antibody status.

Julie Berbiglia, ACLU administrative assistant, notes that in addition to the hotline calls the group receives from people concerned about testing and discrimination, ACLU has also seen an emergence of revisions in employee handbooks regarding these issues.

"Many people call because they're concerned about HIV-antibody testing," said Berbiglia. "Some companies are requiring these before employment is given and people should look closely at the employment contracts they are signing. If an employed person is asked to take the HIV-antibody test, they should report this to us (ACLU) and consult with an attorney."

In most states, firing or other adverse employment action against a person with AIDS is prohibited by laws protecting those with

### AIDS-Related Incidents Reported to ACLU, 1988



Thirteen incidents of AIDS-related discrimination in Tennessee were reported to the ACLU hotline between the project's start in March and December 15, 1988.  
—DARE STAFF GRAPHIC

handicaps or disabilities. However, according to ACLU of Tennessee executive director Hedy Weinberg, Tennessee's handicap employment act no longer offers such coverage to people living with AIDS.

"Two years ago changes to the state law dealing with employment of people with handicaps were being made," explained Weinberg. "Senator Rochelle introduced an amendment to exclude people with infectious and contagious diseases, with the primary purpose of excluding from protection people with AIDS or positive HIV-antibody status."

Weinberg says that a primary focus of ACLU for the 1989 legislative session will be to amend the handicap employment law so that

continued on page 3

## Judge: "Queers" Deserved Murder, Killer Justified

By JEFF ELLIS  
Managing Editor

A Texas judge's admission that he gave a convicted killer a lighter sentence because his victims were gay men has resulted in harsh criticism from lesbian and gay leaders throughout the country.

In Dallas, activists Monday staged a protest that attracted more than 300 people and a previously scheduled AIDS action Tuesday night turned into an indictment of Judge Jack Hampton's statements to a Dallas newspaper reporter.

"I put prostitutes and gays at about the same level, and I'd be hard put to give somebody life for killing a prostitute," the judge said. Hampton's comments were reported in last Friday's editions of the *Dallas Times Herald*.

Hampton gave murderer Richard Bednarski, 18, a 30-year sentence instead of the life sentence sought by prosecutors in the case. Bednarski was convicted in the shooting deaths of Tommy Lee Trimble, 34, and Lloyd Griffin, 27.

"I didn't much care for queers cruising the streets picking up teen-age boys. I've got a teenage boy," Hampton told the paper.

Hampton further indicated he would have given Bednarski a harsher sentence if his victims had been "a couple of housewives out shopping, not hurting anybody."

After Hampton's Nov. 28 decision to give Bednarski a lighter sentence than was sought by prosecutors in the case, a complaint was filed with the Texas Commission on Judicial Conduct by the Texas Human Rights Foundation (THRIF).

John Thomas, spokesperson for the Dallas Gay Alliance, said Tuesday that Hampton's published remarks have resulted in "an outpouring of outrage, not only in the lesbian and gay community, but among all minorities."

"Many people who have read the story have probably said, 'The Dallas crazies are at it again,'" Thomas said, adding that the phone lines into the Gay Community Center in Dallas have been flooded with phone calls about the incident.

"A number of people are calling to ask what they can do about this. We hope that we will be able to sustain the level of outrage to remove Judge Hampton from the bench when he's up for re-election in 1990," Thomas said.

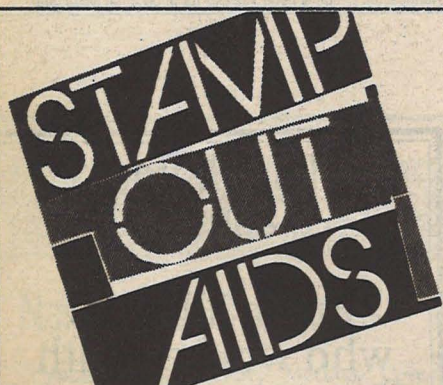
A protest at noon Monday attracted more than 300 people to voice their anger at Hampton's actions. An action already set for Tuesday night to commemorate the more than 1,100 dead from AIDS in Dallas County also provided a forum to voice opposition to the judge's remarks.

Thomas discounted the theory that Hampton's remarks were attributable to AIDS hysteria.

"I think he would have made those same comments ten years ago," Thomas said. "The scary thing is that he thought he could say it and get no reaction. He should go back into the closet with others like him and be a closeted redneck."

Nashville attorney Abby Rubinfeld, former legal director for the New York-based Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, termed Hampton's actions "the most serious trans

continued on page 3



Nashville CARES has launched a new fundraising project. The AIDS service and education organization will sell stamps and buttons with the three-color Stamp Out AIDS logo.

The stamps, modeled on the Easter and Christmas seals programs, are intended both to draw attention to AIDS and to raise money for the National AIDS Network (NAN) and for local AIDS service organizations, according to NAN project director John Gilnes.

Nashville CARES executive director Sandee Potter said that the stamps and buttons are now on sale, \$1 for either a sheet of six stamps or a single button from CARES staff and volunteers. Nashville community bars will soon sell the buttons and stamps, she added.

NAN will process all money from the sale, but Nashville CARES will then receive 90% of the money CARES turns in. •

## Tennesseans On NGLTF Board

From STAFF REPORTS

Attorney Abby Rubinfeld and editorial assistant Gregory Tennison-Fisher have been elected to the board of directors of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), according to a statement released by the group.

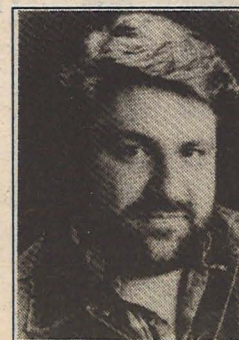
Rubinfeld, former legal director of the New York-based Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, is now in private practice with the Nashville firm Cheatham & Palermo. She is regarded in legal circles as one of the nation's leading experts on AIDS and discrimination legal issues, and wrote the



Abby Rubinfeld

first U.S. legal guide to AIDS issues.

Fisher is a member of the steering committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance (T-GALA), a volunteer buddy with Nashville CARES, and was a founder of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Task Force and ACT UP/Nashville in addition to having been actively involved in the Tennessee March on Washington Committee and the steering committee of Nashville Gay Pride Week 1988, according to the NGLTF statement.



Gregory Tennison-Fisher

The 13,000-member group elected eight new members, four women and four men, to its 24-member national board. •

### INSIDE

The best books  
of the year, sort of:  
Book Editor  
Sherre Dryden  
picks 'em,  
page 4.

Don't miss  
*Queertoons*,  
on the back page.





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## Dates

### 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 901 327-4145.

##### 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

##### Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Support Group, 6:30pm. HIV Education Support Group, 6pm. Family Support Group, 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

##### Vanderbilt Lambda Association

Meeting for gay and lesbian Vanderbilt students, faculty, staff and alumni. Vanderbilt Divinity School, Room G 23. 5:30pm. Info 615 385-4283.

##### AI-Ann

Open meeting, MCC, 6:30pm.

##### Nashville CARES

HIV Education Support Groups, 7pm. Info 615 385-1510.

##### Sober Sisters (Lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous)

Closed meeting, MCC, 8pm.

#### Wednesdays

##### Sex Addicts Anonymous

Closed meeting for gay men and lesbians. MCC, 5:30pm.

##### Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Couples Support Group, 5:30pm. AIDS/ARC Support Group, 6:30pm. HIV Support Group, 7pm. Info 615 385-1510.

##### MTSU Lambda Association

Meeting for lesbian and gay Middle Tennessee State University students, faculty, staff, and alumni, 7pm. Info 615 890-3787.

#### Thursdays

##### Nashville CARES

HIV Support Group, 6:30pm. Visualization group, 6:30pm. Info 615 385-1510.

##### 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

##### Sexuals Anonymous

Closed meeting, MCC, 5pm.

##### Gay Parents Support Group

Meeting, MCC, 1st Friday only, 7pm. Info 615 292-0817 or 615 320-0288.

##### Alcoholics Anonymous Program Study Group

Meeting, Belmont United Methodist, 7:30pm.

#### Saturdays

##### Nashville CARES

AIDS/ARC Support Group, 4pm. Info 615 385-1510.

##### Metropolitan Community Church

Mortgage Meal, all you can eat, 7:30pm. \$5.

##### Gay Cable Network

Cablecast, Nashville Viacom Channel 35 (Community Access Television), 8pm.

#### Sundays

##### Metropolitan Community Church

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

## SPECIAL Events

### Saturday, December 24

**Christmas Eve** Word and Song. Special holiday service. MCC, 131 15th Av North, Nashville. 8:30pm, following Mortgage Meal. Free. Info 615 320-0288.

### Sunday, December 25

#### CHRISTMAS DAY

### Monday, December 26

**Benefit Comedy** Big Ed does standup for Nashville CARES, at Zanies Comedy Showplace, 2025 8th Av South, Nashville. 8:30pm. \$15. Info 615 385-1510.



BIG ED

### Tuesday, December 27

**Dinner** Caring and Sharing Night. Informal social evening. Black and White Men Together, Memphis. French Quarter Inn, Overton Square, Memphis. 7pm.

### Saturday, December 31

#### NEW YEAR'S EVE

**Watch Night Service** Special holiday service. MCC, 131 15th Av North, Nashville. 11:30pm. Free. Info 615 320-0288.

### Sunday, January 1, 1989

#### NEW YEAR'S DAY

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, sponsor, and a contact person's name with address and/or phone number for verification. Deadline noon Tuesday for publication next Friday.

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## ...anti-gay judge

continued from page 1

gression a judge can commit."

"That sort of behavior is the most serious transgression. Here is a man who is supposed to do his best to see that justice is served, but he did not do that," Rubinfeld said.

Instead, she said, Hampton is "encouraging people to engage in anti-gay violence."

"This case doesn't have any direct implications in Tennessee because the judge is not a member of the judiciary here, but this incident does have a chilling effect on people in our community," Rubinfeld continued. "We must be vigilant that nothing like this happens here."

Sue Hyde of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), speaking from her Washington office said she was "disgusted" by Hampton's remarks.

"Immediately, I thought that this bigot should be removed from the bench," Hyde said. "I hope the Dallas Gay Alliance will fight his re-election in 1990."

William Wayborn, president of the Alliance, said Hampton's remarks will encourage the public to work to remove him from the bench.

"Judge Hampton said it himself: No one will remember this in 1990. But we will remember," Wayborn said.

"The message has gone out that the lives of gay men and lesbians are not as valuable as lives of heterosexuals," Hyde said. "Sometimes it takes some plain and simple words to highlight what bigotry is."

While Hyde termed Hampton's remarks "revolting," she said the incident can "change a lot of minds" about increasing acts of violence directed at lesbians and gay men.

Paula Ettelbrick, current director of Lambda, said the Texas incident should not prompt a

"lynch-mob mentality," but rather should galvanize activists to bring about change in the judicial system nationwide.

"It's not so much that the judge didn't give a life sentence, but that he didn't give a harsh sentence because he thought they (the victims) were somehow asking for it," Ettelbrick said.

She said the "real horror" of the incident is how it exemplifies "the inequitable way in which justice is handed out" in this country.

"What we have to remember is that not too long ago there wouldn't have been a conviction in a case like this, so in some ways this can be viewed as a small victory that the killer was even convicted," Ettelbrick said.

"I think it's an outrageous example, but not an untypical example, of the homophobia that pervades the judicial system in this country," said Lambda staff attorney Sandy Lowe.

"I think the media coverage of the incident will help to keep it before the public and let them see how truly outrageous this is."

Ettelbrick said that Lambda would probably issue a memorandum in support of the complaint filed by the THRF.

Already editorials condemning Hampton's remarks have appeared in papers throughout the country, including one in Tuesday's editions of the *Washington Post* which said the judge was unqualified for the bench.

NGLTF's Hyde said a case similar to the Bednarski case, currently pending in District of Columbia courts, will likely be effected by the *Post* editorial.

"The *Post* editorial will not go unnoticed by judges in the District," Hyde said. •

## ...ACLU hotline

continued from page 1

it once again covers people with AIDS. Reports to the hotline of healthcare and housing discrimination emphasize the need for the introduction of general anti-discrimination legislation in this session, she said.

"Having coverage of AIDS restored to the state handicap law would make a difference in

most of the calls we receive," commented Berbiglia.

"However, it's important for AIDS-related incidents to be reported because this is new stuff and the ACLU is still investigating possible avenues of litigation," she added.

The ACLU anti-discrimination hotline number is (615) 256-7028. •

## Passages

### Nashvillian Ron Rush

Vanderbilt University Medical Center laboratory technician Ron Rush died Friday, December 9 in Nashville.

Rush died of liver failure as a result of complications arising from AIDS and hepatitis. He was originally from Gainsboro, Tennessee, and had lived in Los Angeles,

New York City, and Atlanta.

Rush had also worked as a lab technician at other area hospitals prior to his illness. He was 35.

Survivors include 5 brothers and friends Jay Maupin, Bill Brackman and Eddie Hollis. •

Editor's note: Obituary information should be sent to *Dare*, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204, or phone (615) 292-9623.

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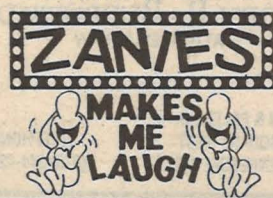
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Dare

December 23-29, 1988

# Best of the B



Audre Lorde, author of *A Burst of Light*. —PHOTO JOAN E. BIREN (JEB)

By SHERRE DRYDEN  
Book Editor

Selecting the "ten best gay and lesbian books of 1988" is problematic for a number of reasons.

First, *Dare* didn't exist until late March and it was some time later that I began reading with thoughts of possible book reviews. What did I read in January and February, anyway?

Then there's the all-important question of what books qualify. Some are obvious, particularly nonfiction. Others are not so easy. Edmund White and Allan Hollinghurst are definitely eligible, but what about Iris Murdoch or Alice Adams? Does having a gay or lesbian character make a book qualify? Does he/she have to speak a minimum number of lines?

Does a book qualify only if the author is gay or lesbian? What about lesbian or gay authors writing about heterosexuals or early childhood education? Surely I'm not responsible for knowing the sexual orientation of every writer in the U.S.A.

Finally, what about some evidently very fine books, like Edmund White's *The Beautiful Room is Empty*, that I haven't yet read? It hardly seems fair to disqualify a book because of my laziness or busy schedule.

Probably to my readers' annoyance, I decided not to answer any of those questions. What follows is my very personal list of best gay and lesbian books for 1988. You figure out what the criteria were.

*The Swimming Pool Library*. Allan Hollinghurst. New York: Random House. 1988. \$16.95.

Before reading *The Swimming Pool Library* I had been longing to be sucked into a book; to be so captivated by mood and characters and

a story that my reality ceased to exist as long as the novel went on. *The Swimming Pool Library* gets my vote for the best book, period, of the year.

For me, it is Hollinghurst's ability to evoke moods that is the book's chief strength.

The historical documents, like the excerpts from the elderly Lord Nantwich's diaries, would have destroyed the book had they seemed silly or fake. Instead, Hollinghurst's sense of an earlier time seems so accurate it is hard to believe he is not a contemporary of, say, Evelyn Waugh. This romanticized, filmed-in-soft-focus past is successfully opposed with the tense, often violent, sexuality of the "modern" characters. The dark, steamy swimming pool and locker room scenes are highly visual and intensely erotic.

*The Book and the Brotherhood*. Iris Murdoch. New York: Viking, 1988. 607 pp. \$19.95.

This is not Murdoch's best, unfortunately, and is perhaps not the ideal starting point for someone new to Murdoch (I'd recommend *A Fairly Honorable Defeat*). But it is a wonderful book, full of the unstated moral tension, the dark comedy and the dangerous intersection of lives that characterizes Murdoch's work.

More to the point of "best gay and lesbian books," *The Book and the Brotherhood* appears to feature what many gay men and lesbians claim to long for—incidentally gay characters. You know, characters whose sexual orientation is known but has no impact on the plot. If such a thing can exist (and, given current social construction, I don't think it can), Murdoch's Gerard Henshaw is it.

Gerard is the center of a group of men and women, most friends since their university days at Oxford, who have in common some emotional tie to the monomaniacal Marxist genius David Crimond. Through Gerard, Jenkin Riderhood and Sinclair Curtland, Murdoch continues her equation of goodness and homosexuality.

*A Burst of Light*. Audre Lorde. Ithaca: Firebrand, 1988. 134 pp. \$7.95, paper.

If people could read only one book about being a lesbian, or being black, or being a woman,

Patrick Gale, auth



# of '88: Books

it should be *A Burst of Light*.

*Kansas in August*. Patrick Gale. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1988. 140 pp. \$15.95.

Patrick Gale writes books in which characters have parallel lives that eventually intersect, sometimes surprisingly, sometimes tragically, sometimes romantically.

*Kansas in August* is like that — surprising and romantic, but not tragic. In fact, it has a wonderful happy ending that I won't spoil by telling, but take my word you'll like it. If you're sentimental it will make you cry.

If this all sounds not very weighty and worthy of being called best, remember that books need to make us laugh and cry, too. Gale has some serious points to make but his primary achievement is that he creates interesting, enjoyable characters that you fall in love with and want to meet. Some of them are gay.

*The Amazon and the Page*. Natalie Clifford Barney and Renée Vivien. Karla Jay. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988. 152 pp.

Natalie Barney and Renée Vivien have long deserved more than the intriguing but voyeuristic biographies written about them, mostly by men. Although Jay's book is a scholarly critical



Iris Murdoch, author of *The Book and the Brotherhood*. —PHOTO FRED MARCELLINO

examination of Barney and Vivien's works, and the relationship between their lives and works, *The Amazon and the Page* is accessible to readers who have a more casual interest in the two writers.

*Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time: An Anthology*. Carl More and Joan Larkin, editors. New York: Saint Martin's, 1988. 448 pp. \$24.95.

*Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time* complements the absurdly titled Penguin *Book of Homosexual Verse* (New York: Penguin, 1986), by concentrating on the more popular and familiar 20th century writers necessarily given less space by Penguin's more expansive scope.

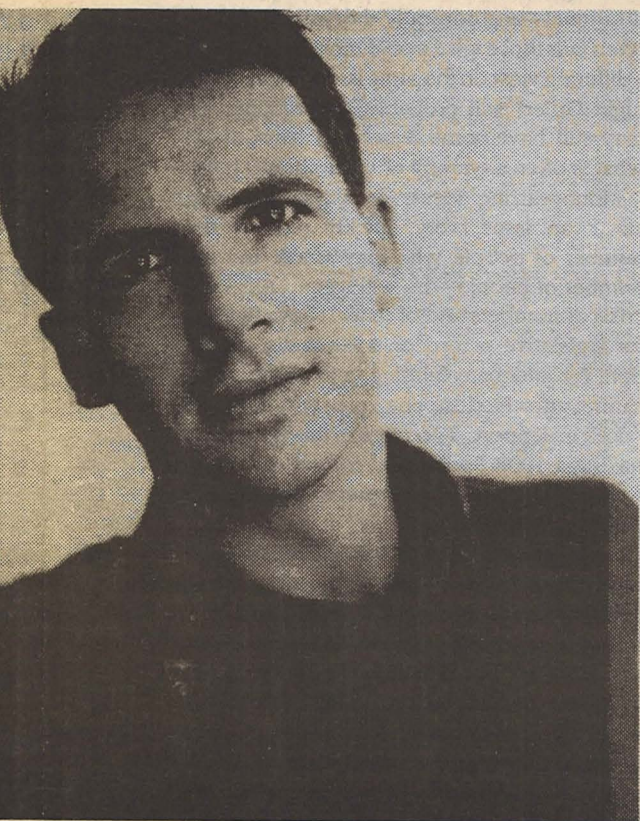
The fact that two large, mainstream publishers have issued collections of homoerotic poetry and poetry by gay and lesbian writers says something — I'm not sure what — about the movement for gay and lesbian rights. Mainstream publishers have for a long time recognized a market for fiction (if we didn't read them, novels would at least attract the prurient interests of heterosexuals) and self-help books.

The publication of the *Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* was hailed as a landmark by feminists and educators in women's studies. It may be a long time before *Gay and Lesbian Poetry in Our Time* turns up on reading lists at colleges across the country, and I imagine that more copies of these books will be bought by libraries than by individuals.


Still, I'm pleased St. Martin's (as well as Penguin) has recognized that the time for a serious anthology of lesbian and gay poetry has arrived. They've done a good job, too, with a nice balance between male and female writers, political and erotic subjects, and obvious and sub-text references to homosexuality.

Special recognition should go to the 15th anniversary edition of Rita Mae Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*. Originally published in 1973, *Rubyfruit* has become a classic.

Unlike most "lesbian classics," however, *Rubyfruit Jungle* is both well-written and confirming. Its impact on heterosexual society as well as on gay men and lesbians is impossible to measure. Bantam's decision to honor Brown with the special edition is official recognition of *Rubyfruit Jungle*'s importance.




Gale, author of *Kansas in August* —PHOTO MARK DOUET



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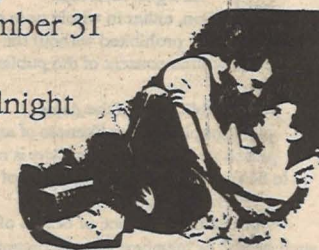
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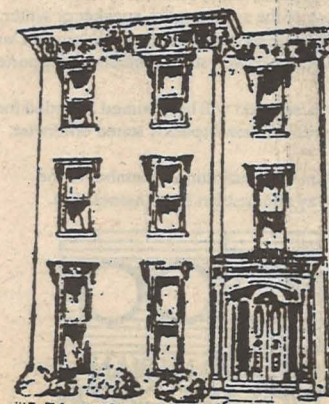


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# Dare

The Lesbian and Gay Newspaper  
From the Heart of the American South

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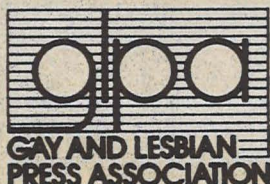
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## Views

### Getting By with Murder

DALLAS, TEXAS, JUDGE JACK HAMPTON has exposed himself. He is a bigot, and the most dangerous kind: He is a small bigot with a little power, and it has gone to his Neanderthal-sized brain.

This man has openly admitted that he thinks the lives of homosexual people are not valuable, that it is okay for heterosexual people to harm and even murder homosexuals!

The judge said, "I put prostitutes and gays at about the same level, and I'd be hard put to give somebody life for killing a prostitute."

Now, there are many in the lesbian and gay community who are going to be outraged by that statement because, first, Hampton is saying that gay men (it is difficult to imagine a person like Hampton even acknowledging that women are important enough that he would include lesbians) are something less than human, and are thus entitled to something less than the full protection of the law. Second, there are those who will be offended by the judge's equation of homosexual people with prostitutes.

And here is where we offer caution.

Prostitutes are human beings. No matter what one thinks of the idea of selling sexual services, the fact remains that many prostitutes are women with few other choices. The very nature of our society is such that the poor have few options. For many of these people, prostitution is the only thing that stands between them and starvation, or between their children and starvation.

Let us not forget that, we, too, are all outlaws. Tennessee, like Texas and many other states, criminalizes sexual conduct between people of the same sex. So Hampton's analogy is not necessarily surprising.

The truly horrible thing about what this man has said is the attitude it betrays: that some human beings are not fully human, are not worthy of the protection of society.

We are used to being told that we are not worthy of protection from discrimination, that we are not worthy of having our relationships recognized, that we are not worthy to keep our own children. Hampton's remarks are notable only because of their intense inhumanity and viciousness.

This man has no business being a judge. He is not worthy to dispense justice. He should be removed from office and disbarred. •

*The truly  
horrible thing  
about what this  
man has said is  
the attitude it  
betrays.*

## Soapbox

### Wait Until Midnight

"Truth is so great a thing that we must not disdain any medium that will lead us to it." — Montaigne

By CAROLE CUNNINGHAM  
Staff Writer

Although 62% of all reported AIDS cases are among gay and bisexual men, they are rarely the focus of television dramas "about" the subject of AIDS. With few exceptions, TV's people with AIDS are either children or women, most of whom have been infected with the virus through transfusion.

So NBC's announcement that an episode of "Midnight Caller" would focus on a bisexual man with AIDS, might have been cause for celebration. Instead, it was cause for alarm.

The original script focused on a bisexual man named Mike Barnes who knowingly and maliciously spreads the virus to his sex partners, male and female. Jack Killian (Gary Cole), ex-cop and late night radio talk show host, tracked down the killer to make the streets and bars of San Francisco safe. This first script ended with one of Barnes' female victims gunning him down in the street, his body carried away in a toxic waste bag.

AIDS activists were rightly alarmed by the show. In a city where education in the gay community and effective leadership from health officials have brought the rate of new HIV infections near zero, it's no wonder gay leaders and city officials took offense at "Midnight Caller's" premise that in 1988 San Francisco, a bisexual man could spread HIV to so many unsuspecting "innocents."

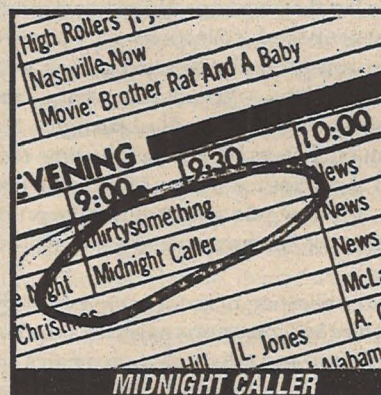
ACT UP (Aids Coalition to Unleash Power)/San Francisco took to the streets in protest on location shots for "Midnight Caller" while other activists and health officials took their concerns to Lorimar and NBC board rooms. The ruckus brought script changes, including a change in the ending: now the bisexual man's life would be saved by radio star Killian, and the script would focus on the tragic effects of the man's denial of his illness rather than his malicious intent to spread the virus.

The show I saw was, with a few exceptions, intelligent (for television), compassionate (for prime time), and surely educational for the

non-gay, non-activist sort (most of America).

When a female friend sleeps with bisexual Barnes and tests HIV-positive (saying later she thought he was just "joking" when he told her he cruised leather bars in the Castro), Killian sets out to find Barnes and to educate his audience about the compassion the AIDS crisis demands ("it's a litmus test for all of us") and about the groups the virus affects ("AIDS is not a gay disease—it affects all of us").

Killian's crusade takes him on a journey



through San Francisco's gay and straight bars as he tries to find the suave but deadly Barnes. Killian shares a poignant conversation with Ross, Barnes' ex-lover who is dying from AIDS. Shunned by family, friends and now his lover, Killian agrees that Ross doesn't deserve the treatment he's getting: "No, you don't. Nobody does." Killian talks to a gay bar owner who explains how the gay community has educated itself, that Barnes is "an aberration. He's not one of us."

Were the show's critics right? Yes and no. They were right to demand that the producers remove a scene in which a PWA, a bisexual, is gunned down in the streets — a scene that would undoubtedly be seen to condone violence against people with AIDS, gays, and bisexuals. Had activists not been in the streets and behind the scenes, the script would not have been changed. The producers and writers were educated (at least for one episode) to such a degree that they incorporated the activists' demands into the script.

"Midnight Caller" will never be a textbook film for AIDS education: it did not adequately emphasize the importance of safer sex, rather advocating abstinence and staying out of bars. Because safer sex was not discussed, the show implied that someone with AIDS can have no sex at all without endangering others. The show *did* emphasize the terror the illness holds for those who have been diagnosed with AIDS, and that the denial PWAs may experience should be treated through counseling, not incarceration. Killian gave misinformed callers practical information and plead for compassion and tolerance: "it's about individual rights and living your own life."

Still, activists protested the show. Montaigne called the inability to endure ways of thinking different from our own a "tyrannical ill humor"—and ironically, the tyranny of ideas often fails those who would most benefit from a differing view on the same issue. While "Midnight Caller" will probably be forgotten, we may still have some lessons to learn about what is often a tyranny of ideas about AIDS.

Monopolizing ideas, or ways of talking about an issue, very quickly reduces the number of people who may speak and the number of people who will listen. AIDS is a crisis of numbers and of time. Those fighting for legislative protection against discrimination, for adequate funding, and much more, cannot afford to lose one voice that might be raised in support. Too often in the interests of having a 100% "politically correct" standard, we lose the ability to communicate with supportive viewpoints.

AIDS activists made "Midnight Caller's" episode about AIDS a better show with a more compassionate message. But the same zeal that made one message better might silence another—not because the message is misinformed or dangerous, but because it is not the exact mirror of ours. As AIDS itself cuts across barriers of age, race, sexual orientation, and gender, so should what is written and spoken about AIDS speak in many voices to many different listeners. The lives being lost are too precious to do anything less. •



## Coffee dearest.



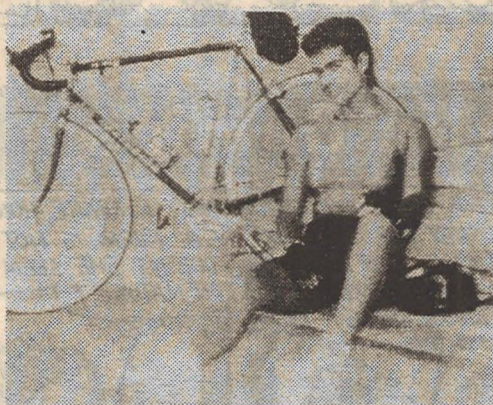
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# Notices

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

• Button, button, who's got the button? Wear your Dare button or your Stamp Out AIDS button during the holidays and you could win tickets, calendars and other great prizes. We'll be looking for you in Memphis and Nashville. Button up!

• Transsexual/transgenderal support group forming in Nashville. Strictly confidential. DARE DRAWER 26.

• Watch GCN/Nashville Tuesdays at 9pm, Saturdays at 8pm. Or both! Exclusively on Nashville's Cable 35.

• Help stop the proposed homophobic changes in Tennessee's crimes against nature law. Send your contribution to Advance, the political action committee of the Tennessee Gay & Lesbian Alliance. Freedom — the best Christmas gift of all. Advance, Box 24181, Nashville, TN 37202. Not tax-deductible. Info 615 385-4283

• **LONG HOURS. HARD WORK. NO PAY.** Dare is accepting applications from writers. Learn community-oriented journalism, and be one of the best. Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, 37204 or phone 615-292-9623.

• Gay or lesbian teenagers who would like to meet others and are interested in forming a support group in Nashville: write Box 158002, Nashville 37215-0082. All correspondence held in strictest confidence.

## REAL ESTATE

• Rmmate needed M'boro. Walk MTSU. Non-smoker. PWA welcome. Fireplace, cable. \$200 + utils. 615 893-7709.

• Great house in Green Hills! LF seeks roommate for 2BR house. Available Jan 1. No smoking. \$250 + utils. 615 292-0817, leave message.

• Waverly-Belmont House. 3 bdrm, 2bath central H/A. deposit, lease \$450/month 615 2973865.

## PERSONALS

• Have you advertised in the personals? I want to talk to you for a news story about love between the lines. Your name is confidential, of course. Write to Jeff Ellis, Managing Editor, Dare, Box 40422, Nashville, TN 37204.

• Dahling FiFi: u may want 2 check yr \$3 billing. I've been playing the baby ka-zoo since B4 the time of the hallowed weenie. Neither kings nor queens of orient G have seen such an immaculate contraption. Platonically yrs, Butch.

• Hey, Butch: Is it true you're going to be the Virgin Mary in the school play? Ah, yes, the inarticulate contraceptive...Oh, well. At least they stopped putting cheese in the guacamole. Yours, PheePhee.

All ads run two consecutive weeks and cost  
• \$10 for up to 100 characters  
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We reserve the right to edit ads for length, and to reject any ad. Sexually explicit or exploitative ads will not be accepted. No ad will be accepted without signature and advance payment in full.

Response drawers are available if you do not wish to use your own address.

To respond to a response drawer ad, write to:

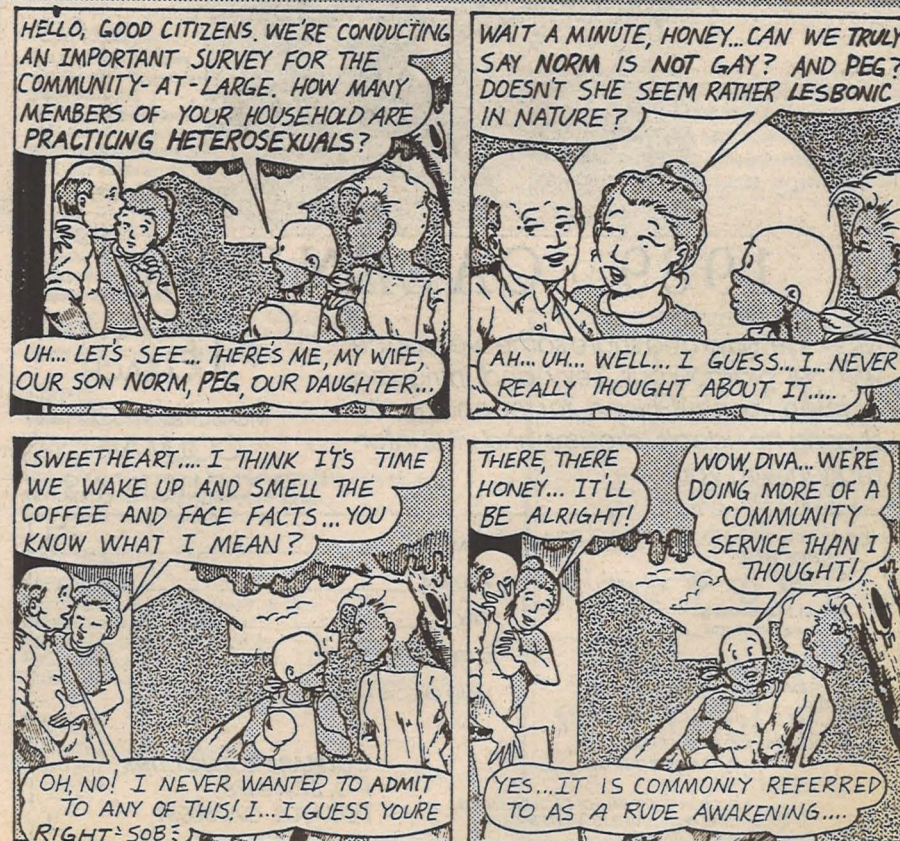
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+ BOLD CAPS charge \$ 5.00

= Subtotal \$ \_\_\_\_\_

x number of two-week periods \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL COST \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Please enclose check or money order for total amount, payable to Dare.

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\$10

\$20