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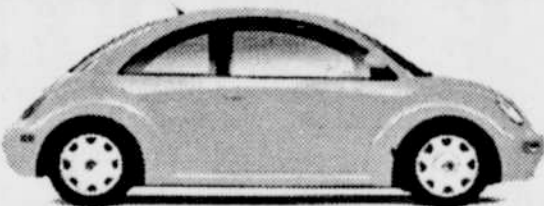
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NATIONAL news

KENTUCKY

An investigation by the Army's inspector general has cleared all the officers at Fort Campbell of any blame in connection to the murder last year of Pvt. Barry Winchell.

He was beaten to death with a baseball bat by another soldier because he was thought to be gay. Two men were convicted of the murder.

CBS News reports the investigation placed the blame on Winchell's first sergeant, who since has been relieved of his duties, for allowing the harassment to take place. The report also blamed a lack of training on what the "don't ask, don't tell" policy means.

Maj. Gen. Robert Clark, who commanded Fort Campbell at the time of Winchell's murder, said: "There is not, nor has there ever been during my time here, a climate of homophobia on post. The climate here is one that promotes just the opposite, respect for all."

Winchell's mother, Pat Kuteles, voiced her concern months ago. "There has been nobody that has been held accountable for the Army's part in the harassment and the lack of safety."



NEW JERSEY

A judge in New Brunswick has ordered Wal-Mart to pay more than \$2 million to a former cashier who was harassed and fired after a boss learned he was undergoing a male-to-female sex change. The Associated Press reported July 18.

Ricky Bourdovales, 27, filed a lawsuit last May against the retailing giant, alleging it violated New Jersey's anti-discrimination laws by firing him in January 1999. When Wal-Mart failed to respond, attorney Mark Stanton sent it a notice in June that his client intended to seek a default judgment.

Again, the company did not respond. In addition to the \$2 million in punitive damages, Bourdovales was awarded \$100,000 in compensatory damages and legal fees.

A spokesman for Wal-Mart's corporate headquarters said the retailer will request that

the judge vacate the award. He said the company knew a document had been served in May but did not realize what it was.

According to Bourdovales, who dresses as a woman, the Piscataway Wal-Mart had no problem when everyone thought he was a woman. The trouble began when a store manager reviewed his job application and noticed the box "male" was checked.

When asked about it, Bourdovales revealed he was undergoing a sex change. After that, he said, the harassment and discrimination began.

Eventually, Bourdovales was fired. A Wal-Mart spokesman said the dismissal was for "misconduct."

WEST VIRGINIA

The U.S. Justice Department has opened a preliminary investigation into the killing of Arthur "J.R." Warren, a black gay man from Grant Town.

Various media sources report Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder met in July with family members and friends of Warren's and representatives of civil rights and gay rights groups. The Justice Department's civil rights division will conduct the investigation with the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office in Wheeling.

Two white 17-year-olds have been charged with the murder of Warren, 26. According to authorities, the suspects beat him to death, then ran over his body with a car to make the incident look like a hit-and-run.

Although many think the murder was a hate crime, Marion County Sheriff Ron Watkins and Prosecutor G. Richard Bunner have insisted hate was not a factor. Bunner has not yet decided whether to try the two suspects as adults.

Officials with the Justice Department said they doubt federal law would apply to the case.

■ Compiled by KRISTINE CHATWOOD, a Portland-based free-lance writer and longtime Just Out contributor.

★ ★ CAMPAIGN 2000 ★ ★

"Won't the real Dick Cheney please stand up?"

That's the question on the minds of liberals everywhere after Texas Gov. George W. Bush formally offered the Republican vice presidential nomination to his father's former defense secretary, an ultra-right-winger with an openly lesbian daughter.

The Human Rights Campaign issued a report July 25 examining Cheney's record on gay and AIDS issues. Its conclusion: Like his running mate, he seeks to package an extremely conservative record with a moderate image.

During the Bush administration, Cheney supported Pete Williams, the Defense Department's chief spokesman, when *The Advocate* revealed his homosexuality.

"I have operated on the basis over the years with respect to my personal staff that I don't ask them about their private lives," he said. "As long as they perform their professional responsibilities in a responsible manner, their private lives are their business."

However, Cheney opposed President Clinton's effort to lift the ban on gays serving openly in the military.

"I am one of those people who believes that people's sexual preference and orientation are a private matter," he told CNN in 1993. "It's something that is a personal matter

for them and no one else's business. And that's the way I ran the civilian side of the Pentagon.... On the military side, though, you can't pursue that policy."

Later in the interview, Cheney said, "I basically don't believe in discrimination, but I did conclude, as secretary of defense, that the ban on gays in uniform was appropriate."

At the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, gay attention focused on his daughter, Mary. She hasn't yet spoken to the media, but plenty of activists and

reporters were talking about her.

"We understand they love each other very much," HRC spokesman David Smith said. "...The crux of it is, it's going to focus attention on Bush's anti-gay policy positions, and Cheney is going to look quite mean if he comes out and says: 'Yeah, I support a law that bans my daughter from adopting a child. I don't support a law that would protect my daughter from discrimination.'"

The Democratic National Committee was quick to label Bush-Cheney as "one of the most anti-choice tickets in our nation's history" and "the all-oil ticket." Cheney is the chief executive officer of the Halliburton Co., a publicly traded company that supplies equipment to the oil industry.

—Jim Radosta



Dick Cheney