

# Q-Notes

Vol. 10, No. 2  
July 1995

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## Gay-basher charged in grisly stabbing death

by David Stout  
Q-Notes Staff

CHARLOTTE—In the early morning of Monday, June 19, Russell (Rusty) Watson, 45, was stabbed to death at his home at the Summit Ridge apartment complex on Farm Pond Lane. Two days later, police charged James Mark Barberree, 31, with his murder. It was the second time in less than eight years that Barberree had been arrested for brutally stabbing a gay man and came only three months after his parole for a handgun possession offense.



James Mark Barberree

Responding to cries for help, neighbor Christopher Hartung, an off-duty Charlotte police officer, discovered Watson alone, lying dead in a pool of blood in front of his apartment.

After Hartung called emergency services, patrol officer J. A. McWhirter arrived on the scene within moments to begin the investigation. Q-Notes contacted Hartung about the incident but he declined to comment; officer McWhirter was unavailable at press time.

According to an anonymous source, Barberree fled the scene on foot and discarded some of his bloodied clothing in the area. Reportedly, these articles were recovered by police and used to identify and apprehend the accused. Sergeant Rick Sanders, a supervisor in the police department's homicide division and the person in charge of this investigation, confirmed that "physical evidence was collected at the scene and other places as well," but

would not reveal what that evidence might be. Q-Notes' source also indicated that Barberree had confessed to the crime, but Sgt. Sanders would not confirm that either.

The events that brought the two men together that night are not clear, but it appears that Watson, a self-employed floral designer, knew Barberree previously. The alleged assailant went to Watson's home, in a car that he had stolen earlier in the evening, and was presumably invited in since police found no sign of forced entry.

Details are also sketchy as to what instigated the stabbing, but robbery is the most likely motive based on a similar crime Barberree committed several years ago.

In 1987, Barberree nearly stabbed Ken Schell to death. In fact, Sgt. Sanders said that the striking similarities between the two attacks was one of the first elements to suggest Barberree's possible involvement to him. "I

was the lead investigator in the Schell case, and I noticed several similarities between that crime and this one. This type of offender, who preys on gay men, is serial in nature usually."

Schell's harrowing story was recounted in a newspaper article in April 1991. In that feature, he said that he gave Barberree a ride when the young man was hitchhiking. They drove around and talked and eventually ended up in Latta Park. Barberree spoke about being "confused" in his marriage and indicated that he wanted to spend the night with Schell. The men then went to Schell's home.

For the next several weeks, Barberree kept calling Schell and coming by requesting money. Schell always refused — until one day Barberree showed up with a knife and stabbed him 27 times and robbed him of \$23 in cash.

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**"This type of offender, who preys on gay men, is serial in nature usually."**

## Helms still blocking Senate vote

by David Jones  
Q-Notes staff

WASHINGTON, DC—The US Senate is ready to vote on the broadly-supported Ryan White CARE Act, which easily won Senate committee endorsement, but sources report that NC Senator Jesse Helms is still blocking a vote (Q-Notes, June 1995).

Sources in Charlotte told Q-Notes that former Republican North Carolina Governor Jim Martin personally called Helms, at the request of AIDS health professionals, to persuade the Senator to release his hold on the bill. Martin was reportedly unable to convince Helms to allow the Senate vote.

Helms is said to have repeated to Martin the same arguments a Helms spokeswoman made to this newspaper last month in an exclusive interview: too much money is being spent on AIDS compared with diseases like cancer and heart disease.

While this situation plays itself out in the Senate, the US House of Representatives is creating its own bill to reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act, which provides financial support to poor people with HIV and AIDS.

The House bill is slated for consideration by the Committee on Commerce this month.

While the working House version is similar to the Senate bill, there are differences, according to AIDS Action Network of Washington, DC. Most of the changes being debated in the House deal with the funding formula that determines the amount of federal money individual states may receive.

Under the Senate version, North Carolina could have its funding doubled if overall levels remain the same. The North Carolina share would climb from the current \$2.4 million to up to \$5 million due to a change in the Senate's funding formula — adjusted to send more money to rural states. In the House version, states with major metropolitan areas (which have received the most funding in the past) would be protected by a 5 percent cap on any loss of funding as a result of the proposed redistribution of money.

The House is also considering a 15 percent set-aside for women, infants and children, and establishing a ten percent cap for administrative costs for groups that receive grants under their program.

## Survey examines bias in NC bars

by Dan Van Mourik  
Q-Notes Staff

GREENSBORO—Due to rumors and a few substantiated instances of discrimination, Men of All Colors Together (MACT)-Greensboro/Triad initiated a survey to find if, in fact, a pattern of discrimination on the basis of color, gender or age actually existed in North Carolina's gay clubs.

The survey began on March 1, 1995 and ended on May 15. It was funded in part by individual contributions and by a \$500 grant from the National Association of Black and White Men Together.

The survey was anonymous and sought only demographic information such as age, race and gender. It included 29 gay clubs and asked participants to identify those clubs from which they had been denied entry and what they felt was the reason. It also asked them to identify their favorite club, the club with the most courteous and friendly staff, and which

clubs they attended most.

Of the 79 surveys returned to MACT, 69 percent of the respondents were male and 31 percent female. People of color comprised 55 percent (40 percent male, 15 percent female) and those identifying themselves as white comprised 45 percent (29 percent male, 16 percent female).

Analysis of the returned surveys revealed that 49 percent had never been turned away from a club; 14 percent had been turned away due to membership policies (not felt to be discriminatory); and 37 percent had been turned away for reasons they felt were discriminatory. Of that 37 percent, 63 percent gave the reason as race, 16 percent gender and 16 percent age.

According to MACT's analysis, several contradictions are evident in the results. While a club may be included in the list of "unfriendly," the same club will rank highly as a

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## Gay jobs bill introduced with record support in Congress

WASHINGTON, DC—Gay and lesbian relatives of members of Congress joined victims of anti-gay job discrimination and Congressional sponsors of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA) at a Capitol press conference reintroducing the landmark legislation. ENDA would prohibit job discrimination based on sexual orientation. Currently, no federal law protects people from being fired, refused work or otherwise discriminated against merely for being lesbian or gay.

"Hard-working people across this nation are fired, refused work and treated unfairly simply because they are gay — and have no federal law to turn to for justice," said Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign Fund (HRCF), the nation's largest lesbian and gay political organization. HRCF organized the press conference along with the lead Congressional sponsors of the bill. "We look forward to a day when all Americans are judged in the workplace not by who they are, but by how well they do their jobs. ENDA would simply ensure that no one loses their job for a reason wholly unrelated to their skills or job performance."

Joining Birch were gay and lesbian family members of US Senators and Representatives, including: John Bennett, nephew of Sen. Robert Bennett (R-UT); Chastity Bono, daughter of Rep. Sonny Bono (R-CA); Sandy DeWine, cousin of Sen. Michael DeWine (R-OH); Candace Gingrich, sister of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-GA) and Julie Pell, daughter of Sen. Claiborne Pell (D-RI).

"Anti-gay discrimination can touch any family in America," Birch said. "As gay and lesbian people come out in their own way and educate their families, friends and coworkers, our movement for equality makes enormous strides forward."

The lead sponsors of ENDA in the 104th Congress are: Sen. James Jeffords (R-VT), Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Rep. Connie Morella (R-MD), Rep. Barney Frank (D-MA), Rep. Gerry Studds (D-MA), and Rep. Peter Torkildsen (R-MA). Richard Womack, acting executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the nation's leading

civil rights coalition, pledged the group's support for ENDA.

Gay and lesbian people who have been discriminated against in the workplace spoke about their personal experiences with discrimination. Speaking were Ernest Dillon, a postal worker from Detroit; Michael Engler, a stock broker from Baltimore; Angela Romero, a police officer from Denver; and Jesse Shaw, a former social worker from Jackson, MS. HRCF recently released a new publication highlighting their stories and similar cases from across the nation.

"Gay and lesbian Americans simply want to do their jobs, pay their taxes and contribute to their communities without living in fear of discrimination," Birch said. "When Americans understand that the discrimination gay people face is both widespread and legal, they support the fundamental values embodied in ENDA."

"On behalf of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, I am pleased to endorse the Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 1995. Sexual orientation does not affect a person's ability to contribute in the workplace yet gay, lesbian and bisexual people continue to be isolated, stigmatized and persecuted in and out of the workplace. Without this measure, the threat of legal discrimination paralyzes us in our jobs and prevents us from living as full and equal citizens," said Melinda Paras, Task Force executive director.

ENDA has already won more original co-sponsors in the 104th Congress than it had when it was introduced last year. So far, the bill has 150 compared to 138 when it was first introduced in June 1994.

A post-election poll of people who voted in the November 1994 election found that more than 70% supported equal rights in the workplace for lesbian and gay Americans. The number included 64% Republicans, 71% Independents and 77% Democrats. The poll of 800 voters, conducted by Lake Research, Inc., had a margin of error of +/- 3.5%.

"America is way ahead of Congress on the fair treatment of lesbian and gay citizens. It's time that Congress caught up," Birch said.