

One of the plaintiffs, Denise Markham, was the only woman of 50 police officers at a session last September at Camp Douglas, Wis. As Markham lay prone on a rifle range during a field exercise, a DEA trainer allegedly bellowed, "I'm getting a hard-on!" and grabbed his genitals. The agent's high jinks caused "laughter among all the men present," the suit claims, but it produced the opposite effect on Markham. She felt so threatened she pushed a refrigerator in front of her barracks door at night and slept next to a loaded gun.

This isn't the first time the agency has faced such complaints. In March 1994, a House subcommittee received a scathing General Accounting Office (GAO) report based on interviews with 63 current and former DEA employees. The GAO found that the agency averaged 382 days to process internal harassment complaints, that investigations were often incomplete, and that employees were reluctant to report incidents for fear of reprisals.

The DEA launched its own probe into the Chicago team after receiving an October 31 letter from a police officer who attended a September session. But the agents were left on the job until April 10, five days after the suit was filed. The DEA gave them paid leave and transferred all but White from the Chicago office. On April 27, the agency announced that its investigation had confirmed some of the allegations and recommended "serious discipline."

"This vindicates our clients' account of what happened," says Sarah Siskind, the plaintiffs' attorney. "We hope we can work with the DEA to achieve effective mechanisms built into the training programs that will prevent this kind of conduct from ever happening again."

—Chip Mitchell

## TORRICELLI'S TURNAROUND

As the House ethics committee investigated whether Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ) violated his secrecy oath by revealing the CIA's ties to a Guatemalan colonel allegedly involved in the murders of a U.S. innkeeper and a Guatemalan guerrilla leader, many observers were trying to answer a more perplexing question: Why did the New Jersey Democrat—a hard-line opponent of Fidel Castro's Cuba and no foreign policy dove—go public?

In a letter to the Clinton administration dated March 22, Torricelli, a member of the House Intelligence Committee, cited classified information showing that paid CIA informant Col. Julio Roberto Alpirez had directed the killing of American innkeeper Michael DeVine and Guatemalan guerrilla leader Efraín Bámaca Velásquez, the husband of American lawyer Jennifer Harbury (See *In These Times*, April 17). Torricelli expressed outrage "that the United States government was complicitous in these murders and continued to mislead the families and the American people."

Considering the CIA's long, sordid history in Guatemala, many human rights activists wonder what spurred Torricelli's sudden interest. Sister Alice Zachmann, director of the Guatemalan Human Rights Commission USA, noted that attempts to get the Subcommittee on Western Hemispheric Affairs to address the issue during Torricelli's tenure as chairman were continually thwarted by "some kind of blockage."

Former CIA agent David MacMichael, a founder of the Association of National Security Alumni, offered a two-word explanation for Torricelli's recent conversion to the cause: Bianca Jagger. Jagger, a longtime human rights activist, has been the congressman's companion since 1992. Torricelli has

## MEDIA BEAT

By Pat Aufderheide

### Internet, Inc.

It hasn't been easy for marketers to figure out how to make money on the Internet, which was developed by computer nerds and Defense Department engineers and then spread to universities and home users. But Internet connections, mostly commercial now, are growing at 10 to 15 percent a month, and marketers are eagerly awaiting the development of secure payment systems on the net.

While we're waiting, the Internet is fast becoming a playground of leading-edge marketers. Some sites, like that of the popular magazine *Wired*, now require viewers to register and use passwords—thus becoming part of a marketers' database, and preparing the ground for future payments. Other sites are embedding advertising into home-page screens, and attaching ads to e-mail messages. After a first-generation (and non-profit) flood of sex-obsessed user groups appeared on-line, some entrepreneurs in San Diego (profiled in this month's *Wired*) are marketing interactive cybersex—an online service that allows customers to phone in requests for live performances, which are transmitted on-screen.

And for kids, Mattel has opened up a Barbie doll online service. With a whiff of mystery, the toy company promised in *Investor's Business Daily* that the service will allow children to "be able to interact with Barbie in very special ways."

Net pioneers, who are mostly noncommercial users, regard the commercialization of the Internet with horror.

But in fact, commercialization could spur the Internet's broader acceptance and use. Nonprofit users might then have wide access to low-cost communications. But there's no need to get prematurely utopian. The net's infrastructure is at the moment a battle site for corporate control, and universal service is still a dream.

Meanwhile, seize the chance to virtually hunt up noncommercial information, heralded in the latest issue of *InfoActive* (Center for Media Education, 1511 K St. NW, #518 Washington, DC 20005, [cmec@access.digex.net](mailto:cmec@access.digex.net)). From the White House to the Foundation Center, World Wide Web sites are springing up faster than you can point and click.

As they do, new problems spring up as well, including the challenge of sifting undigested information and the specter of losing access to information in its old-fashioned print form. But public-access Web sites also demonstrate the potential of "the Net" to be more than a spider's web for the marketers.

### By the way...

For a lively primer on built-in media bias, check out David Croteau and William Hoynes' *By Invitation Only: How the Media Limit Political Debate* (\$9.95, Common Courage Press, Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951, 1-800-497-3207). Bringing together three important studies conducted by the watchdog group Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting, the book surveys leading news and public affairs shows on television and finds that they systematically exclude left-of-center viewpoints.

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acknowledged the crucial role Mick Jagger's ex-wife played in piquing his interest, after she saw a *60 Minutes* report last November on Harbury's hunger strike in Guatemala City to call attention to her husband's plight.

The charges embarrassed the Clinton administration—which had denied having any information on the murders—and provoked House Speaker Newt Gingrich to issue an angry rebuke. Gingrich demanded Torricelli's removal from the intelligence panel if the House ethics committee determined that he had violated a new secrecy oath Congress adopted in January. Nonetheless, the disclosure has prompted both the White House and Congress to investigate the CIA's involvement in the two murders.

Torricelli admits that he violated the secrecy oath, claiming it was in "direct conflict" with the oath of office that requires him to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the country. "My duty as a citizen, a lawyer and as a member of Congress supersedes any congressional secrecy requirement," the 43-year-old, seven-term congressman argued in a letter to the House ethics panel.

But some insist Torricelli's motivation was more Machiavellian. "He is not doing this because he's concerned with people being murdered," said a staffer who works for a fellow House Democrat. "Publicity is power, and now he is in the news more than when he was [subcommittee] chairman." The most widespread speculation, however, is that Torricelli's revelations were an embarrassing "payback" to President Clinton for overlooking him when he named a new chair of the Democratic National Committee early this year.

Regardless of the reasons, Torricelli's actions have been widely applauded in Washington's human rights community. "I'm just glad he did it," Zachmann said. "I'm hoping we can keep up the momentum and do something about the human rights situation in Guatemala."

—Peter Zirnite

### Tomorrow's News Tonight

By Steve Brodner

Bomb blast unearths Hoover.  
He is spotted in DC.  
Gets old job.

