

AUSTRALIA

There's a gonorrhea epidemic among gays in the nation's most populous city, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported Jan. 27.

The number of cases reported to the state health department last year—1,260—is about double the 1998 figure.

Australians are also using fewer condoms. Forty million were imported last year, compared with 55 million in 1991. (Condoms are not produced domestically.)

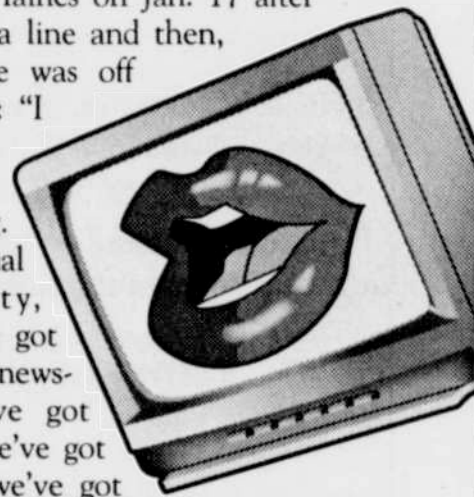
In recent surveys, 20 to 25 percent of gay men have acknowledged having unprotected casual sex.

The nation sees about 400 to 500 new HIV diagnoses yearly.

CANADA

The all-news network CTV fired anchor Avery Haines on Jan. 17 after she flubbed a line and then, thinking she was off the air, said: "I kind of like the stuttering thing. It's like equal opportunity, right? We've got a stuttering news-caster. We've got the black, we've got the Asian, we've got the woman. I could be a lesbian, folk-dancing, black woman stutterer."

Henry Kowalski, a CTV vice president, said: "The nature of her comments did not leave CTV News with any alternative [but to fire her]. Her remarks were disrespectful and unprofessional and cannot be excused."



CHINA

Gay life is opening up in the People's Republic of China, *The Washington Post* reported Jan. 24.

Beijing has a burgeoning gay bar scene, and gay men and lesbians are getting hitched in "semi-open" wedding ceremonies, the paper said.

Sodomy was decriminalized in 1997, and there is no law against homosexual prostitution.

The nation has several gay magazines, according to the *Post*, and gay men and lesbians have also taken quickly to the nation's Internet explosion.

EL SALVADOR

Members and supporters of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission picketed the Consulate of El Salvador in San Francisco on Jan. 26 in support of the gay group Entre Amigos.

El Salvador's National Civil Police has declined to assign officers to protect Entre Amigos leader William Hernandez, his family and other members of the group, all of whom have reportedly received death threats.

Police Chief Mauricio Sandoval has acknowledged that the individuals qualify for police assistance under the nation's Protection for Important People program, but he said he would not actually assign any officers to the case because the officers do not share Hernandez's "sexual tastes" and thus would be uncomfortable.

Sandoval suggested that Entre Amigos instead hire private security officers, whom police could train, or that the group provide a list of names of gay and lesbian officers who could be considered for the assignment.

KENYA

Six of 43 Kenyan prostitutes thought to be immune to HIV have tested positive for the

virus after quitting the trade and no longer being exposed to HIV on a constant basis.

The news is a setback for a vaccine effort that was constructed around the fact that the prostitutes had large numbers of cytotoxic T lymphocytes, which kill cells that harbor HIV.

Oxford University scientists have been testing a vaccine that mimics the lymphocytes' action, delivering HIV fragments via a disabled cowpox virus.

In trials the vaccine protected monkeys from infection, but now researchers fear that individuals would have to be vaccinated over and over and over, just as the prostitutes were exposed to HIV on a near-daily basis.

"This implies that to maintain immunity you need to have continual exposure," said Oxford researcher Sarah Rowland-Jones.

UNITED KINGDOM

Scottish Roman Catholic Cardinal Thomas Winning said Jan. 22 that gays are as dangerous as Nazis, British newspapers reported.

"All over Europe, an active and militant homosexual lobby is pushing for greater power, and the threat to the Christian family is very real," Winning said. "Cast your minds back to the dark days of World War II. The parallels with today are striking. In place of the bombs of 50 years ago, you find yourselves bombarded with images, values and ideas which are utterly alien."

Gay leaders were outraged by the remarks. "Cardinal Winning's claims of an international conspiracy are reminiscent of the kinds of claims being made against the Jews 100 years ago—the very kind of claims that led to the Holocaust," said Tim Hopkins of the Equality Network.

A day later, Winning accused journalists of maliciously misinterpreting his comments.

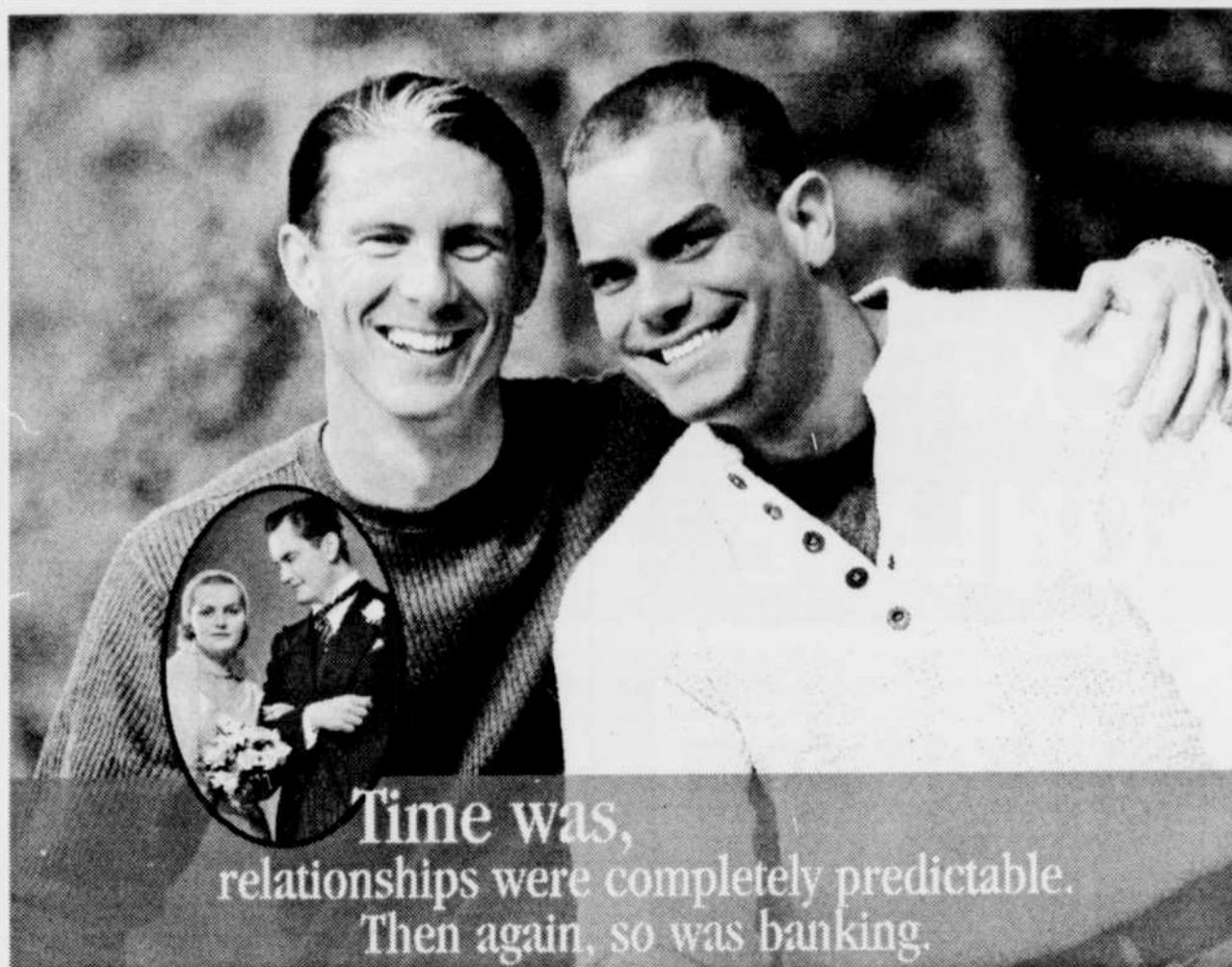
"The suggestion that I compared homosexual activists to Nazis is utterly false," he said. "The word 'Nazi' does not appear at any point in my address, and I believe it would be inappropriate, offensive and fatuous to compare the current debate to what happened in Germany in the war years."

The British activist group OutRage has called a boycott of Stagecoach buses and trains owned by Scottish millionaire Brian Souter.

Souter has donated \$1.6 million to a campaign to derail Scottish plans to repeal locally the anti-gay British law Section 28, which prohibits cities from "intentionally promoting] homosexuality" and bans teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools.

"Brian Souter wants to buy political influence and sustain discrimination," said OutRage's Peter Tatchell. "Using money from his bus and train operations, he is committed to funding a high-profile campaign to pressure the Scottish Parliament to ditch its promise to repeal Section 28. It is apparently Mr. Souter's intention to use his immense wealth to subvert the public and parliamentary majorities in favor of equality."

■ Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



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