

highest in the administration, even while the state was facing a budget crisis.

McGreevey claimed Cipel's service in the Israeli military, which is mandatory for all citizens, qualified him for the position. But the FBI and other agencies refused to share intelligence data with a foreign national who did not have a top security clearance.

Cipel had held the title for only a few months when state legislators questioned his fitness and threatened to hold up confirmation of key appointees. He then became a special adviser to the governor; his responsibilities were murky, but his salary remained the same. He went to the private sector in August 2002.

As *The New York Times* said in an Aug. 13 editorial, "If McGreevey put someone in that critical post because of a personal relationship, that would be an outrage, regardless of his sexual orientation." It was perhaps the most damaging part of the scenario and one the McGreevey side tried to play down.

Crisis Builds

A phone call from Cipel's lawyer July 23 about a sexual harassment lawsuit would set off a round of discussions that ended in McGreevey's resignation 20 days later, according to *The New York Times*. The reporter was given extensive access to those who had participated in the process.

The staff weighed various options as they negotiated with the lawyer concerning a possible settlement, while McGreevey made sure to maintain a normal schedule. He even spoke to a gathering of gay and lesbian delegates at the Democratic National Convention in Boston without letting a hint of the bombshell slip out.

But the price of settling—some \$5 million,



Golan Cipel (left), who claims he's straight, waited a couple of years before objecting to McGreevey's "repeated sexual advances"

according to what staffers told the *Times*—proved to be too high. Cipel's lawyer called that suggestion a smear campaign against his client and claimed McGreevey's people "offered a sum of money to make my client go away."

At first McGreevey thought he would simply announce that he was not going to run for re-election. But then he decided to make a clean break and resign. The one catch was that he would delay the resignation until Nov. 15 in order to forestall a special election and improve chances for the Democrats to retain control of the governor's office. He called the news conference.

Cipel played the victim card in a statement read by his lawyer the next day. "While employed by one of the most powerful politicians in the country, New Jersey Gov. McGreevey, I was the victim of repeated sexual advances by him. Such conduct and McGreevey's behavior caused me such emotional distress and turmoil. When I finally dared to reject Gov. McGreevey's advances, the retaliatory actions taken by him and members of his administration were nothing short of abuse and intimidation."

McGreevey maintains that the sexual activity was consensual. And while the still-married father of two now calls himself a homosexual, the never-married Cipel told an Israeli reporter that he is heterosexual.

Cipel's lawyer anticipates that a sexual harassment suit will be filed shortly. New Jersey has a statute of limitations requiring that it be filed within two years of leaving that employment. The deadline for Cipel is Aug. 30.

Reactions

"I think gayness is being used," Rutgers University political science professor Alan Rosenthal told *The Associated Press*. "It's not the root cause of his resignation. And it's certainly not the root cause of McGreevey's demise." He blamed the resignation on an accumulation of scandals and ineptitude.

"The fact that he's gay is the least of his problems," gay writer Eric Marcus told *The New York Times*. "And I'm not quite sure where his coming out fits into all of this. I don't think it reflects well on gay people."

"Here is a man who chose to hide who he was, came out under pressure because he had engaged in an adulterous affair, had given his romantic partner a government job. It's not exactly a moment I think anybody who has been involved in the gay rights movement can take pride in." **J**

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