

LAGPAN

COORDINATOR - AUSTIN ALLEN
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Lesbian and Gay Postal Action Network Letter No. 5

Background In recent years the relationship between The Manchester Police and the local gay and lesbian community has greatly improved - especially following the departure of James Anderton. This relationship was considerably dented on 23 April 1994 by a police raid on the gay club, Mineshaft. The raid was executed by the Central Licencing Division which, to a degree, operates separately from the main body of the police force. Members of the Greater Manchester Lesbian and Gay Consultative Group are keen to restore the former good, on-going liaison. This can, in part, be achieved by the Chief Constable (who is very supportive and understanding of gay/lesbian issues) recognising 1. the concern of the gay/lesbian community and 2. that, although he is not expected to condone law-breaking, the methods of implementing the law are often very discriminatory against gay men and lesbians.

Target Mr David Wilmot, Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police Headquarters,
Chester House, Manchester, M16 0ER.

Letter Please write to Mr Wilmot and thank him for the on-going liaison between the police and the gay/lesbian community and encourage him to continue and expand this work in the future. Ask him to clarify his position in the light of recent events and make use of the following points if you wish.....

Concerning the raid on The Mineshaft:

1. Is it true that gay men were handcuffed together in their underwear and not allowed to dress before they were taken to the police station?
2. Did the police wear overalls and rubber gloves in the raid?
3. Are the two above common practise?
4. Was the police raid prompted by a complaint from the public?

and generally:

1. Is it true that gay venues in Manchester are well run, orderly and almost totally free from offences relating to drugs, violence and theft? Raids in the future will only serve to alienate the gay/lesbian community and create unwanted animosity towards the police.
2. Will Inspector Grayson (Head of Central Licencing Division) be invited to attend meetings of the Lesbian and Gay Consultative Group in future?
3. Outside of London, Manchester has the highest crime rate together with the lowest rate for detection of crime. The public have every right to be outraged that police time is being spent on victimless crime and 'crimes' which are largely only moralistic crimes in the minds of a minority.
4. The police - especially in the 'Gay Village' - need the support of the gay and lesbian community and should be striving towards colaborative policing. Such examples of harassment towards the gay businesses in Manchester can only serve to harm this need.
5. Manchester is striving to present itself to the rest of Europe as a large, leading cosmopolitan city. This sort of police activity will not be seen in a just light by the rest of a much more tolerant Europe where such actions are rarely experienced.

Suggestions Please, if possible, send a copy of your letter to Greater Manchester Lesbian and Gay Police Consultative Initiative, c/o Healthy Gay Manchester, Ducie House, 37, Ducie Street, Manchester, M1 2JW.

Thank you for writing LAGPAN Letter No 5

Austin Allen

wednesday 11 may 1994

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Dear Friends, Please excuse 'two-for-the-price-of-one' but april gotten too, too busy for me and I just didn't get time to put fingers to typewriter keys - sorry.

Lesbian and Gay Postal ActionNetwork Letter No. 6.

Background In 1991, Mark Watson began a relationship with Ander da Silva from Brazil. Mark worked for the Home Office. Ander was on short stay visa visiting The UK. When Mark realised that Ander would have to return to Brazil either voluntarily or be deported, he forged papers to allow Ander to remain in The UK. The forgeries were discovered and exposed. Ander is now in Brazil. Mark is in prison - serving six months. Clearly, what Mark did was illegal. However, if he and his partner were a heterosexual couple, under the same circumstances, they would not have been placed in their dilemma. Ander would have received permission to remain in The UK and no forgeries would have been necessary and Mark would not be in prison and Mark and Ander would be together. This biassed, unfair, prejudiced situation is experienced by many gay and lesbian couples each year.

Target Mr Charles Wardle, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration, The Home Office, 50, Queen Anne's Gate, LONDON, SW1H 9AT.

Letter Please write to Mr Wardle expressing outrage and deep concern that such discrimination exists within the implementing of our immigration laws. Make use of the following if you wish.....

1. Highlight the above case and stress that Mr Watson would not have been placed in this predicament if he was heterosexual. Also, stress that his choice was cruel - either his lover or his job.
2. The Home Office indeed accepts equality for gay men and lesbians who are employees of the Home Office - Home Office Policy and Guidelines for Equal Opportunities. Why, then, does The Home Office not recognise equality for implementing it's own laws as they apply to ordinary citizens?

Suggestions It would be very helpful (especially in the next three weeks) if copies of your letter were sent to Graham Allen MP, Shadow Minister for Immigration, House of Commons, LONDON, SW1 1AA.

Suggestion - extra - if you would like to send personal letters of support and solidarity to Mark Watson PLEEEEEEESE DO NOT SEND TO PRISON but send them c/o Ken and Gareth, 91, Oval Road, East Croyden, CR0 6BR. If you would like Mark to reply, then please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. Thanks.

Thank you for writing LAGPAN Letter No 6.

Austin Allen
thursday 12 may 1994

Austin Allen