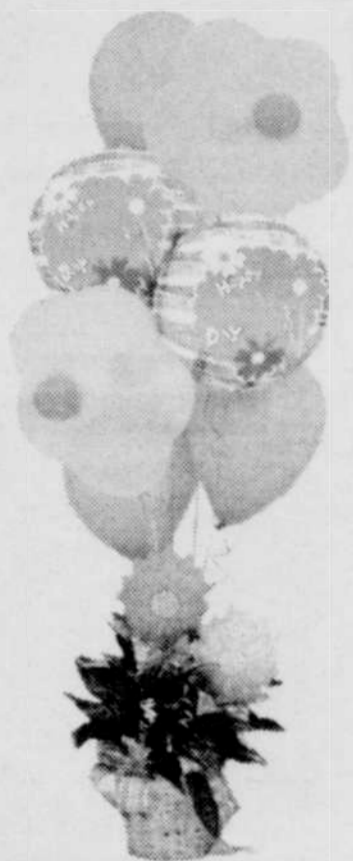


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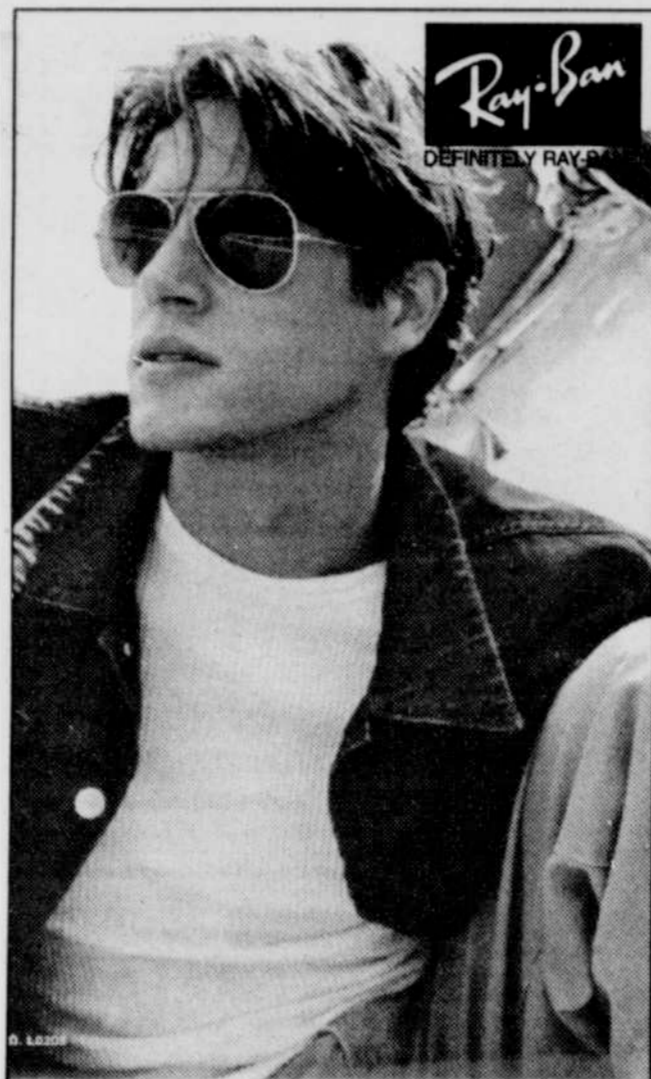
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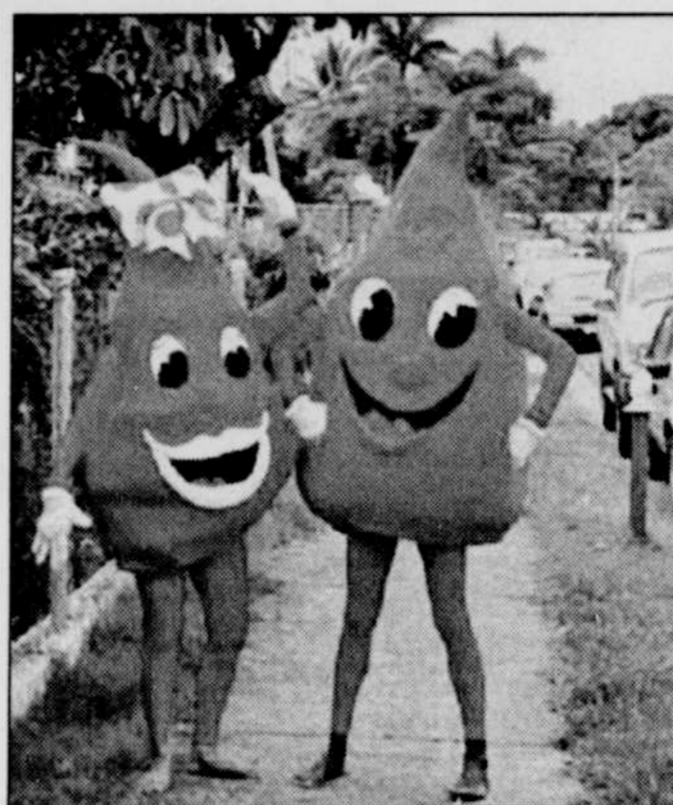
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WORLD news



Fiji Red Cross Society volunteers hit the streets to promote World Health Day on April 7 in Suva

FIJI
The director of the Fiji Red Cross Society and his life partner were found dead and dismembered in their Suva home July 1.

John Scott, 53, and Gregory Scrivener, 39, were hacked to death. They were decapitated, and some of their limbs were severed.

Police arrested Apete Kaisau, 23, for the crime July 9. They said he was one of several young Fijian men who Scott and Scrivener had taken advantage of sexually.

Earlier, authorities questioned a fired bisexual policeman and a drug dealer. Fijian newspapers said the ex-policeman was seen with Scrivener the day before the murders and had a history of befriending gay men, then robbing them.

Scott played a key role in last year's coup, functioning as a conduit with the outside world for former Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and fellow hostages during the 56-day ordeal. Scrivener's sister told several newspapers that Scott had been receiving death threats from people who were angry about his possible testimony in an upcoming treason trial against failed coup plotter George Speight and 12 other people. She also suggested homophobia was a factor in the murders.

"I know in my heart that this is politically motivated," Judy Alvos said. "I told Greg to get out after the coup, that he would come home in a body bag if he didn't—that's exactly what has happened."

Before the arrest of Kaisau, Police Chief Isikia Savua said that no evidence indicated a political angle to the killings and that the couple's homosexuality was probably the key factor.

"You must not forget that John Scott was a known homosexual," he said. "In the past we've had homosexually motivated killings with wounds caused that are similar to this one."

EGYPT
A total of 52 men arrested in a raid on a Cairo gay discotheque May 11 will stand trial for the crime of having gay sex. They will appear before the Emergency State Security Court charged with "practicing debauchery with men," "obscene behavior" and "contempt for religion."

The men could be imprisoned for up to three years for obscene behavior and for up to five years for contempt for religion. Two of them also are accused of "exploiting the Islamic religion to spread extremist ideas" and of engaging in gay sex "in front of the remaining defendants and others with the aim of insulting the heavenly religions and sparking civil strife."

The men have been jailed at Tora Prison since their arrests, and Amnesty International has said it considers them prisoners of conscience. "This case exhibits some of the worst features of Egypt's justice system—prolonged and incommunicado detention and emergency pro-

ceedings on spurious charges," Human Rights Watch's Hanny Megally said July 3.

INDIA
A total of 50 gay men, lesbians and eunuchs staged a "Breaking the Silence" public forum June 30 to July 1 in the southern city of Bangalore. They seek equal rights, decriminalization of "carnal intercourse against the order of nature" and social acceptance.

"People like us should have the courage to come out in public," a lesbian named Chatura told Agence France-Presse. "While I was growing up there were all sorts of restrictions on me. Now the time has come to break free."

UNITED KINGDOM
The city of London will begin offering gay partnership registration and ceremonies in September, Mayor Ken Livingstone announced June 28.

The London Partnerships Register is a "step on the road to equality," he said. "We have some way to go, but [it] is a great start."

The registry will not confer the rights of marriage but will be useful when disputes arise about the nature of a relationship in matters such as tenancy, pensions, intestacy, taxation, inheritance and immigration, Livingstone said.

The ceremonies will be performed for about \$125 Wednesdays and Saturdays at the visitors center of the Greater London Authority.



Ken Livingstone

RUSSIA
Plainclothes police raided two Moscow gay bars and a gay sex club June 30, checking identifications and videotaping patrons, activists said.

The intrusions occurred at the bars Central Station and Three Monkeys and at the sex club Kazarma. Some of the patrons were beaten, and one man reportedly required medical treatment for a fractured rib.

Activists said they suspected the unidentified officers were from the drug enforcement arm of the Russian Interior Ministry. Six patrons of the sex club were taken from the premises but later released after reportedly paying bribes of \$10 to \$20.

"These unwarranted raids, irrespective of the authority of the involved agency...violate the privacy clause of the European Convention on Human Rights, to which Russia is a signatory, the Russian Constitution and the Federal Laws on Police and on Operative Investigative Activities as well as internal police regulations," activist-journalist Nikita Ivanov wrote at the Internet site Gay.ru.

BELGIUM
Belgium's government has approved a bill opening regular marriage to homosexuals and sent it to Parliament for a vote. Although several nations have gay partnership laws under which same-sex couples receive up to 99 percent of the rights and obligations of marriage, only the Netherlands lets homosexuals marry under the same laws as straight people.

"Mentalities have evolved; there is no longer any reason not to open marriage to people of the same sex," the government said. "The starting point of this bill is equality of treatment in marriage for homosexual and heterosexual couples."

However, the bill does not include equal treatment in the area of adoption rights, which will remain available only to opposite-sex couples. Unlike the Dutch marriage law, which