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## Former NJ candidate to host LGBT political show

by Jen Colletta

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Jim Morrison

Jim Morrison's career has taken him from attorney to reality-show contestant to helicopter pilot to owner of a political T-shirt company — and his latest venture will place him at the forefront of the LGBT political world.

"For & Against," a political-analysis series on here!TV that will focus on the LGBT issues of the day, will debut Jan. 6, with Morrison as host.

The 30-minute weekly series will feature interviews with political pundits, commentators and LGBTs of all walks of life. The goal, he said, is to present an in-depth and well-informed examination of the topics impacting the LGBT community across the nation — giving attention to subjects not adequately addressed by the mainstream media, and pursuing those who are fighting against the LGBT-rights movement.

Now a resident of Brooklyn, Morrison ran for a state senate seat in New Jersey in 2003, winning a nomination through a write-in effort but eventually losing to a Republican incumbent.

Before he entered the political race, Morrison, who attained his law degree from Columbia University, took a break from his legal career to become a contestant on the inaugural 2001 season of "The Mole," finishing as runner-up.

Morrison, who once spearheaded the pilot for an MTV political program, said he jumped at the chance to enter the LGBT political fray when the concept of "For & Against" was presented to him by a here!TV producer.

"We were on the same page about the need for a gay and lesbian political show," Morrison said. "From our encounters with people in general, many are misinformed about these issues and some are just totally apathetic. So we wanted to do a show that is not just educational but presents these issues with a real energy."

Targeting the apathy some members of the LGBT community hold about the political challenges the community faces will be one of the primary goals of the show, Morrison said.

"In a lot of ways, we're victims of our own successes," he said. "Demographically, a lot of the community lives in urban areas and has good jobs and, because of that, a lot of people are really checked out and living just in their own lives. And on the flip side, we've been outsiders for so long, people tend to balkanize and not pay attention to what's going on in the outside world and how it's affecting us."

While "For & Against" will be a primer in the ins and outs of top political issues, it is also meant as an opportunity for LGBTs to engage in open discussion about the direction of the LGBT-rights movement.

For instance, Morrison said the program will explore both sides of the conversation among LGBTs about marriage equality.

"We're not going to look at the debate in the sense of the right-wing arguments for so-called 'traditional' marriage, but we thought it would be more interesting to look at the arguments from within the gay community for and against marriage equality," he said. "There are some powerful arguments that stem from the idea that straight people are handed this gameplan or social mores about how they should behave — and why should we want to be part of this institution that caters to the needs of straight people? I don't personally agree with that because, as an attorney, I am wholeheartedly in favor of marriage equality from a societal and legal perspective, but 'For & Against' is about examining arguments and looking at all sides."

That dedication to balance is no more apparent than in the show's pledge to invite all of the Republican contenders for president to appear on the program.

Morrison said one of the first such candidates they plan to reach out to is Fred Karger, an openly gay Republican presidential candidate from California who Morrison said can provide important insight into the complexities of the politically conservative gay community.

"We're going to be doing an episode on the rise of gay Republicans, so it'll be important to



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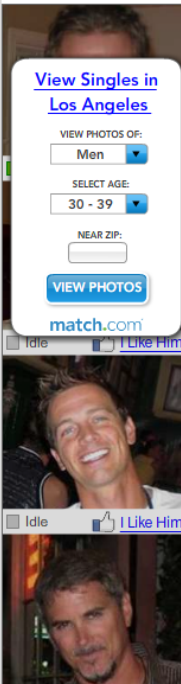
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have him on. For me, I don't know how people in the community could consider voting for Gingrich or Romney or anyone else out there fighting against us, especially if there is an openly gay candidate, but I do have some issues with the idea of a gay Republican, and that's something we want to look at," he said.

The show is running on a two-week production schedule, which Morrison noted doesn't always allow for the topics to be as timely as he would like.

However, the show will have an online presence — with up-to-date video clips and other content posted at here!TV and The Advocate, such as immediate reactions to the upcoming Iowa caucuses.

While the program is geared toward an LGBT audience, allies — and those who are not yet allies — can also benefit, Morrison said, as they "come to see the issues affecting the LGBT community from a human perspective."

Inroads have already been made in that realm in the past few years, he asserted.

During his 2003 race, Morrison's sexual orientation was unsettling to some political leaders, he said, although the public seemed supportive of an openly LGBT candidate — an idea that has become more commonplace since that time.

"It's changed a lot," he said. "There are certainly more gay and lesbian members of Congress and in state houses. I basically got a response from people like, 'Yeah, whatever.' I think the general population really just doesn't care as much as our enemies want them to care."

Despite that, Morrison said, proactive steps are still needed to stymie the flood of misinformation that threatens to inhibit future progress.

"In the mainstream media, you get a very cursory one question about LGBT issues and then they move on to another category and usually the answers are maddeningly inadequate and inaccurate," he said. "In the marriage-equality debate, a typical question comes up about sexual identity being a choice, and so many people answer it in the affirmative and they're not being called to task for that. We have a mission to not let those issues go, to not move on to the next question until we get the answer we deserve. I think the LGBT community has gotten the short shrift from the mainstream media and we need to have a voice for our community and our issues — and being able to do that through a political lens is a powerful thing."

"For & Against" premieres at noon Jan. 6. Many cable providers carry here!TV programs through the On Demand menu, where it can be found under the Premium option.

For more information, visit [www.heretv.com](http://www.heretv.com).

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