

WORLD news

cluded that much of the recent syphilis transmission between men likely resulted from oral sex rather than unprotected anal sex.

ITALY

Vatican officials are circulating a draft of new church laws that would ban gays in seminaries and the priesthood.

The document, prepared by the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has been sent to theologians, canon lawyers and others for comment. It says that because Catholic teaching holds that gays are "objectively disordered," it makes sense to keep them out of the priesthood.

Catholic doctrine considers queer sex "intrinsically evil," "deviant" and "contrary to the laws of nature." Gay relationships are "a deplorable distortion of what should be a communion of love and life between a man and a woman in a reciprocal gift open to life."

JAMAICA

Two gay men were granted asylum in Britain last month because it's not safe to be queer in Jamaica. The House of Lords extended asylum law to cover "particular social groups" in 1999.

The applicants presented evidence of threats, murders and machete attacks against Jamaican gays as well as popular music lyrics urging listeners to burn, beat and shoot "chi chi men," which is slang for "faggots." Three of the nation's most successful groups, TOK, Capelton and Elephant Man, have recorded such songs.

Gay sex is punished in Jamaica with up to 10 years in prison at hard labor.



Elephant Man is the reggae world's Eminem

hatred in those young people's eyes was frightening. Some of them looked like they would kill me if they had the chance."

The Independent Television Commission ruled Oct. 14 that a gay kiss shown by the ITV1 network before the 9 p.m. starting time for adult content was acceptable.

About 170 viewers complained to the watchdog agency about a kiss between two male cops on the popular drama *The Bill*, which airs at 8 p.m. In rejecting the complaints, the commission said a kiss is a kiss regardless of the gender of the smoochers.

"The program code does not distinguish between the sexual orientation of characters but asks that any sexual behavior be appropriately limited and inexplicit before 9 p.m.," the ruling stated. "Considering the general portrayal of relationships in this series, the ITC felt the scene was not sexually explicit."



A kiss is just a kiss, a U.K. television watchdog agency ruled after a smooch between two male cops on the popular drama *The Bill* prompted dozens of complaints

UNITED KINGDOM

Activists picketed London's Music of Black Origin Awards on Oct. 1 because Best Reggae Act nominees Capelton, Elephant Man and TOK have recorded songs urging that gays be shot, burned or beaten to death.

None of the three won. The protesters, from the group OutRage!, said they were attacked by a "screaming, homophobic mob" of teen-age reggae fans.

"Yelling 'Kill the batty boy' and 'Kill chi chi men' [Jamaican for 'faggots'], 25 mostly black teen-age music fans kicked, punched, spat on and hurled beer cans, coins and cigarette lighters at gay human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell after he held up a placard with the words 'MOBO rewards anti-gay hate,'" OutRage reported in a press release. Fearing for their safety, the protesters abandoned their demonstration and were escorted away by police.

"The collective homophobic hysteria was absolutely terrifying," Tatchell said. "It was like what white racists did to the black civil rights marchers in the Deep South during the 1960s. For a moment, I was in fear of my life. The

Arsonists torched the Gay Men's Health Center in Edinburgh, Scotland, Sept. 30.

Firefighters doused the flames quickly, but patient records and computers were destroyed, and the facility suffered extensive smoke and water damage. "The whole room looks like a volcano has erupted," said Bruce Fraser, the center's chief executive.

ISRAEL

Tel Aviv extended various spousal benefits to gay couples Oct. 3, *Ha'aretz* reported. Same-sex pairs will have access to discounts and benefits at cultural facilities, libraries, swimming pools and city events, the daily newspaper said.

"The municipality will treat couples known to the public, including single-sex couples, as couples in every sense and will confer to them the same discounts and benefits in public services which are provided to married couples," the new regulations state. The benefits are available to couples who live together and submit an affidavit of their relationship. [E]

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

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