

Just news

Dutch person with AIDS jailed by INS

Six days in Minnesota jails and \$10,000 bond greets AIDS educator

BY TIM CAMPBELL

Hans Paul Verhoef, 31, a civil servant from the Netherlands who does public education on gay and lesbian issues including AIDS was released by United States Immigration authorities in St. Paul, Friday, April 17. He flew immediately to San Francisco for the 11th Annual National Lesbian and Gay Health Conference. The 7th Annual National AIDS Forum was a part of the conference, as well. Verhoef was six days behind schedule and the conference was nearing its close. Art Agnos, Mayor of San Francisco had responded to Verhoef's unfathomable detention by declaring it "Hans Paul Verhoef Day" in San Francisco.

Judge Robert Vinikoor ordered Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) authorities to release Verhoef for a business visit provided he post \$10,000 bond and leave the United States promptly on April 28.

Judge Vinikoor ruled that Verhoef be released as soon as he posted bond and that he should not be held further, pending an INS appeal.

Verhoef's dispute began when he landed at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport on Sunday, April 2. He had tickets to San Francisco for the health conference and only expected to change planes in Minnesota. Unfortunately, he had to go through customs before deplaning.

INS officials claim that they found Verhoef's AZT and asked him if he had AIDS to which he responded, "Yes." INS also cited a letter found on Verhoef in which he admitted he had AIDS and referred to other "documents" in which AIDS was mentioned.

Although INS officials deny any connection, local observers speculate that Verhoef's leather jacket, trousers, and his sexual toys were the most obvious items in his luggage, serving as red flags to the INS.

Just weeks earlier, another gay Dutch visitor with leather in his luggage was detained by the same INS officials. The transcript of that

interrogation shows intense and hostile questions about the traveler's leather attire. Marinus Bos was also asked if he had AIDS but said, "No." He was ultimately detained on a minor technicality. Bos flew back to Amsterdam and then flew directly to Los Angeles where INS was not bothered by his leather.

As soon as Verhoef told INS inspectors that he had AIDS, they slapped him in handcuffs and hauled him off to Scott County Jail.

Late Thursday afternoon INS District Director Tom Schiltgen, announced that he would grant Verhoef the requested waiver saying that, "the criteria for adjudicating this waiver application is that the applicant must show that: one) the danger to the public health is minimal; two) the possibility of spreading the disease is minimal and that three) no costs are to be incurred by the federal government. Mr. Verhoef has met the criteria."

Richard E. Norton, Associate Commissioner of INS in Washington, denied Verhoef's request for waiver saying, "The applicant has no close relatives residing in the United States and he has not made any assertions there is substantial reason for desiring a waiver. Although the Service is sensitive to the needs of people who want to exchange ideas, the Service has also, in these circumstances, a legal obligation to protect the health and safety of United States residents. The risk of harm by an AIDS infected alien, in the absence of humanitarian reasons for permitting the temporary admission of aliens, far outweigh the privilege of an alien to enter the United States to participate in a conference."

Friday afternoon the Verhoef matter was publicly aired before Judge Robert Vinikoor who ordered Verhoef released on bond while any appeal was pending.

Verhoef easily convinced the judge that the risk was minimal.

On Wednesday, ACT UP sponsored protests erupted in Amsterdam, San Francisco, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.

Portland lesbians to host national conference planner

Regional meeting will create goals and agenda for national meeting in Atlanta

BY ABBY HAIGHT

Portland will host the second planning meeting for a historic national lesbian conference, which is expected to draw several thousand lesbians to Atlanta in 1991.

The Portland meeting, scheduled for this July, will be the only one on the West Coast. Women interested in organizing the Portland meeting are encouraged to attend a meeting at 1 pm, May 21, in Room 403 of Portland State University's Cramer Hall.

The Atlanta conference is planned as a ground-breaking gathering to educate and entertain lesbians, as well as clearly demonstrate our diversity and commitment to equal rights to the nation.

"Lesbians have a tendency to be the doers and we do everything for everybody — except ourselves," said Amanda Colorado, who attended the first national planning meeting earlier this spring in Durham, NC, and is helping organize the Portland meeting.

"For once, we're going to do it for ourselves," she said.

The Portland planning gathering almost didn't occur when leaders of the Lesbian Community Project decided against doing the organizing as a group. Instead, individuals plan to organize all facets of the meeting, in keeping with the national emphasis on grassroots participation.

The planning meetings are intended to create goals and an agenda for the national conference. Topics for the national conference haven't been set, but will cover such issues as lesbian legal rights, job security, women and AIDS, youth and aging, day care, racism, and establishing a national lesbian organization.

During a sometimes stormy weekend, participants at the Durham planning meeting agreed that women of color should represent

50 percent of the steering committees, speakers and performers. Disabled and older lesbians also will have full representation, organizers say.

Colorado said local organizers want to insure full involvement in the Portland planning meeting, as well.

The Durham gathering agreed to set spring 1991 for the conference date. Participants also agreed Atlanta would provide higher national visibility than "safer" cities, such as Washington, DC, or San Francisco, Colorado said.

Local organizers say they need women to help coordinate the July planning meeting, including setting an agenda, creating a volunteer network, and reaching out to women throughout the Northwest. Housing may also be needed for women traveling from other cities and states.

Women interested should attend the May 21 meeting, or send their name, address and telephone number to Portland Host Committee, 2208 NE Multnomah #7, Portland, 97232. ▼

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Baltimore AIDS activist sued

Stuart Caplan, a registered nurse and AIDS activist in Baltimore, Maryland has been slapped with a multi-million dollar lawsuit after criticizing an AIDS testing clinic. The clinic, AIDS Counseling and Testing (ACT) had been distributing flyers promoting "peace of mind" by taking an "affordable" \$50 test and offering a picture ID card to prove that the cardholder is HIV-negative.

Because the local health department was offering free HIV testing and because ID cards are not an effective AIDS reduction tool, Caplan wrote letters to various government officials demanding an investigation of ACT. ID cards are misleading and counter-productive because they are good only for the moment the blood is taken. It can take up to fourteen months after infection for HIV antibodies to appear.

As a result of his activism, Caplan was sued by ACT for \$6.5 million in US District Court. National Gay Rights Advocates has agreed to defend Caplan and on Friday, March 31, 1989, filed a Motion for Summary Judgment, requesting that the court dismiss the suit.

"We are asking the court to protect Mr. Caplan's free speech rights under the first

amendment. While we are in the midst of this epidemic, it is crucial that every one be encouraged to speak out against unscrupulous AIDS profiteers," said Leonard Graff, legal director of the NGRA.

"We will not allow ACT to escape responsibility for their opportunism by filing intimidating suits against our community," said Jean O'Leary, NGRA's executive director.

Mark Lane, an attorney affiliated with Liberty Lobby, an ultra-conservative, Washington, DC, political group is representing ACT.

Edward Wolf, of Arnold and Porter, is NGRA's co-operating counsel. Arnold and Porter is one of Washington DC's largest and most prestigious law firms.

The court will hear the case on May 19 in Baltimore, Maryland.

BRADLEY J. WOODWORTH ATTORNEY AT LAW

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