

## Behind the Headlines



# Out in the Terry family

Randall Terry says his son's coming-out was a betrayal, and he's still determined to deny "special civil rights" to gays

**O**utraged by his son Jamiel's public coming-out in the May issue of *Out* magazine, antigay and militant antiabortion activist Randall Terry published his own essay on the far-right Web site *WorldNetDaily.com*. He accused the magazine of recruiting his 24-year-old son, whom he took in as an 8-year-old foster child, and publishing lies about his family.

Randall Terry originally entered the public eye as founder of the antiabortion group *Operation Res-*

*cue*. He went to jail for having a fellow abortion opponent bring an aborted fetus to then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton in 1992, and he went bankrupt after women's groups won huge civil suits against him in the 1990s. In recent years he has focused his efforts on battling same-sex marriage. The Advocate spoke with Terry, who these days is president of the *Society for Truth and Justice* and a radio talk-show host in Florida, shortly after news of the *Out* essay broke.

—Benjamin Ryan

**What's the most difficult part about your son's coming-out?**

I love my son. And because I love him I have to tell him the truth. I have to say to him, "Jamiel, this is a sexual addiction that could claim your life. And it's self-destructive behavior."

**Do you feel betrayed by your son's essay?**

Yes, yes, absolutely. There were so many things in his story that were inaccurate. For me, that kind of betrayal of family boundaries and privacy is mind-boggling.

**Has it caused you to reexamine your beliefs about homosexuality?**

[*Long silence*] For me, part of the issue is, How do we as a culture say that these people have the right to not be harassed? I don't want to live in a police state where doors are being broken down. [I do want to live] in a culture where we do not applaud this lifestyle or reward it with special civil rights or the covenant of marriage.

**Some have argued that you took up an antigay crusade only after the antiabortion movement ostracized you.**

That's just completely inaccurate. I was speaking against the homosexual agenda in the late '80s. When I was doing all my pro-life work I was doing speeches and saying, "Look, people, these two things come from the same root. They are the rejection of God's plan for human sexuality and for family."

**You've been called a hypocrite for champi-**

**oning morality while divorcing your wife and raising daughters who have children out of wedlock.**

Divorce is a nightmare. Anyone who's ever gone through it knows it. But if I say to people, "We should not steal," and one of my kids goes and steals a car, the truth of the statement is still just as true.

**What do you think of *Out* magazine?**

Well, I guess I owe *Out* an apology, because I was told by my son that they approached him [when, in fact, Jamiel approached *Out*]. So it was wrong of me [to criticize *Out* for soliciting the story]. But I still think they exploited my son.

**Do you believe that the gay rights movement threatens your civil liberties?**

Well, if you take the homosexual argument through to its logical end, it would become a crime to speak against homosexual behavior. I would have to deny the gospel itself if I were to say that God didn't love these people and that there wasn't a way out [of homosexuality].

**What's next for you?**

One is to encourage people to stand against the homosexual marriage movement. But the other thing is, I feel that one of the ways the homosexual movement has been brilliant in its strategies is to browbeat the average American into excluding God from the equation [of homosexuality]. If there is no God, then it would be ludicrous to oppose homosexual behavior or abortion.