

artistic egotism than greed or ingrained criminal behavior.

Blarek and Pellecchia, business and intimate partners, were convicted of money laundering after designing custom furniture with secret compartments for a leader of a Colombian cocaine cartel.

Blarek was sentenced to five years and eight months; Pellecchia to four years. For their crimes, federal sentencing guidelines would have punished Blarek with 10 to 12 years in prison and roughly eight years for Pellecchia. The pair are free on bail pending appeals.

CONDOM DEBUT IS A DUTCH TREAT

The package might read "Made in America," but running down to the pharmacy for the new "baggy" condom would be premature.

EZON, a new type of condom manufactured by Oakland, Calif.-based Mayer Laboratories, has hit the market—but only in the Netherlands, reports Reuters news service.



The new condom is made of polyurethane instead of latex and is half the thickness of ordinary condoms. It fits snugly only at the base, can be rolled on in either direction, and it isn't compromised by oil-based lubricants. Polyurethane is five times stronger than latex, according to some studies, and is a better conductor of heat.

David Mayer, head of Mayer Laboratories, understandably has nothing but good things to say about the EZON.

"It addresses those millions of men who don't like condoms," he touts.

"The traditional condom was designed to constrict the penis. This one moves with the penis and creates sensation," adds Frits Kist, whose firm is marketing the product in the Netherlands.

It also costs about twice as much as traditional condoms. In Amsterdam, a pack of three EZONs is selling for about U.S. \$6.50.

Mayer says the earliest possible date for Food and Drug Administration approval and sale in the United States is about a year away. The baggy condom should be available in the rest of Europe within six months.

HRC MOURNS GOLDWATER'S PASSING

Saying he was a staunch defender of individual liberty and equality for gay men and lesbians, the Human Rights Campaign, a national sexual minorities rights group, lamented the May 29 death of former U.S. senator and Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

"Barry Goldwater envisioned an America where equal rights and liberty extend to all people. He exemplified honorable conservative principles such as respecting individual rights. Many of today's right-wing politicians, who mistakenly call themselves conservatives, can learn

a lot about true conservatism by studying Barry Goldwater," said HRC Executive Director Elizabeth Birch.

In 1993, Goldwater came out in support of allowing openly gay people to serve in the military. Goldwater, whose grandson is gay, continued his support for equal rights by crafting a July 1994 *Washington Post* op-ed column asking Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which is designed to protect gay men and lesbians from job discrimination.

"It's time America realized that there was no gay exemption in the right to 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' in the Declaration of Independence. Job discrimination against gays—or anybody else—is contrary to each of these founding principles," Goldwater wrote in his opinion piece.

GENDER REASSIGNMENT IN THE ROCKIES

The *Washington Post* let the rest of the country in on a little-known piece of transsexual trivia with its May 13 profile of surgeon Stanley Biber, 75, who has quietly been performing gender reassignment surgery in Trinidad, Colo., for more than 30 years.

Trinidad's unofficial moniker, "sex-change capital of the world," is apparently well-known in the former mining town, population 8,500.

Biber has completed more than 3,500 gender reassignment surgeries during his career, with an operation costing about \$10,000 and taking roughly two and a half hours—compared to seven or eight hours for most other surgeons who perform the operation.

Biber told the *Post* his long career helping transsexuals began by accident. Already a surgeon with field experience in the Korean War, Biber says he was approached by a friend in the late 1960s who confided that she wasn't anatomically a woman and asked if Biber could help her make the change.



He agreed to perform the operation and boasts he's only improved his technique over the years.

"Originally, I probably accepted it as a surgical challenge," Biber explained, adding that he later understood the humanitarian nature of his work.

"Once you begin to understand what [transsexuals] go through and how they're hiding all the time, how they can't find a good job, how they can't pass a physical examination, how they're not accepted anywhere if they come out, you start thinking, 'I could offer them a service,' and it was a satisfactory service and it seemed to me I was turning out good products and making good citizens out of them," he said.

Biber, who also serves as Trinidad's general surgeon, currently performs one or two gender reassignment surgeries weekly.

Compiled by WILL O'BRYAN

THE SEE VUE

Experience the unusual

When Beth got some time off from her hectic job it took no time at all for her to convince Charity to cruise down the Oregon coast. It would be a spur of the moment trip, no plans, no reservations. Charity couldn't resist, she hadn't spent any quality time with Beth for months and their relationship was faltering because of it.

They headed south down Highway 101, passing through Yachats when they noticed a little motel off to the side of the road with magenta doors and blue trim. Beth said, that place looks good, so they stopped. They were pleasantly surprised to be greeted by lesbian hosts who escorted them to the Princess and the Pea room. Charity said, this is the room I want, without seeing any of the others. Beth agreed. They spent the next three days lingering by the fire, watching the sun break through the waves, while falling in love with each other—again—and with the magic of the See Vue.

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