

Bob LeBlanc

Silent Drums



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Talk Show

It all started in early 1994, as I was sitting in my West Los Angeles office, serving as police captain for the Veterans Affairs Police Department.

I received a telephone call from a women who said she was calling from New York, and that she represented a major talk show host. They wanted to know if I would appear on their show to explain how I felt about the book.

Confused and surprised, I thought to myself, what book? I told her that I had no idea what she was talking about, and asked her to please explain herself. She then informed me that I was mention by name in a book entitled *Conduct Unbecoming*, written by Randy Schultz, and proceeded to read out of a chapter in the novel devoted to “LeBlanc v US Marine Corp.”

Still somewhat shocked, I replied that I wasn’t completely sure what she was talking about, and that until I found out, I had no intention of appearing on her show or anyone else’s.

The Bookstore

I left my office and drove to the nearest bookstore.

As I entered, low and behold, there was a lady reading the book in question. I searched the shelves, and quickly became aware that there were no additional copies of the book available.

I went looking for the woman, who seemed to have the last copy, al through the store. I finally found her, but I guess I was a little forceful in wrenching the book out of here hands. I explained my circumstances, and asked her if I could see the book. She offered it to me. As I stood there reading, I started to flashback to the year 1963.

High School Buddies

Eight high school buddies and I agreed to join the Marine Corp. We got together and went down to the local recruiting station. There were many formalities: we were interviewed, we filled out forms, took a written test and finally, we received a physical checkup.

Upon completion of these things, we found that our wishes were about to come true. We all passed, and were going to boot camp. We each went home to our families, and made final preparations, saying goodbye to love ones.

A few weeks later, we were sworn in as US Marines. They shipped us off to Camp Lejune, North Carolina, where we would receive our formal combat training.

It was there, on that base, that I was first accused of being a homosexual.

Allen

As I was going through my training in 1964, I met a corpsman from New York named Allen Spear. During that time, IO learned to respect him, for he was a hardworking, dedicated patriot. We became good friends.

Allen was soon ordered to report to the Office of Special Investigations (O.S.I.). It was also commonly known as Naval Investigative Services (N.I.S.). Thought he himself was not under investigation for homosexuality, he was accused of knowing and associating with a homosexual. His response was direct. He said he did indeed “know” a homosexual, and could see nothing wrong with it.

The Marine Corp gave Spear a dishonorable discharge for knowing and refusing to divulge the names of other homosexuals in the military. He returned home to New York and tried to explain what had happened to his family. They rejected him as a “disgrace to the family,” and subsequently disowned him.

He began to drink heavily. He moved to Montreal, Canada, where he declared himself a “landing immigrant.”

To this day, nearly 40 years later, Allen continues to drink heavily and resides on skid row. He never

attempted to reconcile with parents, who have both since died.

He refused to return to the United States because he still believes that his country dishonored him unjustifiably.

These events fortified my determination to never allow such unjust discrimination to be applied to me. Not without a fight.

Transfer to Vietnam

During the escalation of the Vietnamese hostilities, I requested reassignment to a combat position. The request was denied by my commanding officer.

I made a subsequent appeal at the next level in the chain of command, and my request was granted. I was transferred to Camp Pendleton, California, for processing, and shipped to Vietnam.

My Off the Cuff Advice

During processing, I was approached by a fellow marine who wanted some advice.

He told me that he did not wish to go to Vietnam because he was frightened. He did not want to go into combat, and felt that the military life was not for him.

He wondered if I knew any alternatives that would get him out quickly. I let him know that there were various choices for his consideration, but the one fast and sure way would be to turn himself in to his commanding officer as a homosexual.

At that time, I thought nothing of my “off the cuff” remark.

First Interrogation

Several days later, I was summoned by my commanding officer. I reported to his office, where he then informed me to report to OSI and dismissed me. As I was leaving his office, I came upon a good friend of mine named Christopher Reed.

It seems that he could tell I was a little shaken, and he asked me what was wrong. I told him where I was going. “don’t worry,” he said. “You’ve done nothing wrong. They probably just want to ask you a few questions, maybe get some information.”

Hearing this put me a little at ease. I thanked Chris, walked over to the OSI building and reported in.

I was seated in a small room, where I waited for more than an hour. Finally, a man dressed in civilian clothes came in and introduced himself as a special agent of the OSI. (from this point forward, the agent will be identified as Inv-1)

Inv-1 said that he wanted to talk to me about some allegations that someone had made against me.

“”What allegations?” I asked.

“For being a faggot,” he said in those words.

“I am not a faggot,” I replied. “I never was a faggot, and I will never become a faggot. I am here to serve my country. As a matter of fact, I believe I’ve done a pretty good job for the Marine Corp up to this point.”

Another hour passed as he repeated this line of questioning. I gave the same answers. Soon a second man entered the room (Inv-2). He chastised Inv-1 for the length and harshness of the interrogation. They said that they did not want to establish that I was a homosexual, but to determine if I had any knowledge about other marines who were. Inv-2 asked his colleague to leave. I spent another hour with Inv-2, reaffirming my innocence. Then, he left the room.

Inv-1 returned, and started all over again with the same type of questions, only this time, he used another approach. He focused my attention on the telephone, which he approached holding a piece of paper. He read off a telephone number, and asked me if it was familiar.

“Of course,” I answered. “It’s my mother’s phone number.”

Then he said, “I plan to call your mother, and tell her that her son is a faggot who is about to be kicked out of the Marine Corp. Of course, we could stop all this. All you have to do is confess to the allegations, and we will keep everything quiet as you are being discharged.”

I flashed back to my friend, Allen, and it fortified my determination. I was not going to allow this to happen to me, and I told Inv-1 that he could call anyone he wanted.

He explained that being court martialed a homosexual carried a stiff fine, plus years of hard labor in a military prison, and again mentioned that he could stop all of this if I would confess to the allegations. But this time, he added that I should provide him with a few names.

By now it was getting dark. Inv-1 dismissed me, but said that I had to return first thing the next morning.

As I walked back to my barracks, I wondered what else I could say or do to convince the OSI agents that I was not a homosexual. This questioned drummed over and over in my head all through the night.

The following morning, I reported back to OSI, where I was met by Inv-2. He told me he believed everything I said about not being a faggot, but that I had to prove myself to Inv-1 by submitting to a polygraph test. If I passed it, the investigation would be terminated.

The test consisted of only a few questions, including, of course, "Are you a faggot.?"

I said no.

After the test was over, I felt relieved. But a major approached me and said that I would have to take the test

again. The second time the same questions were asked. After passing the second test, I was informed that I must submit to a third one. Approximately forty-five minutes after completing the third test, two agents and the test administrator told me that I had successfully completed the interrogation with no apparent attempt at deception.

The major indicated to me that if I was a faggot, I would probably be killed in Vietnam anyway, and that would be one less faggot in the world.

“It doesn’t mean anything to us,” he said. “You’re dismissed.”

I went back to my company, and a short time later, I was shipped to Vietnam.

Vietnam

I served a thirteen-month tour of duty in Vietnam, and was highly decorated upon my return to the United States. During this time, I learned that my friend, Chris, had been killed in an ambush. (His name is on “the Wall”)

In 1967, I started a second tour in Vietnam, which lasted for tow years.

In late 1969 we were receiving rocket fire and mortar shells into the support base. I was standing on a bunker when an explosion occurred, and I was hit by debris. I went into several respiratory arrests, including cardiac arrest, and lost all feeling from the neck down. Fortunately, a nearby corpsman saved my life.

A surgeon later diagnosed me with contusions of the C-2, 3 and 4th of the spinal cord. I overheard him say. “This Marine has little or no chance of living,” then he ordered me to be evacuated immediately by helicopter to the military hospital in Di-Nang.

When I arrived, they determined that my situation was beyond their resources, so they rushed me by helicopter to a hospital ship located off the coast of Vietnam.

Hospital

Upon arrival, I was placed into a contraption called a striker-frame with crutch-feel-tongs.

Later they shipped me back to the United States to the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, where I was placed in another type of contraption called a gardener-wells-tongs.

I later learned some good news: my spine was severely bruised, but not broken. They recommended a vigorous rehabilitation program to force the muscles to regenerate, thereby making it possible for me to regain feeling from the neck down, and the use of my limbs.

During this period I heard that my commanding officer, Colonel Goggin, from my old unit in Virginia was reassigned to Quantico Marine Corp Base, also located in Virginia. I contacted him and requested assistance in getting transferred to an active duty station, hoping it would be at Quantico.

My orders were approved, and I was shipped to the Officers Communication School at Quantico, where I was assigned to a limited-duty position as an assistant to the instructor. Later that year I was re-assigned to a Military Police unit, where my career in law enforcement began.

Life Off Base

During this tour, I lived in an apartment off base, where I met several corpsmen, and became friends.

I found out later that they were each picked up by OSI agents in a sting operation, and questioned about their sexual orientation. One of the corpsmen approached me, warning that I may be a possible target in the OSI investigation because when he was being interrogated, my name came up.

Day later, I looked out of my window and noticed a suspicious looking car parked in front of my apartment, with two men sitting inside seemingly observing my building. OSI agents stopped a friend who had just visited my apartment, he too noticed the car. When he got a few blocks away they approached him. They took him to the OSI office and interrogated him for six grueling hours. He was questioned on both his sexual orientation and mine.

I continued to report to work as if nothing had happened. Several days later, I answered a knock at my door. It was sergeant and several military police officers from my unit. The sergeant informed me that I was under arrest for being a homosexual. They handcuffed me and put me in the backseat of their car.

Second Interrogation

The military police drove me to OSI and escorted me into a small room, where I again sat alone for an hour. I prepared myself for the familiar routine: good cop/bad cop.

When the agents came into the room, it felt as if it had started all over again, the same accusations, the same questions, even the same telephone number routine. It was as if they were reading out of the same script used back at Camp Pendleton.

I was released six hours later, and allowed to return to my apartment. This time I didn't detect any observers watching my apartment.

First Administrative Review Board Hearing

When I returned to work the following day, I was asked to report to the commanding officer. He informed me that he believed there was sufficient evidence against me to warrant an administrative review discharge board meeting.

I asked him if he'd rather court martial me, and he said, "no." He explained that while hearsay evidence would not be admissible in a court martial, it would be perfectly acceptable in a board hearing.

I later went into Alexandria to consult with an attorney.

During the hearing, the board concluded that the accuser's reason for reporting me was vengeance. My commanding officer had known of the allegations previously brought against me at Camp Pendleton, and that they had subsequently been dropped. In his mind he felt that I was guilty and just happened to get away with it. Therefore, there was not enough evidence to support his claims based on hearsay.

Shortly afterwards, I requested a transfer to the Marine barracks in Long Beach, California. My orders were approved.

I was transferred to Marine Barracks Long Beach.

During this assignment, I excelled in my position.

One day a Marine passed through the barracks facility and recognized me. He decided to inform my commanding officer, Major Alan Pettit, of my past. Subsequently Major Pettit launched an investigation.

The major questioned many of the marines I associated with, and intimidated them by using the old OSI telephone trick. This was confirmed several days later, when one of the individuals approached me and apologized for giving into the pressure.

He said, "They were going to call my parents and I didn't want that to happen." This man came from a long line of military men. He signed a statement saying that he had overheard me talk to two of my friends and admit that I was a homosexual. If he refused to sign the statement, the major would have concluded that he was covering for me and that he too was a homosexual.

I had a second Administrative Review Board Hearing.

The next afternoon, I was called into the major's office where he informed me that he was going to recommend an Administrative Review Board Hearing on allegations of my homosexuality. He added that he would do everything in his power to stop me from receiving my promotion to staff sergeant and then dismissed me.

While the major continued trying to find evidence against me, I obtained another civilian attorney, Doug Lance.

At the second hearing the prosecuting team attempted to blow me out of the water. When they finished it was our turn. It was ironic to later learn that the star witness for the defense was a woman named Maria, who had been my roommate and companion. No one had known of our relationship. The prosecuting attorney objected to my presence in the courtroom during her testimony, arguing that I might intimidate her into giving only favorable answers. The board agreed and I waited outside until they had finished questioning her.

I later learned that she had kept a diary on all of our activities, including where I was whom I was socializing with and when she had sex with me. To top that off, she stated that we had a very good healthy sexual life together and that I satisfied her.

At the conclusion of the hearing, I was found not guilty. This infuriated Major Pettit. He called me into his office and yelled, "Just because the board found you not guilty does not mean that you're not a faggot."

In his words I was nothing but a "fucking faggot." He warned me that I would never get the upper hand on him while staying in his Marine Corp. He walked to the front

door of his office and opened it to call out to his executive officer, Captain Stanford, “Get this faggot out of my office right now!”

The captain ordered me into his office telling me of his discontent with the board’s decision in my case. “There is more than one way to get someone like you,” he said, “Faggots like you have no business in the marine Corp. You may have pulled the wool over the eyes of the Administration Review Discharge Board, but you’re not going to pull it over mine. We’ll get you sooner or later.”

My Promotion

Several weeks passed. Major Pettit looked on as the sergeant major approached me and shook my hand, congratulating me on my promotion to staff sergeant. Immediately the major asked him into his office.

A few minutes later, the sergeant major approached me again. “I may have been premature in congratulating you. I guess I wasn’t supposed to tell you about your promotion yet, because it may not go through after all.”

Several weeks passed before I was summoned to the Major Pettit’s office. Captain Stanford accompanied him. The major informed me that I had been officially promoted to staff sergeant. He said that he found it very hard to believe after what had happened. The he said, “I’m not going to pin these stripes on that son of a bitch.” He ordered Captain Stanford to do it himself. “But no in this office,” he said.

Captain Stanford ordered me into his own office, where he pinned the stripes on me handed me my certificate. He reassured me that he would discredit me eventually.

The Informant

One night while I was serving as Officer of the Day, I received a call from one of my guard posts reporting that they were detaining a sailor who had tried to smuggle some wine and marijuana onto the base.

I rushed to the gate and immediately recognized the sailor who was being detained. He was one of my best informants who in the past had supplied me with reliable information.

When I approached the guard post and took charge, my informant begged for my help. In exchange he said he would provide me with valuable information. After hearing what he had to offer, I agreed to help him. This of course is not at all uncommon among law enforcement officers. I dumped out the wine threw away the few joints that had been confiscated and sent him on his way. As I standard, I made these notes in my report.

The following day I was summoned to Major Pettit's office. He wanted all of the names of my informants. I refused and he dismissed me.

The Court Martial

Days later I was again summoned to the major's office. In the presence of Captain Stanford he informed me that I would be subject to a court martial for impeding an investigation by destroying evidence and for perjuring myself in my report log.

(tape 1-B)

Once again I requested the services of my attorney Doug Lance. But this time the court found me guilty on both counts. What was so unusual about this case was that the court refused to pass down a sentence, meaning that I received no punishment.

My attorney said that in all of his years defending clients he had never seen such an action. He did recall hearing of a case in which a black marine was found guilty of beating a white marine. Throughout the proceeding it became known that the white marine was a member of the Ku Klux Klan and that the black marine felt threatened by him.

I reported back to work where I was called back into Major Pettit's office. "I've got you ,you fucking faggot," he yelled it, "We are going to give you a dishonorable discharge for being a homosexual."

Major Pettit attempted to discharge me by pressing this issue. He believed that since I was accused before, that it must be true. For him this was reason enough for a dishonorable discharge.

I searched out another attorney and found Scott Tepper. We went to the Federal Courthouse in Los Angeles, and secured a temporary restraining order.

When I returned to the base, Captain Stanford and Major Pettit were obviously frustrated. The major said, “Just because you’ve received this temporary restraining order does not mean that I’m not going to kick you out of the Marine Corp.” He dismissed me and as I walked toward the door he said, “Just a minute. What you don’t know is that I have an ace up my sleeve. And I guarantee you it will work this time. The day will come when you find out whose Marine Corp this really is – your or mine.”

Finally, my case was heard at the Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The judge ruled that they could not discharge me simply for allegations of homosexuality.

After the outcome of my case, I reported back to Major Pettit. This was when he reminded me of the “ace up his sleeve.” He pulled some papers out of his top drawer. It was my enlistment contract.

“I’m not going to sign them,” he said.

Now I knew that he had won, but at least I was safe from a dishonorable discharge.

I asked him for permission to speak candidly.

“Why are you so homophobic?” I asked him. “What is it that you fear?”

“Homosexuals should not be allowed in the military because they will have sex in the barracks,” he said.

“I’ve been living in military barracks for nearly 13 years, and I don’t recall a single incident – well, at least between two men.” Then I recalled an incident that had occurred several weeks prior. I was involved in an investigation of a marine who had taken a woman into his barracks. Later, it was alleged that he and his fellow marines performed a “gang Bang” on her. She stated that she did not give her consent to penetration. Even if she had, however, it was unlikely that it could be considered valid, since the girl was mentally retarded.

“You tried to sweep that investigation under the rug,” I told the major. “When you heard that I had reopened the case by hiring a private investigator, and that the case had been leaked to the media, (Warren Alney, NBC Los Angeles) you were frustrated with not only me, but the investigators who questioned you. You told them it was a ‘natural mistake. Here you are, so worried about male marines having sex, but you don’t seem at all concerned about straight marines having sex with females in your

barracks, not even when it's rape with a mentally retarded woman. Why is it that the military condones the one, but not the other?"

Major Pettit then dismissed me.

When the day came to report to the administration office, I was met by a warrant officer, third grade. He and Everland updated me on the progress of my discharge. He informed me that it would be honorable. The reason that my enlistment was up and they simply had decided not to renew my contract. He also explained to me why I couldn't re-enlist. "You were court marshaled and found guilty for impeding an investigation, and for perjuring yourself on your report."

"Yes," I said. "I was found guilty, but I never received any punishment from the court."

"Before I will answer any more of your questions," he said, "I was instructed by Major Pettit to give you this message. He said you would understand it." Then he read from a piece of paper in hand, "Do you remember the 'ace up my sleeve?' Well here it is."

After this meeting, I bumped into a friend, Sergeant Tom Hart, who worked in the administrative office where my discharge was being processed. He expressed his regret at what was happening to me, and invited me into a file room that was restricted to all non-administrative staff. He unlocked one of the filing cabinets, and pulled out a

file with my name on it. Inside were several letters I had never received, and that someone else has opened without my knowledge or consent. Tom told me that none of the letters were incriminating, and that all of my outgoing and incoming mail had been screened.

I was shocked that the military would stoops so low.

To this day Tom and I are still friends. He is now retired from the Marine Corp and lives in Twenty-nine Palms, Ca.

Lift the Ban on Gays

Years later, during his initial presidential campaign, Bill Clinton promised that, if elected, he would attempt to eliminate discrimination based upon sexual orientation in the military.

Presently, there are congressional hearings chaired by Senator Sam Nunn who contends that no one was railroaded in the military and when found innocent they were left alone.

I heard my calling, so I attempted to contact several congressmen. I repeatedly left messages so I could testify at one of their hearings. I received only on return call, from the office of Senator Barry Frank. His aid assured me he would do his utmost to get me in front of Sam Nunn's committee.

Weeks later, I received a telephone call from his office. Apparently Sam Nunn refused to see me, and would not permit me to testify at any of his hearings because he was afraid that I might influence the committee to lift the ban. He also added that he did not want the committee to review my service record.

Frank's office told me that there was nothing else they could do, but they assured me that they would contact me if anything changed.

I decided to contact Senator Bob Dole. One of his aids assured me that they would attempt to break the gridlock. But several days later he called back and told me that I was blocked from testifying. He too said he could not do anything more for me at the time, but that there would be more hearings in the future.

To this date, I have not received a single phone call.

Close Encounters with Larry

I believe that since the book *Conduct unbecoming* rolled off the press, my position as captain at the West Los Angeles Wadsworth Medical Center has been compromised.

For example, on February 24, 1994 I had to write up a report of contact for Assistant Chief Larry. As I approached his office, I noticed that his door was slightly ajar. I could clearly hear his conversation. I didn't want to interrupt, so I waited outside. The more I heard, the more I understood that I was the subject of his conversation. I overheard him refer to me as a "faggot." He further state, "I will get rid of him. It may take a year, but I'm going to work on it."

I was shocked. I went back to my office and made arrangements to meet with our Equal Employment Officer (E.E.O.), Dennis Cunningham. I relayed to him the story about the book and my belief that Larry had either read or heard about it. I told him what I had overheard and asked if it was covered by the E.E.O.?

Cunningham asked me if I knew of any disciplinary actions pending against me. "No," I replied. "My last performance appraisal was outstanding, and I recently received a performance award from the director of the Wadsworth Medical Center."

I also told Cunningham that my main concern was that Larry said he was going to get rid of me within the year.

Cunningham said that, in his opinion, Larry's actions were unacceptable, but his hands were tied because my complaint was not covered under federal E.E.O. policies. He suggested I check into alternate resources and offered to speak to his director on my behalf.

I asked him not to. I knew that this would be another uphill battle for me, and I wasn't prepared to deal with it at this time.

On March 11, 1994 at approximately 2 pm, I was sitting in the briefing room and observed Larry walked into the room and come toward me. He suddenly stopped as if he was shocked to see me sitting there. He then motioned to Lieutenant J. Theall who escorted him from the room.

I walked to the adjacent room, where the door was slightly open and listened.

Larry said, "I don't want LeBlanc here. I am giving an award to one of his officers."

"I didn't tell him," replied Theal.

I rushed back to my seat and waited.

Larry and Lt. Theal returned and proceeded with presenting a plaque to officer David Martin for Employee of the Month.

Later that day, I asked Larry why he didn't want me in the room while he gave Martine the plaque.

Larry only said, "I should have given it to him yesterday." He walked away before I could ask any more questions.

The Larry gave me a memorandum indicating that I had to personally complete a report on the computer. I asked, "Why are you asking me to do this report instead of Mr. Cook? This is his responsibility. Besides, how do you expect me to extract this information without his access codes?"

I further explained that I was not even trained on the software program. Larry only shook his head, smiled and said that he'd give me the access codes. Eventually, I received those codes, completed the report and turned it in.

Soon, I went to the secretary's office and attempted to open the door. My issued key, D-2416, no longer worked. It had become apparent that the locks were changed. Having previously enjoyed unlimited access to numerous offices and files, I did not understand what warranted the change. That same day, I confronted Larry

and asked him about it. He said that two keys had been reported missing, and then walked away.

I looked in the police log to see if anyone had reported and missing keys. There were no reports filed by anyone regarding keys. I then contacted the supervisor of the Medical Center locksmith shop, Wayne Lockensloger. He said there were no missing key reports sent to him. He then told me that Larry had instructed him to change the locks because he suspected me of sabotaging and stealing his files. Larry told him not to make any more duplicated keys, and that the only people authorized in those areas would be himself, the chief and his secretary. Mr. Cook also received keys to access those areas.

As I was working on a project in an adjacent office, I overheard another one of Larry's telephone conversations, but this time it was clear that he was talking to Police Chief Garcia in Security Services at the VA Hospital in San Diego. They were talking about a female chief at the Los Angeles O.P.C. Larry was saying that she was going to be replaced, that someone would be hired over her. Larry was thinking that he could talk Chief Constance into transferring to Los Angeles VA Medical Center and bring her in as a detective. (This is known as pre-selection). Then he continued the conversation about me, telling Chief Garcia, "Bob could never go into the O.P.C. as chief because the director wouldn't allow it. Many years ago, LeBlanc was involved in some union problems, and we don't want that to happen again."

To my knowledge, I have never created any union problems.

Soon after, a telephone repairman came into my office and replaced my speakerphone with a standard telephone. I asked him who ordered the change.

It was Larry. “What reason did he give?” I asked.

“He said that you did not rate a speakerphone.”

The Chain of Command

When the acting chief leaves for annual or sick leave, his office is temporarily passed onto the next senior man in charge. I am a GS-10.

Larry announced an extended absence via e-mail, and said that he would be temporarily replaced by a Lieutenant. This would leave him in charge over me, a captain.

I confronted Larry with this and he said, “Well, I just wanted to rotate the personnel around. You’ll get your chance.”

I was never been left in charge. The proof lies in the e-mail.

I overheard another telephone conversation between Larry, and whom I suspect was Chief of Police Tom Simpson of the East Orange, New Jersey VA Medical Center. It quickly became apparent that Larry was talking about me when he referred to me as a “faggot.”

He was going to get rid of me.

I heard him make an additional statement about all of my “bridges being burned behind me.” He said that I could not rebuild them because I had tried to burn too many people like himself and other individuals in the Central Office.

Larry said that I had only a few supportive friends, including Wayne Seabert, Chief of Police at the VA Medical Center in Dallas, and Rick Fur, inspector of the VA Medical Center Central Office in Washington D.C. He assured Simpson that he would get rid of me within a year.

The following steps were laid out as the groundwork for my dismissal:

He would order me out of my civilian clothing and into my uniform

He would move my office to an undisclosed area

I would no longer receive good appraisals

He would not make any special attempt to talk to me, except twice per day for about five minutes and “even that’s too much for him.”

He would possibly discredit me in front of my staff.

Larry finally hung up and left the area.

Log Cabin Club

Later that day I observed Larry entering my office with a piece of paper in his hand. When he left, his hands were empty.

I went into my office and discovered a newsletter from The Republican Log Cabin Club, a gay political organization for primarily gay republicans. My name and office address appeared on the mailing label.

I attempted to do some research by calling The Log Cabin Club secretary. I failed to discover who ordered the publication in my name. He apologized and assured me that future mailings would stop.

I contacted my new attorney, William Smith, in Los Angeles. I informed him about Larry's telephone conversation and the newsletter.

I had applied for at least a dozen jobs through our Washington D.C. office, but I'd had only two interviews. I am certain that someone is contacting these places and discrediting me. I can only suspect Larry.

On numerous occasions, I have gone to the E.E.O. and received consultation. An attorney informed me that there was little I could do, since I could not file a claim based upon sexual orientation. He told me that the federal government did not have any laws protecting individuals from discrimination on that basis.

P.T.S.D.

I had a discussion with a friend of mine, Dr. Terry Keen, director of Psychological Services at the VA Medical Center in Boston. He is in charge of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (P.T.S.D.) program, which deals with many Vietnam combat veterans. I expressed that the people in this diary, and others, should be allowed to claim a service connected disability because they too suffer from P.T.S.D. They experienced traumatic badgering and harassment before being discharged from the military, and then subsequently having to face their families, friends, employers with bad discharges.

I asked him if anyone had ever challenged the military over this issue. He said no. I told him that I wished all veterans who had served in the military would go to the VA and request to be tested for P.T.S.D. on the grounds of what the military did to them while they were in the service of their country.

I thanked him for all of his advice and support and told him that I planned to file for benefits of P.T.S.D. through the VA in West Los Angeles, which I did.

At present, my case is still pending. I plan to appear in front of the Civilian Board of Review some time in the near future.

Closing Statements

What I find extremely depressing is that thirty years later, I am still experiencing prejudice from the federal government that had nothing to do with my work performance.

Here it is three decades hence and thousands of dollars later, and I am still fighting the bigotry of the United States military.

I would think that thirty years of fighting would be long enough to find justice.

It is sad that it has taken me this long to counter the issues raised in the book *Conduct Unbecoming*.

I contend that sexual orientation is not the business of the government. Whatsoever. Period. My performance is the only thing that should be considered.

<From the Independent Press Telegram, May 24, 1976.

Fights Homosexual Tag

L.B. Marine Wins Ouster Appeal

By TOM WILLMAN
Staff Writer

A 30-year-old U.S. Marine from Long Beach has won a last-minute reprieve from an impending discharge that would label him undesirable on grounds that he has exhibited homosexual tendencies.

S/Sgt. Robert LeBlanc won the delay with an appeal to a circuit judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals in Los Angeles late Thursday afternoon, as military officials began processing his discharge.

The court-ordered stay, signed by U.S. Circuit Judge Shirley M. Hufstедler, marked the second time in five months that LeBlanc has successfully fended off his general discharge.

He has been battling the discharge since 1972, contending that although he has twice been accused of homosexual acts in the last ten years, Marine Corp review boards exonerated him both times.

LeBlanc repeatedly has refused to either confirm or deny allegations of homosexuality, saying, "It's none of their business" so long as he capably performs his duties as a Marine.

During 12 years in the Marine Corp, LeBlanc said Friday, he served two duty tours in Vietnam, winning a Purple Heart and other battle ribbons, and later served as military police chief of Los Angeles County.

Last December, his threat to seek a temporary restraining order won the first delay, while a lawsuit he filed against the Corp awaited trial in Los Angeles federal court.

His attorney, Scott Tepper, won the new stay shortly before 5 p.m., Thursday, after learning that the Marine was then undergoing a pre-discharge physical examination at Long Beach Naval Hospital, LeBlanc said.

Judge Hufstедler explained that she issue the stay with a "very routine order" under which a three-judge panel will decide if LeBlanc's discharge should be delayed until his court appeal is heard.

That decision could come as soon as a week after defense attorney Tepper and the U.S. Attorney's office submit written arguments to the panel on May 24, the judge said.

<December, Day? Year? Independent Press Telegram>

L.B. MARINE'S DISCHARGE DELAYED BY COURT ORDER

By TOM WILLMAN
Staff Writer

A 30-year-old U.S. Marine from Long Beach, faced with impending discharge on grounds he exhibited homosexual tendencies, Thursday won an 11th-hour reprieve after filing a federal lawsuit against the Marine Corp

Marine S/Sgt. Robert LeBlanc—who maintains the discharge order stems from unfounded charges—said the order was withdrawn two hours after the government was informed of his suit.

LeBlanc's general discharge, labeling him as undesirable, had been scheduled for Monday, according to his attorney, Scott Tepper. Tepper said he filed a request for a temporary restraining order against the Marine Corps along with the lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles.

The suit contends LeBlanc's discharge was ordered despite the fact that, although he's twice been charged with homosexual offenses, Marine Corp review boards have exonerated him in each case, said Tepper.

A government attorney confirmed Thursday afternoon that the discharge order had been withdrawn at least temporarily.

"The Marine Corps has decided to hold his discharge in abeyance pending internal review of the case, said Assistant U.S. Atty. Steven Peterson. In turn, said Tepper, the appeal for a temporary restraining order was dropped.

The attorney described LeBlanc as a military policeman who collected 12 battle ribbons during two tours of duty in Vietnam, and who has worked since in base narcotics enforcement.

The discharge order appeared to have been issued by high Marine officials in Washington who "flatly ignored" the fact that the charges of homosexuality had twice been discounted by Marine Corps review, Tepper said.

LeBlanc, pointing to the two review board verdicts and his 12-year service record, is indignant over the discharge threat.

"They have asked me a number of times if I'm a homosexual," he said. "My answer is, it's none of their business. The military is one of the few organizations in this country that has the right to invade your privacy, to ask people about their sex lives. I don't even think they have the right to ask you if you're heterosexual."

The charges of homosexuality came four years apart. The allegation was raised in 1969 while he was working narcotics enforcement at Quantico, Va., said LeBlanc.

He was found innocent after several fellow servicemen testified military investigators had threatened them with similar charges to force them to implicate them, LeBlanc contended.

The second allegation came in 1973, and was brought by a serviceman whom LeBlanc had once arrested on narcotics charges, he said. The Marine said he again was

exonerated, in part on the testimony of a girlfriend who vouched for his whereabouts at the time the homosexual incident allegedly had occurred.

Marine Ouster in "Gay" Case Halted

By BRAD ALTMAN
Staff Writer

U.S. Marine Corps officials have been prohibited from discharging a Long Beach-based career staff sergeant until the Ninth District Court of Appeals hears his appeal in which he contends he is falsely accused of "homosexual tendencies."

The court-ordered stay was issued last week by federal judges Anthony Kennedy and Walter Ely in San Francisco.

S/Sgt. Robert L. LeBlanc, 30, appealed after he lost a lawsuit in federal court last April, alleging that disgruntled Marines have accused him of homosexuality and the Corps was prepared to forcibly discharge him despite his vindication at two military administrative hearings.

THE STAY, issued last Friday, continues a temporary restraining order issued May 13 by a Los Angeles federal judge which enjoined the Corps from discharging LeBlanc.

Asst. U.S. Atty. Steven Peterson said Thursday that the stay doesn't clarify whether the Corps can discharge LeBlanc after his appeal is heard. He said opening briefs are scheduled for June 30 with oral arguments expected to start "several weeks later." LeBlanc's discharge date is August 26.

LeBlanc, a 12-year veteran, served for one year as USMC military police chief for the Los Angeles area, and also worked as an undercover agent in investigation of drug abuses.

HE SERVED two duty tours in Vietnam, and was awarded several combat medals, including the Purple Heart. He also received a "Certificate of Community Service" from the Long Beach Police Department in 1975, and is a graduate of the Long Beach Police Academy.

Scott J. Tepper, LeBlanc's attorney, said the Corps wants to give LeBlanc a general discharge "on grounds of unsuitability due to homosexual tendencies. We would be willing to accept an honorable discharge."

He added that two administrative discharge boards in the last 10 years have found charges against LeBlanc "false and unproved" and "our position is the Marine Corps has found him not to be a homosexual, therefore, the regulations dealing with homosexual discharge do not apply.

The staff sergeant refuses to confirm or deny that he is a homosexual, saying, "My sexuality is nobody's business but my own. I don't even think they have the right to ask you if you are heterosexual."

HE SAID HE doesn't expect to remain in the military even if he wins the appeal. But the stigma of the charges would have serious ramifications on his career if the Corps is able to discharge him as contemplated. "Since I am a law enforcement specialist, I will be unable to obtain employment in my chosen field," he says.

LeBlanc says the homosexual charges, which came several years apart, were brought against him by lower-ranking enlisted men because of his work as a military police officer. He said he took three lie detector tests at Quantico, Va., in 1969 which cleared him.

Another allegation, made in Long Beach three years ago, was brought by a serviceman whom LeBlanc had once arrested on a narcotics charge, he said. LeBlanc again was exonerated, in part on the testimony of a woman friend who said she and LeBlanc were having sexual relations at the time the homosexual incident allegedly occurred.

Rape by Terminal Isle Marines Alleged

By BRAD ALTMAN
Staff Writer

Sen. Alan Cranston will ask the commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps to review a Long Beach private investigator's report that a mentally retarded woman was raped by up to 20 Marines last year at the Marine barracks on Terminal Island.

The report is the result of a three-month probe by Arrow Services, which was hired by a Long Beach marine who is facing a dishonorable discharge Aug. 27

The Marine, S. Sgt. Robert L. LeBlanc, and his supporters charge the alleged rape is an example of the military's "double standard toward sexuality" because the Corps has spent more than \$50,000 to charge LeBlanc for "exhibiting homosexual tendencies" while "not spending one dime" to investigate a "fairly well-documented rape."

Military review boards acquitted LeBlanc of previous accusations of homosexuality in 1971 and 1974.

The 85-page report, written by Ronald B. Sutter Sr., senior investigator for Arrow Services, 4320 Atlantic Ave., concludes:

--An obviously mentally retarded woman, age 30 to 35, spent the evening and early morning hours of Feb. 16 and 17, 1975, inside barracks No. 32 (Marine barracks) at the Naval Support Authority on Terminal Island.

--The woman, whose present whereabouts are unknown, engaged in sexual activity, including oral copulation and intercourse, with from five to 20 Marines.

--The incident was "of common knowledge" to Marines in the barracks and could have been construed as a gang rape under applicable laws since the woman was of apparent diminished mental capacity.

Stemming from the alleged incident was the court-martial Sgt. Robert K. Nicholson, sergeant of the guard during the shift the woman was allowed onto the complex. He was found guilty of dereliction of duty in a summary court martial three months later and his punishment, according to a transcript of the court proceeding, was 30-days restriction in the barracks, mess hall, chapel and dispensary.

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The court martial was ordered by Maj. Alan D. Pettit, barracks commanding officer, who in a telephone interview, denied knowledge of a woman being raped in the barracks.

"I do know a girl was found in the barracks against orders," Pettit said. "As far as I know, that was the entire incident. I didn't know a rape was involved."

"The senior man responsible for letting the girl in was court martialed," he said. "If Marine Corps headquarters wants me to reinvestigate or if there is some sort of congressional interest, I'll be happy to indicate what we did (to investigate)."

An aide to Sen. Cranston in Washington, D.C., said the senator would review the report next week before forwarding it on to Gen. Louis H. Wilson, commandant of the Marine Corps. The commandant will be asked for his comment to determine if there is sufficient evidence to warrant further government investigation.

John Brazilló, group spokesman for about 200 Long Beach-area citizens asking the senator to request an Armed Forces-type investigation into the incident, charges that the Marine Corps court martialed one Marine and refused to discipline any of the others involved "to minimize embarrassment to the command."

Brazilló claimed the private detectives "stumbled" on other alleged illegalities at the barracks during the investigation, including possible theft and or misappropriation of government property and information related to narcotics usage at the Naval installation.

One Marine interviewed by Sutter was alleged to have given 4,000 rounds of 45-caliber ammunition to Los Angeles Police Department officers. Sutter turned his information over to representatives from the FBI's Long Beach field office and agents for the Naval Investigative Service (NIS).

NIS senior resident agent Robert David said Sutter's information was "just a lot of vague allegations and a few things that did touch upon the truth—like the bit of theft of ammunition."

"But," he continued, "we had already investigated and resolved the issue long before those people (Arrow Services) ever came out (to Naval Support Activity)."

Maj. Pettit, when told of the allegations in the report said, "There is nothing to cover up, regardless of what LeBlanc says. I feel he is probably doing whatever he can do to bring disgrace on the Marine Corps and this command in particular."

LeBlanc, 30, a career serviceman, is scheduled to be discharged on Aug. 27. His attorney, Scott J. Tepper, is trying to get a last-minute stay that would keep LeBlanc in the Marines until his court appeal is decided. The sergeant has appealed to the U.S. Ninth District Court of Appeals.

Since his discharge order last December, LeBlanc has not worked at the Naval complex while continuing to receive his twice-monthly \$370 paycheck.

Three polygraph tests and two administrative review boards in 1971 and 1974 acquitted LeBlanc of accusations of homosexuality.

LeBlanc has contended in the past that these findings speak for themselves.

"They have asked me a number of times if I'm a homosexual," he said during a review of the case last December. "My answer is, it's none of their business . . . I don't think they even have the right to ask you if you're heterosexual."

Leblanc said one allegation was made in 1971 while he was working narcotics enforcement at Quantico, Va. He was found innocent after fellow servicemen testified

that military investigators had threatened them with similar charges to force them to implicate him, he said.

The second allegation came in 1974 and was brought by a serviceman whom LeBlanc had once arrested on narcotics charges, he said. The Marine was again exonerated.

The commandant's decision to request an unsuitability discharge by reason of homosexual tendencies was explained in a document prepared by the Board of Corrections of Naval Records in Washington, D.C.: (the charges.) "when considered together, corroborated the truth of both."

Brazillo, an avowed homosexual, says the government's position is that "where there's smoke, there's fire." He added, "the government is literally throwing thousands of gays and suspected gays—out of the military with this tactic.

He noted that LeBlanc served two tour duties in Vietnam, received 12 battle ribbons, including the Purple Heart and Navy Commendation Medal, was graduated from the Long Beach Police Academy and served as the military chief of police in Los Angeles County for two years. Except for the charges of homosexuality, LeBlanc's military record is exemplary, said Brazillo.

LeBlanc Discharge Stayed

By BRAD ALTMAN
Staff Writer

A 30-year-old Long Beach Marine won an 11th-hour reprieve Friday from an undesirable discharge based on the allegation that he is a homosexual.

A restraining order issued Friday in San Francisco by the U.S. Ninth Court of Appeals enjoins the Marine Corps from discharging Robert L. LeBlanc when his enlistment expires Aug. 27.

The order by judges Walter Ely and Anthony Kennedy suspends for the moment a Los Angeles federal court decision upholding the Marine Corps right to discharge LeBlanc.

Marine Commandant Gen. Louis Wilson ordered LeBlanc discharged last December because fellow Marines accused him of participating in homosexual acts.

LeBlanc, who worked as a military policeman before the Corps ordered him to stay home pending further action, served two tours in Vietnam and was decorated for bravery.

HE WAS acquitted of charges that he is gay in two separate military hearings in 1971 and 1974. The charges were brought by men LeBlanc had arrested for narcotics violations.

Despite the acquittals, Gen. Wilson has said that when considered together, the fact that the charges were levied is proof LeBlanc is homosexual.

"I answered the question—Am I gay?—over and over by taking three lie detector tests and being found innocent of the charges by two administrative review boards," he said Friday.

LeBlanc, a bachelor, said his case differs from that of Air Force S/Sgt. Lennie Matlovich, an avowed homosexual who made headlines last year during his unsuccessful court fight to remain in the service.

"My philosophy is different," LeBlanc said. "Matlovich is going under the conception of gay rights.

"I am going under the conception of human rights. That's the difference.

"I'm saying that a homosexual should be discharged if his sexuality interferes with his performance. . . the same as with a heterosexual."

Naval Base Picketed

Military Bias Against Gays Protested

By KRIS SHERMAN

Staff Writer

About 40 pickets marched peacefully outside Gate 1 at the Naval Support Activity on Terminal Island Saturday to protest what they called "military discrimination" against homosexuals.

The protesters, who set up their picket line on the south side of Seaside Boulevard at about 1 p.m., drew curious stares from most passersby and the keen interest of military security guards.

Group spokesman John Brazillo of Long Beach said the protest was held "to let the government know that we will not tolerate military discrimination and double standards."

He said protesters were specifically focusing on the case of Marine S/Sgt. Robert LeBlanc, who was ordered discharged from the service late last year on grounds he allegedly engaged in homosexual conduct.

That order, however, was withdrawn when LeBlanc filed a federal lawsuit against the Marine Corps. A hearing in the case is scheduled Monday.

LeBlanc, a career Marine, has been most recently assigned to the narcotics enforcement division of military police at Terminal Island. He collected 12 battle ribbons during two tours of duty in Vietnam.

Brazillo said the marchers gathered at the base Saturday included "military personnel, gays and straights" from Long Beach, San Diego, Pomona and several other cities.

About a third of the marchers were women.

As they marched, members of the group waived their placards high for motorists and hitchhikers to see: "There are no sexual bigots in fox holes," read one. "How many gays have died for your country?" asked another. A third said: "Let's have UNIFORM justice."

Some marchers changed, "It's none of your business," as they kept their picket line moving in a circle near the gate.

(LeBlanc reportedly gave that answer to Marine officials when they asked if he was a homosexual.)

Other protesters tried to get onlookers to sign petitions protesting LeBlanc's treatment by the Marine Corps, but most passersby exhibited only curious interest in their cause.

Two private security guards, however, stood watch just inside the gate, their eyes trained on the pickets.

They and Navy officials refused comment on the protesters, directing questions to the base commander.

Marine sentries on duty at the gate paid little attention to the protest a few yards away as they admitted cars to the complex.