


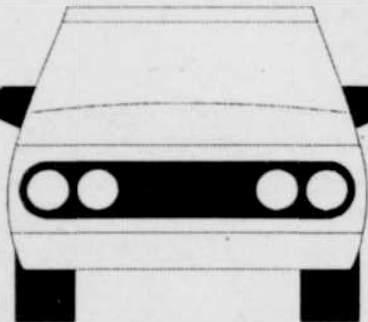
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NATIONAL news

NATIONAL
 President Bush's campaign allegedly engineered a highly questionable strategy to hide payment to one or more anti-gay operatives, the *New York Times* reported Jan. 25.

Associates of longtime top adviser Karl Rove state that he orchestrated an unethical and potentially illegal deal with Enron for the Texas-based company to retain Ralph Reed as a consultant so the former Christian Coalition executive director could help the campaign without appearing on the candidate's payroll. The report alleges that the Bush campaign was able to rely on Reed and his ties to the religious right wing without risking its "compassionate conservatism" message.

"The American people deserve a thorough and independent examination of the alleged Karl Rove-Ralph Reed scandal," said Chad Johnson, National Stonewall Democrats executive director. "It's in everyone's interest for President Bush to direct Karl Rove to immediately make all contacts with Enron public and for Congress to ask tough questions. If the facts about Ralph Reed and Enron are true, George W. Bush wrapped his arms around 11 gay Republicans for a photo op while his campaign improperly, and illicitly, masked his real loyalty to the anti-gay right wing."

According to the *Times*, Reed was paid between \$10,000 and \$20,000 a month by Enron while he "volunteered" his time on the Bush campaign.

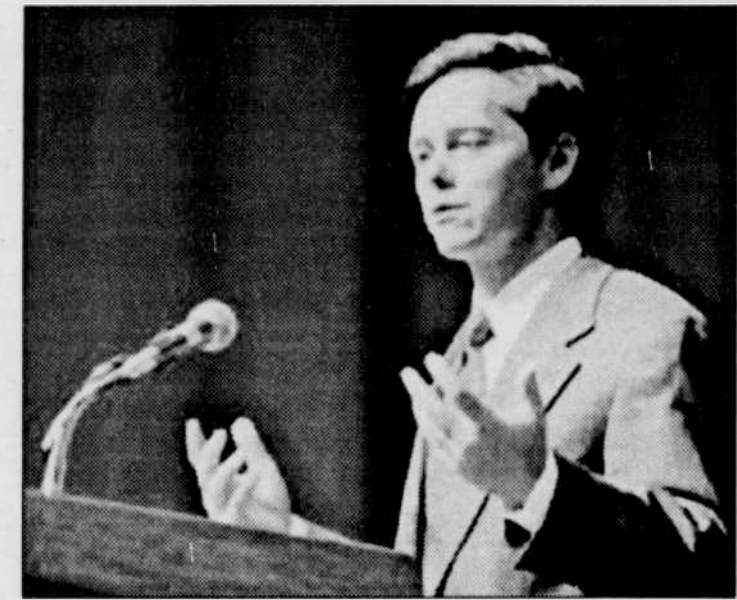
Rove's alleged deal permitted the candidate to solidify his political position among anti-gay voters and simultaneously appeal to centrist voters with a moderate public image. One of the most notorious of these activities by radical-right groups on Bush's behalf involved a flier sent to legislators during the South Carolina primary, stating that rival U.S. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., was tied to gay groups and accordingly was unfit to be president. Who paid for, or disseminated, the gay-baiting materials in support of the campaign never was identified.

If the reports prove accurate, it appears likely Rove, Reed and Enron violated federal election laws and other statutes, which could implicate others, including Bush.

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement Feb. 4 supporting legal and legislative efforts to provide second-parent or co-parent adoptions to same-sex couples. It based its position on a review of scientific literature, which led it to conclude that such adoptions are in the best interests of children.

The policy statement is published in this month's issue of *Pediatrics*, a peer-reviewed academic journal. It urges academy members to "support the right of every child and family to the financial, psychologic and legal security that results from having legally recognized parents who are committed to each other and the welfare of their children." The statement is accompanied by a technical report providing details from the best available scientific studies of children who grow up with gay or lesbian parents.

Only six states and the District of Columbia have made second-parent adoption available statewide, either by statute or state appellate



Ralph Reed reportedly rallied religious right

court ruling: Connecticut, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Vermont. In addition, California's recently passed domestic partnership law allows for stepparent adoption, meaning gay men and lesbians are eligible to adopt their partners' biological children if they wish.

A total of 20 other states have awarded second-parent adoptions at the trial court level, but nothing guarantees judges in other counties would do the same. Pennsylvania recently granted second-parent adoptions in 14 of 67 counties, but in November 2000 the state Superior Court ruled they were no longer available to same-sex parents.

RHODE ISLAND

A regional media frenzy has ensued since the Jan. 16 arrests of seven men in an adult video store during a questionable sex sting.

All of them were charged with disorderly conduct, and four of them also were charged with loitering for prostitution. Although it is difficult to determine where the irresponsibility began, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation said both print and electronic media outlets have been covering the story in a reckless manner.

One man whose name and address were printed in the *Providence Journal*—as well as in his Connecticut hometown paper, the *Norwich Bulletin*—committed suicide Jan. 20. After this tragedy, the *Journal* printed an extensive story Jan. 27 on the case listing not just the names and addresses of the men but also their occupations and a full-page spread of their photos.

This is not the first time people arrested in public sex raids have taken their own lives after their names and addresses were printed in their local paper. In 1998, a Little Rock man killed himself after the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* outed him.

The suicide note said: "My name and everything is in the paper this Morning...Goodbye. I love you."

Although printing the names and addresses of those charged with criminal offenses is legal, including the occupations and photos of these men went beyond the boundaries of the newspaper's typical treatment of arrests. According to GLAAD, the frequency of this practice does not make it right regardless.

"The Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics states that one of the most important principles of responsible journalism is to minimize harm," the watchdog group said. "The media have a responsibility to inform the public, but in this case they missed not only a valuable opportunity to investigate the dubious, possibly discriminatory actions of police officials but also the chance to educate the community about homophobia."

MAINE

Activists have foiled a divisive effort to prohibit same-sex couples from receiv-