

Roseburg report

by Billy Russo

This bizarre tale — which I've dubbed "Toiletgate" — began over two years ago when two gay men removed five photo albums from the home of Dan Dunnam, better known as Francis I of the Roseburg Court. Dunnam was not home at the time.

After passing the photos among their friends, one of the men, Roland Egbert, turned selected pictures over to the Douglas County Sheriff. Egbert also volunteered the names of over a dozen men, and details concerning the Gay And Lesbian Alliance (GALA).

According to the Crime Property Report, a public document, "Roland Egbert turned in pornographic photo's [sic] of homosexuals engaged in sex acts. Some of the people depicted in the photographs are definitely under the age of 18 years." The report goes on to say that the investigating officer has shown the photos to members of other police agencies, grade, junior high, and high school counselors in an attempt to identify homosexual youths. According to the report they identified at least eight suspected homosexuals. Their ages ranged from 18 to 28.

Of the eight, only one 21 year old was located by authorities. The narrative states: "[He] denies being a homosexual and initially denied having any sexual contact with [the

suspects]. [He] then said he may have allowed them to orally copulate him, but he never did anything to them."

Many gay men (some say all) go through a period of identity confusion in the earliest stage of coming out which is summed up in the incongruity of the above statement: the young man refused to label himself homosexual. How do you think he felt? Do you think the authorities treated him with respect and dignity? What right did Egbert have to betray this man, someone he never met or heard of!!! Egbert's reckless actions violate the fundamental integrity of the homophile

homosexuals. And two more young men admitted having sex with Dunnam. And although they were of legal age, 18 and 20, they both admitted that their involvement with Dunnam preceded their 18th birthday, the age of consent in Oregon.

At this point the Douglas County Grand Jury was presented with the evidence. The seven member jury heard testimony from half a dozen gay youths and issued four sodomy indictments against one man, Daniel Francis Dunnam.

The police documents from which the preceding information was derived were

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community.

And it didn't end here. Near the beginning of May, 1982, an anonymous informant volunteered more names to the police, he/she was probably the parent of one of the men identified earlier. Through this lead authorities were able to identify five youths. Their ages ranged from ten to 19. These youths were questioned after the police informed the parents of their sons' homosexual affiliations. Two of them, 19 and 16, admitted having on-going, consensual sex with men.

The ten year old was the younger brother of one of the other suspected homosexual youths. And although questioned twice, he maintained that he had never engaged in "Nasties" with men. "Nasties" is the term used in the police reports.

Later that month another confidential informant stepped forward. This man is apparently gay himself and active in the local community. He identified a young man in Portland who he believed was involved with the suspects. This indiscreet snitch gave the young man's place of employment, and the hours he was on duty. He also identified a 15 year old who was involved with GALA.

According to the Portland man, the police broke down the door of his room at the Esquire Hotel, identified themselves and questioned him. He refused to cooperate.

The 15 year old had never met Dunnam or the other suspects, but he spoke freely about himself, GALA, and other members of the homophile community. Through this chatty youth police identified more suspected

designed for the sole purpose of convicting Dunnam. They, along with about three dozen photos that Egbert supplied authorities, were submitted as evidence against Dunnam and therefore are public documents.

Contrary to statements made by Egbert and his supporters, none of the pictures submitted as evidence depicted Dunnam having sex with prepuberal boys. But the controversy goes on. Egbert, et. al., say that such pictures exist and that they turned them in to the police. They suggest that maybe the prepuberal boys were the sons of other police officers and influential people who would not allow the police to bring them into the case.

Tom Bernier, a Roseburg criminal defense attorney who is experienced in defending sex offenses, commenting on Egbert's scenario, says, "I can't say it's impossible, but it's unlike anything I've seen the authorities do in this kind of case." Bernier believes that the police investigator worked very hard to get a conviction in this case and the Egbert scenario is doubtful.

Eventually Dunnam pled guilty to one of the four sodomy charges against him. The other three were dropped. And in spite of dozens of letters from influential members of the veterans' community and the personal testimony of the commander of the Roseburg American Legion and the retired head of the County's Health Department in Dunnam's behalf, Dunnam received the maximum penalty under law: he was sentenced to five years in the state prison. It was an emotional sentencing trial. The judge sympathized with Dunnam. He said that he

believed that Dunnam was a good person and recognized his many contributions to the community; however, he cited "deterrence as his reason for the harsh sentence. "We have to set an example," he said. Ironically, later that same day the judge sentenced a man who was convicted of molesting a 12-year-old girl to probation.

Dunnam served five months of his five year sentence. He was released from prison — more irony — the same day that GALA held the third and final "special meeting" dealing with Egbert's breach of confidentiality concerning the organization. At that meeting it was agreed that Egbert would not be allowed to attend most GALA meetings, functions, or activities for at least one year. The exception being GALA functions where the general public is invited: concerts, garage sales, and such.

Dunnam is on parole until the end of the year. He has to report to the probation office every week. He has to adhere to a ten p.m. to six a.m. curfew seven days a week. His probation officer can appear at his home at anytime for a search, to administer a breathalyzer test (Dunnam cannot consume alcohol to the extent that he's legally intoxicated), or to whisk Dunnam off for an informal chat with police investigators who might want to question him. (This is exactly what happened to at least two of the men questioned during the "Toiletgate" interrogations). And Dunnam has to pay a ten dollar monthly fee for these services.

Dunnam says, "I'm under a lot of pressure from the community to put this all behind me, but it's very difficult when I'm constantly reminded of what I've been subjected to every week by the probation department." Dunnam says that the most difficult part is dealing with the sense of betrayal and violation he sometimes feels: "I try my damndest to ignore the two men who burglarized my home. I prefer that they didn't exist, but when I see them at church [MCC, Roseburg], I think about them going through my belongings and stealing my prized possessions and I feel so violated. It's hard to forgive and forget."

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