

the Front Page

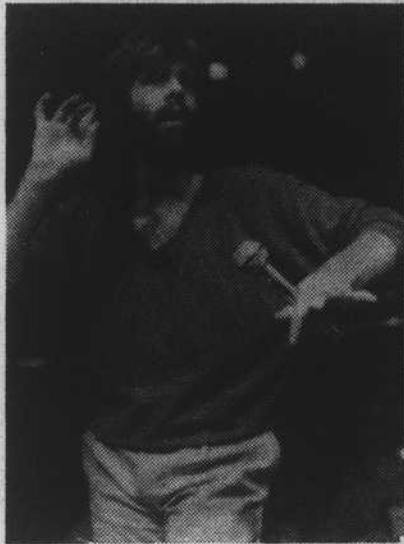
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The News & Entertainment Paper for N.C.'s Gay Community

IN THIS ISSUE:



Pacino boogies (sort of) in 'Cruising'

'Cruising' Opens

Protests in major cities;
unanimously bad reviews

Compiled by Michael Baker
and Don King

The hotly debated film about homosexual murders opened across the country on February 15, despite rumors of a postponement. Although there have been protests in several major cities, and scathing reviews in almost every conceivable publication, *Cruising* appears to be doing brisk business in the early weeks of its showing.

According to the manager of the Tryon Mall Theatre in Charlotte: "We opened 'The Jerk' during Christmas, and we're doing about as much business with 'Cruising' as we did then." Manager Cato went on to say that "We've only given four refunds—to older couples who just couldn't take it."

Sanford Jordan, district manager for the Martin Theatres, told the *Raleigh News & Observer* that 'Cruising' was doing "very, very good" business at Raleigh's Terrace Theatre. But he, too, said that a few people had walked out, saying the film was "too rough and just too gory."

Filming incited Riots

Directed by William Friedkin and starring Al Pacino, the film has been surrounded by controversy ever since a copy of the script was leaked to Village Voice columnist Arthur Bell early last summer.

Although there had been several sporadic attempts throughout last July to disrupt filming of *Cruising*, it wasn't until July 25 that the anger against the film (which had been criticized by several journalists, including Arthur Bell of *The Village Voice*) developed into a full demonstration, during which a gay man was arrested for allegedly assaulting an officer.

The *New York Post* ran the headline "Gays Riot over Movie" on the front page, the *New York Times* editorialized on the subject, and radio and television networks picked up the story of the protests and debates.

NGTF issued a statement concerning the film in August, saying: "We have reached the conclusion that the film . . . represents a gross distortion of the lives of gay men by portraying them as violent and sex-obsessed. . . Like other groups before us who have been victimized by false and inflammatory media images, we will not sit still for an entertainment that debases our humanity."

"R" rating

There was further controversy when the time came for the film to be rated by the Motion Picture Association. By trimming three minutes from 'Cruising,' the producers received an R rating. (An R rating allows a parent or guardian to take his child to the film.)

The General Cinema Corporation, the nation's largest theatre chain, disagreed with the rating. GCC had bid to show

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National News

Resignations Follow Tearoom Scandals

Olympia, WA (IGNA) — The president of the Olympia Brewing Company and a Republican state representative have resigned their positions following their arrests on misdemeanor charges of "lewd conduct" in a public restroom.

Leopold Schmidt, 39, was arrested on Valentine's Day along with Republican state representative Eric Rohrbach, 28. Also arrested was Joseph Gregorious, 40, the director of the Alcohol and Substances Abuse Section of Washington's Department of Social and Health Services.

Schmidt, the son of the company's founder and first president, resigned his \$132,000 per year position as head of the nation's seventh largest brewery two days after the arrest, citing "medical reasons."

Representative Eric Rohrbach, Republican from Normandy Park, resigned from the state legislature. But Rohrbach went on the floor of the House on February 18th to say, "I am not a homosexual."

He further told a hushed group of legislators: "Charges made against me last week, which have been expanded upon by the media, have caused me untold personal embarrassment and irreparable damage."

"Because of this, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for me to effectively serve my constituents. Mary Kay, my fiancee, and I plan to be married and I must think of her and our future."

"I have also seriously considered my responsibilities to this legislative body. I am proud of the work I have accomplished as a member of this legislature. I thank all of you for your personal support, but I must, in light of the foregoing, submit my immediate resignation."

The third man, Joseph Dean Gregorious, a state official in the state's Bureau of Alcohol and Substance Abuse, submitted a letter of resignation to his boss at the Department of Social and Health Services. He asked to be reassigned to another position even if it means demotion and a decrease in salary.

The boss, Glen H. Miller, accepted the resignation and gave Gregorious 30 days' leave. Depending on merit system regulations, Miller said he would try to find a place for him within the department. Gregorious has been with the department for more than 20 years.

The arrests occurred in the restroom of a lakefront park located about a dozen blocks from the state capitol. Police had the restroom staked out for three weeks because of "citizen complaints" about the sexual activity in the area, says the city's police chief John Wurner.

Wurner said officers had identified 20 to 30 regular visitors of the restroom in the past two weeks and that homosexual activities had been observed. These men may now be arrested, he says.

The arrests were made by undercover officer Jim Flint, after he entered the restroom and "was solicited himself," Wurner said. "The acts were taking place right in front of him."

According to a recent issue of *Gay Community News*, representatives of the Olympia Gay Rights Coalition are wondering why the police had the restroom staked out at this particular time, alleging that "the restroom has been a well-known 'tea-room' for over 20 years." The group is also concerned over Police Chief Wurner's "list" of regular visitors to the restroom, and possible repercussions from its existence.

Roger L. Winters, president of the Dorian Group, Washington state's largest gay rights organization, has been critical of the local media for its coverage of the arrests. In addition, Winters, who is also acting director of the Seattle chapter of the ACLU, said, "There is some concern about reports of 'illegal homosexual activity' since no law makes homosexual activity per se a crime."

Considering the question of police entrapment, Winters stated, "We may never know if no defense in court is done." Because the three men have forfeited their bail, there will be no appearances in court.

Army Man Pleads Not Guilty

Seattle, WA (GCN)—Roger Cutsinger, 21, charged with the murder of his roommate as he walked across the campus of the University of Washington on Dec. 14, has entered a plea of not guilty before the Superior Court of that state.

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- An interview with **GOTHAM** page 8
- A review of the film 'Cruising' page 13
- "Media Notes": a new column, examining coverage of gay stories by major media, begins page 5
- Book Review: "Tales of the City" page 11

DEADLINES



for next issue:

For a number of reasons, we are combining issues 8 & 9. Our next issue will be out March 20.

Deadline for advertising is March 14.