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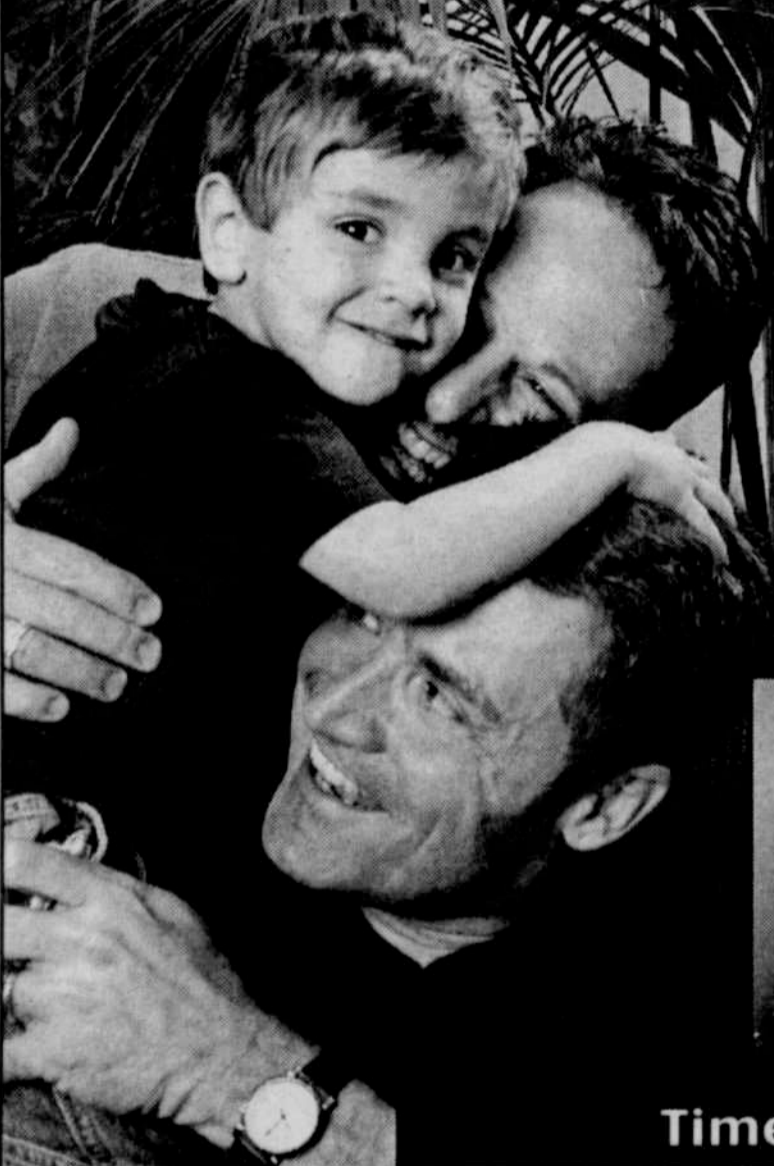
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WORLD news

VIETNAM

A gay fashion show and dance at a hotel in Long Hai attracted hundreds of homosexuals in late March, the newspaper *Thanh Nien* reported April 1. The official youth daily called the event a "highly frenzied...monstrosity," noting most of the models had been "partially turned into women" at sex-change clinics in neighboring Thailand.

"It was an abnormal phenomenon in the activities of the youth [that] is foreign to our country's cultural tradition," the newspaper said. "This monstrosity poses a headache for officials in charge of culture and education."

Very little gay news emerges from Vietnam. In 1998, Agence-France Presse reported that the National Assembly banned gay marriage in response to ceremonies that had taken place.

In 1999, San Francisco activists spread word of an AIDS organization in Ho Chi Minh City. They said the group—called Information, Education, Communication—had 40 members who dispensed condoms, advice and crudely duplicated pamphlets to the estimated 20,000 men who visit local gay pickup spots.

Also in 1999, Vietnam's Labor Ministry reportedly banned HIV carriers from working in hotels, kindergartens, restaurants, health care facilities, beauty shops, vaccine production labs and cosmetic surgery facilities. The agency said that there would be no mass-testing program but that people already known to be infected would have to leave their jobs.



Dutch Defense Secretary Henk Van Hoof says soldiers will march in uniform during Amsterdam's Gay Pride

THE NETHERLANDS

Gay members of the Dutch military will participate in Amsterdam's Gay Pride parade wearing their uniforms this year.

They previously had to wear civilian clothing. Sailors plan to ride on a float shaped like a warship.

"The Dutch armed forces are an organization for all races, natures and religions," Defense Secretary Henk Van Hoof said. "By taking part in the parade it's a good way to show this."

ZIMBABWE

The head of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation resigned April 3 after police began investigating his sexuality. Alum Mpofu is alleged to have been caught "in a compromising situation" with another man March 28 at a Harare nightclub.

"Sexual perverts need to be told once again that homosexuality is unnatural," Information Minister Jonathan Moyo told the *Herald* newspaper. "The only people who accept homosexuality are liberals who think it is a way of getting votes."

ECUADOR

Amnesty International issued a report April 3 blasting Ecuador for mistreatment of sexual minorities.

"It is a sad irony that, while Ecuador is one of the few countries in the world whose constitution explicitly includes 'sexual orientation' in its anti-discrimination provisions...LGBT people in the country continue to suffer human rights violations," the organization said. The group cited arbitrary detentions, torture and ill treatment in custody, and harassment of activists.

"Eight months ago in Quito we launched a comprehensive report on homophobic harassment and violence in Ecuador," Amnesty said. "Sadly, these abuses continue, and the Ecuadorian authorities have taken no action to put an end to them."

Most of the cases described in the report took place in Quito and Guayaquil.

"In recent months, Guayaquil has seen a sharp increase in police roundups, often ending with arbitrary arrests of LGBT people," the organization said. "In a worrying development, the new chief of police for the Guayas and Galápagos Province, who was appointed in September 2001, recently has declared his homophobic views."

"It is time," Amnesty said, "for Ecuador to live up to the promise of equality made in its constitution and to break the vicious circle of impunity and abuses based on sexual identity."

SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa's blockade of AIDS drugs has been ended by the nation's highest court.

The Constitutional Court ordered the government April 4 to give nevirapine to HIV-positive mothers and their newborn babies to prevent mother-to-child transmission. The order did not extend to other HIV drugs or other categories of patients, but AIDS activists said it was a beginning nonetheless.

The South African government steadfastly has refused to provide any anti-HIV medication and even has fired doctors who bucked the ban. President Thabo Mbeki has said that the drugs are too dangerous for human consumption and that he's not sure AIDS really is caused by HIV.

AIDS is caused by HIV, experts agree. And the drugs—while having many side effects, some of them serious—suppress HIV replication to such an extent that hundreds of thousands of people have seen their immune systems rebound, staving off impending death.

POLAND

The Roman Catholic bishop of Poznan, who has been accused of sexually harassing seminarians and priests, resigned March 28.

Monsignor Juliusz Paetz, 67, denied the allegations but said, "The church in Poznan needs peace and unity, so for the good of the church I asked the Holy Father to accept my resignation."

He was outed Feb. 23 by the daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*, which said the incidents occurred so frequently that the rector of the nation's seminary banned him from the property.

In his resignation announcement, which came at the end of a Mass, Paetz said: "My kindness and spontaneity have been abused. My words, gestures and acts have been twisted and misinterpreted."

Poland's leading news agency, PAP, said young seminarians sitting in the congregation snickered as Paetz spoke.



Juliusz Paetz