National HIV & AIDS Archive

Print Media

1st to 5th September 1987

HIV Ireland 1987—2017
LIVE MUSIC

Aid to fight Aids

The Radiators from Space, Dublin's leading punk band of the late 1970's, will reform for a one-off concert to help the Aid to fight Aids Campaign.

The Radiators, probably best known for the classic album TV Tube Heart, band split up in 1980, with nearly all the members staying in one area or other of the music business. Mark McGrath (Hogan), now heads his own band and also plays with various others including the Honor Heffeman Band. Steve Rapid, having reverted back to his former title of Steve Averill, is currently running the Dublin based Creative Department, a graphic design studio, who concentrate on album covers and touring merchandise for many international music bands, including U2. Pete Holiday now plays with Light A Big Fire. Johnny Crash is working in London and the final member, Phil Chevron, now plays with The Pogues.

Also on the bill for the concert is ex-Virgin Prune, Gavin Friday, who comes complete with a new band. Real Wild West will also play. Just to make it even more exciting, MC for the night is B.P. Fallon, who, for sure, will try persuading a few of his friends to come along, and if he's successful, you never know who might end up on the stage. The crucial date is the 13th September and the venue is Hawkins. Doors open at 7.30pm Tickets can be booked in advance (advisable) at HMV, all in for 5 pounds. Help the cause!
AIDS tested
people may be
‘uninsurable’

PEOPLE in Britain suffering from AIDS, showing signs of the virus or living a certain “lifestyle” are being refused life assurance policies, according to a survey published yesterday.

A report in the latest issue of Labour Research shows 12 of the 15 leading insurance companies describe people with AIDS as “uninsurable”, which means they are unable to get endowment mortgages.

But the companies did indicate that AIDS sufferers with existing policies were not affected as long as details supplied when the policy was taken out were correct. Three of the companies contacted—Sun Life Assurance Society, Equity and Law Life Assurance Society and Provident Mutual Life Assurance—declined to comment on their policies towards AIDS sufferers.

“Taking or even considering having an AIDS test may make people uninsurable,” says the report.

Insurers companies are very cautious about people having a positive AIDS test.”

Five companies—Guardian Royal Exchange, Sun Alliance and London Insurance, Royal Life Assurance, Eagle Star Holdings and Friends Provident—said they would decline applications from people who had had a positive AIDS test.

The rest would postpone a decision for two to five years and then review the application.

The report says many companies have recently included wide-ranging questions on AIDS as a result of recommendations from the Association of British Insurers.

Two companies, Commercial Union and Eagle Star, said they would seek information on the lifestyle of applicants if they were two males buying the same property.

Scottish Widows said it might “think again” if an applicant turned out to be homosexual and Royal Life Insurance said it would not insure “promiscuous” individuals who had had a negative AIDS test.

The Terence Higgins Trust, which provides a counselling service for AIDS sufferers, condemned the insurance companies attitude. — (FA)
Irish Times
1st September 1987

AIDS treatment

A POSSIBLE treatment for AIDS may be found in the seeds of an Australian chestnut tree, a researcher at Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre in Seattle, Washington, said. The seeds yield a drug called Castanospermine that appears to interrupt the AIDS virus's ability to reproduce itself inside the cell. — (UPI)

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Help offers pour in for Aids family

Arcadia, Florida: Offers of help poured in from other states and foreign countries for a family with three Aids-exposed sons who remained in seclusion after a suspicious fire destroyed their home.

Arson has not been ruled out as a cause of the Friday blaze that left Clifford and Louise Ray and their children — Ricky, aged 10, Robert, aged nine, and Candy, aged six — homeless, destitute and determined never to return to Arcadia.

Since the boys went back to school last week there have been bomb threats, a school boycott and the fire. The Rays said on Saturday they were forced to flee for their safety.

The family remains at an undisclosed location outside DeSoto County, its members trying to decide their next step. "They are weighing their options today," the family attorney, Mr Bill Earl, said yesterday.

The Ray boys were barred from Memorial elementary school last autumn after they tested positive for antibodies to the virus that causes acquired immune deficiency syndrome. A federal judge ordered the boys reinstated in school this summer, prompting angry protests. The boys are haemophiliacs and are believed to have been exposed to Aids through a blood factor they take to make their blood clot if they are injured.

Mr Earl said: "There’s been a lot of calls of support from people around the country. But the family was still in desperate straits. They don’t have anything right now," he said.

But the Rays want any donations from residents of DeSoto County to go toward teaching residents about Aids.

Meanwhile, at St Paul’s Catholic Church in Arcadia, the pastor urged 300 parishioners at Sunday Mass to search their hearts for love, compassion and understanding.

"It reminds me of the time of leprosy when they rang bells and told people to stay away," the Rev Michael Hickey said.

"It’s a crying shame. I feel as sorry for the Rays as I can be. I know there’s a lot of us doing some soul-searching," said Mr John Childs, standing outside Calvary Baptist Church. "A house burning is terrible."

St Paul’s rectory was turned into a makeshift collection centre. One priest took more than 100 phone calls from people wanting to send money to help the Rays.

Seven churches in Virginia got together a joint collection of articles to send the family. Callers from London and the Netherlands were sending cheques.

Citizens Against Aids in School, an Arcadia group organised to keep the Ray boys out of school, called off a week-long boycott on Friday at Memorial elementary. — AP.
**Aids test means insurance blacklist**

By Philip Edward

Britain's Aids sufferers are now regarded as uninsurable by 12 of the country's top insurance companies, according to a report out today. And they have adopted a near-blanket blacklisting policy by refusing life assurance policies to people who show any sign of the Aids virus or live a certain "lifestyle," the report says.

Some "promiscuous" people would not be insured even if they were cleared in an Aids test, says one company surveyed.

The report, in the latest issue of Labour Research, is condemned by the Terrence Higgins Trust, which counsels Aids sufferers. It says insurance companies are acting in an irrational way.

The inquiries were made in the wake of recommendations from the Association of British Insurers suggesting that wide-ranging questions on Aids be included on application forms.

Endowment and pension-linked mortgages could be affected as well as life assurance and mortgage protection policies. Existing policies would not be at risk.

Three companies refused to co-operate with the research but those who replied gave a similar response.

Says the report: "Taking or even considering having an Aids test may make people uninsurable. Insurance companies are very cautious about people having a positive Aids test."

Five companies — Guardian Royal Exchange, Royal Life Assurance, Sun Alliance and London Insurance, Eagle Star and Friends Provident — said they would decline applications from people who have had a positive Aids test. Others said they would postpone a decision for two to five years and then review the application.

Two companies, Commercial Union and Eagle Star, said they would seek information on the lifestyle of applicants if there were two males buying the same property.

Scottish Widows said it might think again if an applicant turned out to be homosexual, and Royal Life Insurance said it would not insure "promiscuous" individuals who had a negative Aids test.

Some companies have also included questions on hepatitis, an infection common but not exclusive to people carrying Aids.
AIDS creeps into China

SLOWLY, but relentlessly, "ai zi bing"—AIDS—is creeping into China, which until last month represented the largest population pool on earth still free of the disease.

A youth from Zhejiang province has died of AIDS after being injected with infected blood serum from the United States, the official Xinhua Agency has announced. The young man, a haemophiliac, became the first native Chinese to succumb to the disease. Three other haemophiliacs in the same province also tested positive for the AIDS virus after receiving doses of the same infected blood.

Minister of Public Health, Minzhang also revealed last month that several Beijing residents have tested positive for the AIDS virus. He did not identify the residents or say whether they were natives or foreigners.

Before the death of the Zhejiangese youth, identified simply as a "boy", only two other people had actually died of AIDS on Chinese soil, and neither was a native.

One, an Argentine tourist named Oscar Messina, came to China having already contracted AIDS and died of it in Beijing in June 1983. His body, clothes, personal effects and hospital bed sheets were all burned, so great was the horror of the disease.

The second victim was an overseas Chinese who returned to China's Fujian province after living for many years in New York, and who succumbed to AIDS last spring. One African diplomat left China recently after being diagnosed as having contracted AIDS.

Now, with the death of the first native, the government is proposing a whole new set of strictures aimed at cutting off the spread of the disease.

China has banned all imported blood and blood serum products and has burned huge quantities of imported Western clothes in its fight against AIDS. Quarantine stations will be set up to test everyone requesting a Chinese resident permit.

A programme to give blood tests to all foreigners residing in China was announced last spring, but is proceeding slowly because of a lack of disposable syringes. Health Minister Chen said.

But China has no plans to test tourists for the disease, and quarantine procedures at the Chinese ports of entry remain perfunctory. Visitors merely fill out a sheet of paper saying they are in good health.

In 1986, about 22.8 million foreigners, including overseas Chinese, poured into the country, making tourism one of the richest sources of foreign exchange revenue for China.

But along with their money, the foreigners may be bringing in AIDS. And Chinese authorities are in a dilemma—whether to grant visas to foreigners—"as if they had found a goose that lays golden eggs, but carries a lethal disease as well."

Health Minister Chen expressed fear that AIDS "might be promoted by illegal sexual intercourse between foreigners and young Chinese ladies," one of the few public admissions that prostitution is on the rise in China, especially in the southern city of Guangzhou (Canton) where, in recent months, taxi drivers have been arrested for using their vehicles as rolling brothels.

Chen called for more "moral and sex education" among China's young people to prevent the spread of AIDS. He also said traditional Chinese medicine, including gigaw 'breathing exercises, may help combat the disease.

Over the long run, the spectre of AIDS may reinforce China's age-old xenophobia, which periodically breaks out in political rashes such as the recent campaigns against "bourgeois liberalization" and "total Westernization."

The fear has been mutual. After thousands of Chinese émigrés were brought to America in the 19th century to build the Union Pacific railroad spanning the country, a wave of revulsion set in and laws were enacted to prohibit further Chinese immigration to the United States.

One of the most virulent of the China-haters was the American scholar Bayard Taylor, who wrote in 1853: "It is my deliberate opinion that the Chinese are, morally, the most debased people on the face of the earth. Forms of vice which in other countries are barely named are in China, so common that they excite no comment among the natives."

"Their touch is pollution, and harsh as the opinion may seem, justice to our own race demands that they should not be allowed to settle on our soil."

Today the Chinese could say the same thing about the U.S.
Aids: experts not hopeful on vaccine

AMERICAN scientists are confident they can develop drugs to treat people infected with the Aids virus, but are less optimistic about finding a vaccine to prevent the disease.

Leading researchers told a meeting sponsored by the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine that they believe Aids eventually will yield to a battery of treatment drugs under development.

But, after initial failures with prototype vaccines used on animals, they said they cannot be as confident about seeing a preventive vaccine in the near future.

"We cannot predict the success of vaccines," said Dr. William Haseltine of Harvard Medical School. "What we can predict is the success of antiviral agents."

Dr. Haseltine said development of drugs to treat or hold off Aids infections is moving rapidly and should produce good results soon. Researchers are dealing with one disease caused by variations of essentially the same virus, called HIV, he said.

Scientists now know more about HIV than any virus in history and have identified a dozen places in the virus, or in the cells it infects, to attack and control it, he said.

Scores of candidate drugs aimed at stopping the Aids virus are being tested in the laboratory and in humans, Dr. Haseltine said, and a number will be available in a few months or years for a combined attack on the disease.

Dr. Haseltine said most of the simple approaches to vaccines against acquired immune deficiency syndrome (Aids) have been tried and have failed in tests with chimpanzees, the best animal model for humans.
Aids hits teen sex

THE FEAR of Aids is stopping girls from having under-age sex, according to a survey published today.

Three years ago, almost 50 p.c. of those interviewed for the British magazine Loving said they had lost their virginity before reaching 16. Now that figure has dropped to 36 p.c.

Ms. Gerry Fallon, editor of Loving said: "Our survey of readers' sexual habits three years ago was conducted when Aids was not an influence on a young woman's approach to sex."
Doctors ‘not equipped to respond to AIDS’

ALTHOUGH more than 80 per cent of Irish doctors in a recent survey said they had read literature on AIDS, about half said they felt they did not have sufficient information to respond to patients’ needs. Only 23 per cent said they had the special blood sample kit necessary to ensure the safety of those transmitting or receiving specimens, although 72 per cent said they would take blood samples to detect AIDS.

The survey was carried out among more than 400 doctors in Ireland, and appears in the first issue of Irish Doctor, launched yesterday by the Minister for Health, Mr O’Hanlon. The new publication will be distributed twice monthly free to all doctors practising in Ireland, and is edited by Dr Aidan Meade, a Dublin general practitioner, who is currently chairman of the Irish Medical Organisation’s Ethics Committee, a member of the National Health Council and a member of the health and science faculty of Trinity College, Dublin.

The first issue carries a three-part section on AIDS, including the survey, an article on the AIDS strategy in Ireland by Dr James Walsh, deputy chief medical officer of the Department of Health, and an article on testing for AIDS, written by Dr Irene B. Hillery of the Department of Microbiology, University College, Dublin. Among the points which emerged from the survey was that while 89 per cent of doctors agreed with the Department of Health recommendations on AIDS, fewer than 20 per cent would notify the Department of HIV positive patients, and 69 per cent would notify directors of community care. A majority of doctors, 59 per cent, said that notification should be compulsory.
WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has identified 3,035 military personnel and 1,766 recruit applicants as carriers of the Aids virus out of more than three million tested, according to the latest statistics (AP reports). Military personnel with the virus are allowed to remain in the service provided they show no signs of the disease itself.
California plans emergency legal action on Aids

From Ivor Davis
Los Angeles

In a desperate effort to try to curb the growing Aids plague, California, the most populous state in the United States, could begin its own programme of testing experimental drugs within weeks if a new emergency Bill is approved this week.

Complaining that the US Food and Drug Administration is dragging its feet in giving its blessing to the experimental anti-Aids drugs, California's Attorney-General, Mr John van de Kamp, has taken the unusual step of sponsoring the new law by noting, "This Bill is the State of California's announcement that, in the face of an extraordinary medical emergency, business as usual is not enough."

The state's chief law enforcement officer added that the measure "will echo like a thunderbolt ... in the corridors of the federal medical bureaucracy."

If the measure is approved, California will be able to begin tests, possibly within weeks, on the first of thousands of volunteers who have Aids or who have been tested positive for the Aids virus.

Mr van de Kamp said the measure would enable pharmaceutical companies to bypass the FDA as well as offer some hope to Aids patients, many of whom are crossing the border into Mexico to seek drugs and treatment.

In Washington, the FDA denied that it has moved too slowly in efforts to test Aids drugs.

The measure, which has won the support of leading lawmakers in California, is expected to be approved next week before the legislature adjourns.

However, Mr Neil Schramm, the former head of the Los Angeles Aids task force, has said that even if the Bill is passed it may not be possible to produce a vaccine or cure any faster, even if California establishes its own testing procedures.

"Everybody is frustrated by the slowness of research," he said, "but unfortunately that is part of the problem with quality research. No amount of rushing things can make good research happen faster."

The Governor of California, Mr George Deukmejian, has threatened to veto another Aids Bill that would require schools in California to give Aids prevention education to junior and senior high school students.

Republican lawmakers claim the law...
The Times
2nd September 1987

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday that it would test some 12,000 prostitutes for AIDS after news that a youth who regularly visited a red-light district in the capital had contracted the virus (AFP report).
In Dublin
3rd September 1987

rock

SOMETIMES I LIE IN BED
in a tortured state, twisting and
twisting all night and pondering over
tantalising issues. Like how long
will the last piece of string? Is The Irish
really shrinking? Will the
Mighty Joe Youth album be
good? Can Paul McCartney
possibly spend all his money
during his lifetime?

Occasionally I slip into a
euphoric trance and so
these questions are answered
just as I'm about to jot them
in my notebook. I
postman, arrived with yet a
U2 record. Life goes on.

The Subterraneans, who
'Mad Joy' released on October
in the Bagfoot Inn for the
night... Reunion gig of the
in Hawkin's on Sunday we
Sept., when The Radiator
back together for a once of
Chevron, Pete Holiday etc
joined by one or two
special guests including Gav
day and supported by The
Wild West.

'Strageways' is the title
soon to come Smithy. Also
there's even a rumour that
Johnny Thunders has
rehearsing with the three
remaining members... Scullion, a
good old Scullion... what a

In Dublin
3rd September 1987

The Radiators now and then (inset). Catch their once-off reunion gig (and help the AIDS campaign) by going along to Hawkins on Sunday 13 at eight pm.
Hard-hitting Aids campaign slogan angers Tory MP

By Nicholas Timmins

Health Services Correspondent

but to the unborn babies of infected mothers, to the sexual partners of drug abusers and from them to the general population".

The £5m two-stage campaign will concentrate on the youth and music press and late night rock and pop music programmes, hammering home the message that in some parts of the country — notably Edinburgh — one in two injecting drug abusers are now infected with the Aids virus and that sharing a needle just once can pass on the disease.

The message to the estimated 40,000 to 50,000 who inject is "If you can't stop, never share injecting equipment", while warning those who might be tempted to inject not to do so.

The second stage of the campaign links the Aids message to the Government's heroin prevention programme warning that addicts lie, scrounge, steal from their families and friends and go into prostitution to support their habits as well as putting themselves at risk of Aids if they share needles or syringes.

The Terence Higgins Trust, which yesterday had its grant boosted from £18,000 a year to £300,000, said the advertisements were some of the best Government-sponsored ones so far, and the British Medical Association said the new stage in the Aids campaign was crucial.

The BMA and Victoria Gillick appeared to have fought to a draw yesterday as new Government figures showed no difference in the rate at which girls under 16 became pregnant during 10 months in 1985 when doctors were barred by the Appeal Court from prescribing contraceptives without parental consent.

The ruling brought warnings of a rise in unwanted pregnancies, and was overturned by the House of Lords in October 1985. Figures from the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys show total pregnancies fell by 2% in girls aged 13 to 15 during the period, and by 24% over the whole of 1985.

The fear of Aids is stopping girls from having under-age sex, according to a survey published in a teenage magazine yesterday.

Loving magazine said that three years ago, almost 50 per cent of those interviewed said they had lost their virginity before reaching 16. Now that figure has dropped to 36 per cent.
Outspoken new drive on AIDS and drugs

The Government yesterday launched a £5 million campaign against drug abuse and AIDS, amid warnings that in some parts of Britain one in two addicts is infected with the deadly virus.

The Social Services Secretary, Mr John Moore, said: “Injecting drug users are at serious risk of becoming infected with the AIDS virus if they share needles and syringes.

“The threat is not only to the drug users themselves but to the unborn babies of infected mothers, to the sexual partners of drug abusers and, from them, to the general population.”

The campaign is to be carried out through TV, radio and cinema commercials, backed by advertisements in youth magazines.

Mr Moore said: “This campaign is hard-hitting, and some people may find some of the material disturbing, but we cannot afford to pull our punches if we are to reach the young people who are most at risk.” — (PA)
Explicit publicity to highlight Aids risk from abuse of drugs

By Thomas Pen fiance, Science Correspondent

It is imperative to raise the awareness of young people about the risk of AIDS from drug abuse. This campaign was launched by the Government yesterday.

The message of the campaign is clear: "Drug users Aids," and young adults should be informed through posters, television, radio and cinema commercials and through newspaper advertisements.

With more than 1,000 cases of AIDS in the UK and 2,000 new cases of drug abuse in Scotland, the risk to the young population is real. Mr John Moore, the Secretary of State for Social Services, said: "We don't know how many drug users are already infected, but even the smallest number of young people is real."

Mr Moore called for action, "Our awareness efforts have fallen short of our goals."

AIDS condom fails in test

By Jill Sheanan, Social Services Correspondent

The College of Health has given a warning that five different condom brands, specifically designed for drug users, have failed British Standard performance tests. A survey of 35 different condom brands found that four brands failed when used with water and one failed when used with saliva.

The results of the test showed that all the condoms had produced no leaks and none of the brands had been tested under actual drug use conditions. It is not clear how the condoms performed in real-life use.

The current British Standard permits 3.5% per cent of tests, in line with concerns over 1,000, with a 3 per cent failure rate being allowed when testing similar conditions.

However, on the website's, AIDS-AIDS, asked for comments on their site. They replied that they did not know the number of failures. The site was also closed to new users. The final brand, Ritamale, failed because it had a water barrier, a number of other manufacturers failed.
Aids man charged

An American judge has ordered an Aids-stricken male prostitute to stand trial on attempted murder charges, saying he believed the man intended to pass on the deadly virus when he sold his blood.

"What we have here is a deliberate and conscious disregard of human safety," Judge Alban Niles said yesterday as he held Joseph Markowski to answer five charges, including attempted murder, assault and attempted poisoning.

The case is believed to be the first in the United States in which a person with acquired immune deficiency syndrome had been charged with attempted murder for allegedly selling sex and tainted blood.
Doctors' new hope for AIDS babies

By JOHN ILLMAN, Medical Correspondent

A REVOLUTIONARY technique is bringing new hope to babies in Britain born with AIDS.

Six infants aged from 18 months to four have been given the life-prolonging treatment with 'dramatic results', it was disclosed yesterday.

The treatment consists of 'passive immunisation' against common infections with antibodies taken from blood donations.

Doctors say the technique is designed to counter the devastating effects of AIDS by providing the body's natural defences with a major boost.

Dr. Peng Lee Yap of the Edinburgh blood transfusion service said that after the treatment children who had been in hospital were able to live at home.

They put on weight and were no longer so vulnerable to common infection.

One of the children, who lives in the North of England, is also being given the AIDS drug AZT. 'We want to explore whether giving the two together is better,' Dr. Yap said during an international conference in London staged by the Hospital Infection Society.

Talks began last night in London between Soviet diplomats and the Foreign Office on the prospect of co-operation to fight AIDS.
The problem with AIDS

The problem with AIDS is that it is a disease that is not only likely to spread rapidly, but also difficult to control once it has gained a foothold. The disease is caused by a virus called HIV, which attacks the immune system and can lead to a variety of serious health problems, including AIDS.

The spread of AIDS is primarily through sexual contact, injection drug use, and mother-to-child transmission. In recent years, the disease has spread rapidly in many parts of the world, particularly in the developing world where access to healthcare is limited.

There is no cure for AIDS, but antiretroviral therapy (ART) can help manage the symptoms and slow the progression of the disease. However, accessing ART is a challenge in many parts of the world due to the high cost of the medication and limited healthcare infrastructure.

Prevention is the key to controlling the spread of AIDS. This includes promoting safe sex practices, needle exchange programs for injection drug users, and educating the public about the risks of infection.

By Joreniah Newman, Bishop of Limmerick

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By Joreniah Newman, Bishop of Limmerick
Irish Times
4th September 1987

Man (70) has AIDS virus

A MAN in his 70s has been admitted to St. James's Hospital, Dublin, with the AIDS virus.

This is the first such case reported in Ireland, according to the Department of Health, but is not uncommon elsewhere.

TCD head of geriatric medicine Dr. David Coakley warned doctors to check the sexual histories of geriatric patients.
Donations sent to victims of AIDS assaults

From Sean Cronie

GOONS and guns including money are being used by Americans in St Paul's Catholic church, Arvida, Florida, for the family of Leslie and Clifford Ray whose sons were doused with boiling acid and who had their home burned down because they are homosexuals and carry AIDS antibodies.

The cheque and money total $25,000, a church worker said. The Rays are in hospital. The fire that destroyed their small house was called "suspicious" because it began in a bedroom of the St Paul's house and Mr Ray's brother was the only witness.

"It's enough that it caught me to get out of Arvida," Clifford Ray said. He hopes to settle with his family in a more hospitable part of Florida than the rural rural community southeast of Tampa, near the Gulf of Mexico.

The Rays — Bobby (10), Robert (9) and Randy (8) — were burned from the local school last year when it became public knowledge that they carried the AIDS virus, apparently from blood transfusions. The Rays took the case to court, but a federal judge ruled last month that the boys must be permitted to attend school. What they want is schools, said the people angry at home.

The Rays, who are Catholics, were supported by five church.

The Reverend Michael Lynch told the 80 parishioners, "It's normal, out of the line of tragedy when they sang hallelujah, but people angry at home.

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AIDS-blood donor faces charges

A JUDGE in Los Angeles has ordered an AIDS-infected man, 27-year-old, to stand trial for attempted murder charges, saying he misunderstood the man sentenced to prison for falsifying medical records after selling his blood.

What we have here is a deliberate and conscious disregard to human safety," Judge John Niles said as he sentenced Joseph Marcovich to 20 or 30 years in prison for convictions filed in June. The man was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the first time in which a person with AIDS has been charged with attempted murder for allegedly selling contaminated blood.

(AP)