

Dr. Laura to set Portland straight on KGW-TV

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Schlessinger also believes that the usual bankrolling behind the "gay agenda" is supporting the national movement. But Tyler says this movement has survived on less than \$10,000 raised by T-shirt sales and one individual donation.

Tyler says Schlessinger's rhetoric is dangerous and has hit a nerve in the gay community.

"Our community is saying 'enough,'" Tyler exclaims.

"The more cities we get, the more the sponsors are hesitant about sponsoring her," she adds. "We'd love to do Portland in August."

Major cities throughout the country have held protests during the late spring and early summer and more have summer protests scheduled, including Cincinnati; Kansas City, Mo.; Providence, R.I.; Orlando, Fla.; Minneapolis; and Houston.

"Would you give David Duke a cooking show?" Tyler asks. "What if he didn't say anything racist?"

Tyler says she posed those questions to the general manager of KING in Seattle and he replied, "Of court not! He's a known racist."

Tyler wants to know what the difference is—is it OK to promote a known homophobe but not a known racist?

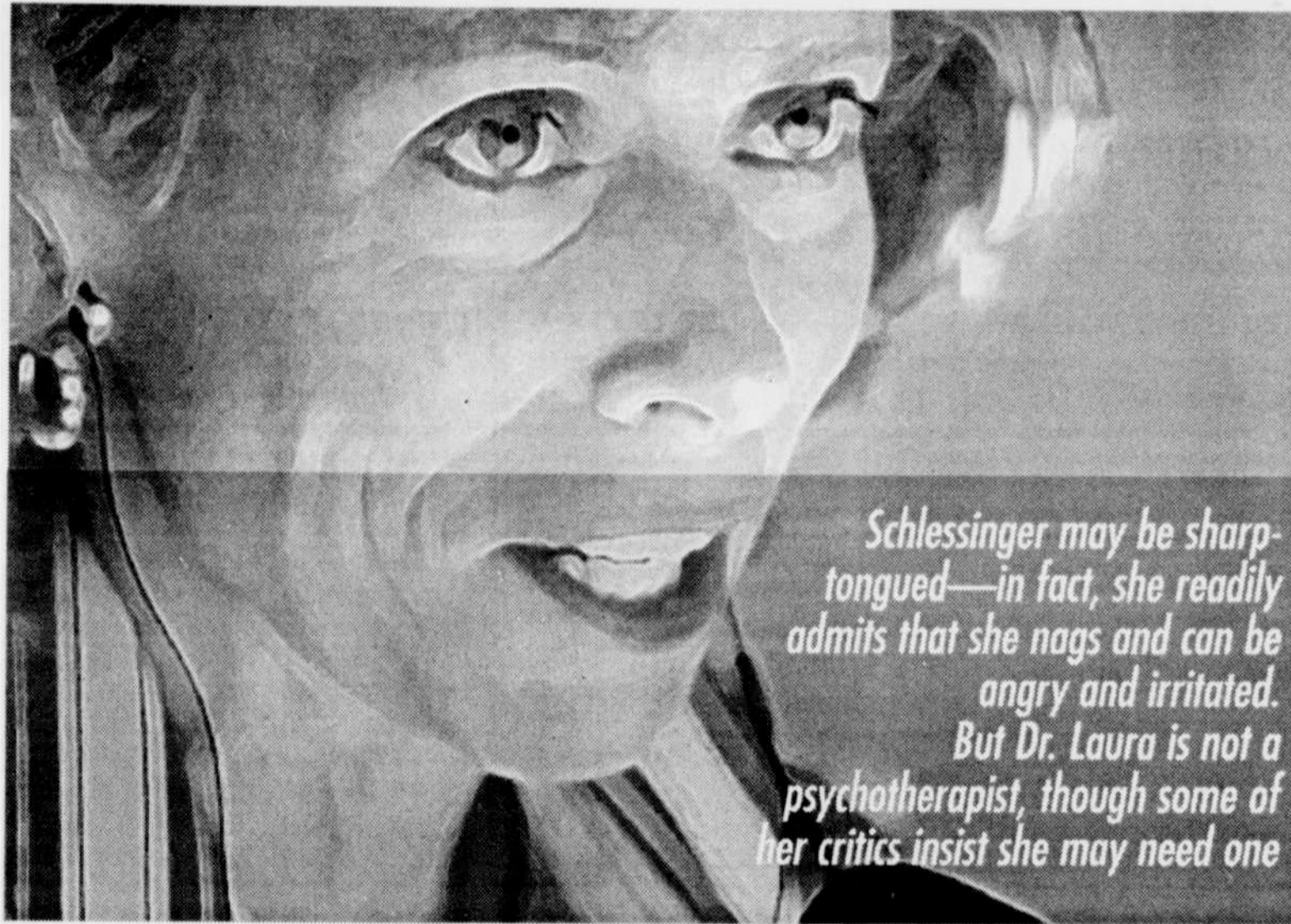
Some general managers have offered a "balanced programming" rationale, but Tyler doesn't buy that.

"There is no such thing as 'equal time' for bigotry," Tyler says. "Equal time is not giving us a spot on some bigot's show, where they make millions, and we get the time to define ourselves."

She adds: "It's not about Dr. Laura. It is about corporations profiting from hate"

Schlessinger and her supporters insist that gay activists are trying to take away the talk show host's freedom of speech. But most who are offended by Schlessinger's comments say they support her right to speak what she believes. They assert, though, that they also have the right to object to the content of Schlessinger's show and have the freedom to discourage advertisers, just as conservatives have done with any number of television shows, including ABC's *Ellen*.

It's not about free speech, Tyler insists, it is about greed.



Schlessinger may be sharp-tongued—in fact, she readily admits that she nags and can be angry and irritated. But Dr. Laura is not a psychotherapist, though some of her critics insist she may need one

There haven't been any local advertisers who have pulled their ads, Buratti says. She would not name any Portland-area advertisers who have purchased time during the Dr. Laura broadcast but confirmed that there is no shortage of companies wanting to buy time.

Another matter of contention is Schlessinger's use of the title "Dr." Critics believe that the popular radio host dishes out advice and opinions in a context that

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suggests she has psychological or psychiatric credentials. Schlessinger has neither. While Schlessinger holds a doctorate in physiology, she has no mental health credentials or training.

The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation is extremely concerned about the views on homosexuality that Schlessinger

broadcasts to millions. Yet GLAAD contends that Schlessinger shouldn't be compared to religious or political leaders who often attempt to influence others with anti-gay speech. Schlessinger's listeners, and soon her viewers, look at her as a person who is an expert, because she is a "doctor."

Tyler and others think that when someone dehumanizes gays by using terms like "biological errors" and "deviant," hate crimes against gays increase.

Schlessinger, meanwhile, adamantly denies that she called homosexuals deviants, but admits that she described homosexual behavior as "deviant."

Schlessinger also refutes claims that she has called gays "biological errors," although she says it is an inarguable fact that homosexuality is a biological error and is abnormal. She says some people just don't want to hear the truth.

The 2,000 mostly gay and lesbian physicians and medical students of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association also are worried. The group says that as national murder rates have decreased, murders of sexual minorities have increased—by 150 percent in the last two years.

Last month, the Portland Police Bureau reported that issues surrounding sexual orientation motivated 25 percent of the bias crimes reported during May. Bias crimes relating to sexual orientation account for 28 percent of the total bias crimes reported from January

through May of this year. But the figures may not fully represent the violence that sexual minorities are experiencing on the streets of Portland. Some police officials believe crimes against sexual minorities are vastly underreported.

GLMA members are also concerned that anti-gay speech framed in a clinical context drastically affects teens who are attempting to understand their sexual orientation. Gay and lesbian youths are said to commit suicide at a rate three times that of their heterosexual peers. And Oregon has one of the highest suicide rates in the country.

Time's Jeanne McDowell, who interviewed Schlessinger, evidently was confused about the radio host's credentials. Referring to Schlessinger as "the sharp-tongued psychotherapist" in her article's lead paragraph, she demonstrated the likelihood that

Schlessinger's radio and future television audience will continue to consider her more than a physiologist.

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■ For more information about starting a Portland chapter of STOPDR.LAURA.COM, contact Robin Tyler at (818) 893-4075 or rstopdrlaura@aol.com, or call Lynn Thomas at (503) 274-1741.

JONATHAN KIPP is a Just Out staff reporter and doctor of love.

Whether it's freedom of speech or freedom of religion, the First Amendment is often talked about but seldom read. Here is the exact wording:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

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