

Howard, Webber await questioning in sexual assault case

Charges have not been filed yet against the Wizards' Chris Webber or Juwan Howard

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Police plan to question Washington Wizards forwards Juwan Howard and Chris Webber concerning a woman's accusation that she was sexually assaulted during a party at Howard's home.

No charges were filed Monday, but authorities in the Montgomery County, Md., police department said Webber and Howard would be

interviewed when they returned to the area.

The Wizards play the Bulls tonight and the team practiced in the morning in Chicago. Howard and Webber walked off the United Center court without comment.

General manager Wes Unseld was to make a statement in the afternoon in Washington. Coach Bernie Bickerstaff did not address the issue, saying his job was to prepare the team for tonight's game.

"We'll let Wes take care of the other things," he said.

When asked what effect the in-

vestigation had on his team, Bickerstaff said: "You never need distractions, but it's a part of life. I think the Bulls are our distraction."

Investigators searched the players' homes after a woman called authorities about 3:45 a.m. Monday, police spokesman George Ludington said. Police also were interviewing other people at the party that started Sunday night and ended early Monday.

Billy Martin, a lawyer for Howard, told WTTG-TV that no warrants were pending for his client.

Howard told The Washington Post

the accusations were "ludicrous." He said, "It depresses you because it's a distraction to your family, especially when it's totally untrue."

Following practice Monday in Washington, Webber told WUSA-TV he has not been contacted by police.

Unseld told the Post he knew little about the situation.

"We haven't heard from the authorities on any specific individual, and we'll wait to hear from them before making any direct comment," he said.

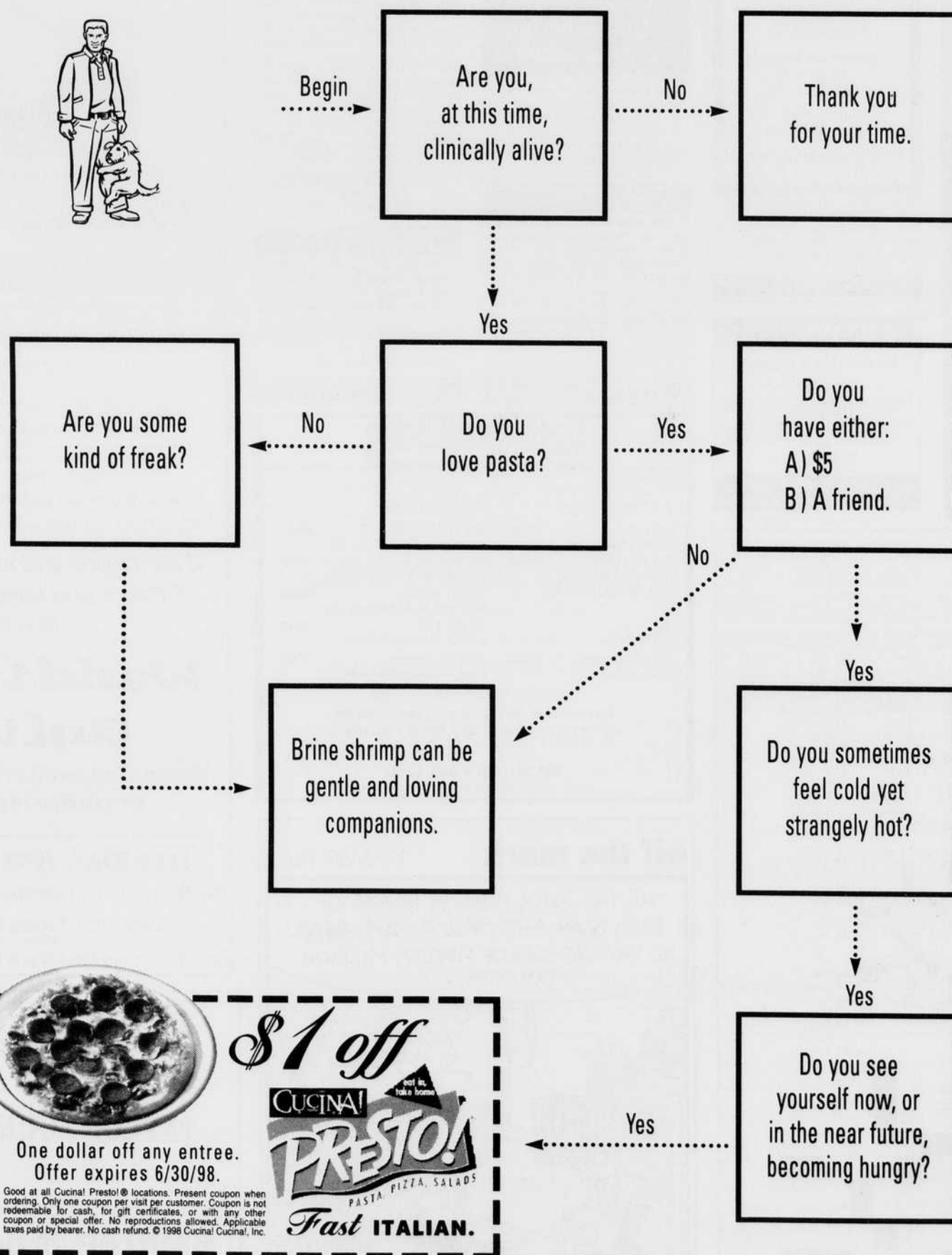
Webber was arrested Jan. 20 by police in Prince George's County,

Md., another Washington suburb, and charged with speeding, assaulting a police officer and possession of marijuana. He is awaiting trial.

Howard was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol in 1996 after his Mercedes was spotted speeding from a Washington nightclub. The charges were dropped after he agreed to enter an alcohol education program.

Howard, one of the NBA's highest-paid players and known for his charitable work around the Washington area, scored 12 points in the Wizards' 88-85 victory over the Orlando Magic on Sunday night.

SELF EVALUATION 6A: ABILITY TO LOVE AND BE LOVED



OPENS DAILY AT 11:00 AM • NOW OPEN AT 13TH AND ALDER IN UNIVERSITY DISTRICT