

Bill O'Reilly really likes you

The conservative, argumentative host of Fox News's *The O'Reilly Factor* favors gay rights laws and gay adoption but does wish that gays would shut up already **By Michael Giltz**

Bill O'Reilly is a brash, aggressive man who, at 6 foot 4, towers over everyone around him and exudes the no-nonsense working-class Irish Catholic background he proudly claims as a native of Levittown, N.Y. The nuns at his school had O'Reilly pegged as a handful at an early age. So it's hardly surprising when the 52-year-old host of Fox News's *The O'Reilly Factor* tells *The Advocate*, "I've never, ever, in my life been hit on by another guy. Ever. I don't give out that aura."

Any sensible person would wait for him to make the first move. But the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association took the initiative and asked O'Reilly out for their annual convention, and he said yes. He'll appear by satellite at the group's mid-September gathering in Philadelphia. Sure, he's debating whether there's a liberal bias in the media. But still, Bill O'Reilly? At a gay convention? After all, he continues to insist, "I've never understood why anyone, why any American, would want to tell the world what their sexual preference is. It's no one's business but yours."

During an extensive interview at his rather messy Fox News office in New York—"It's always like this," he explains—O'Reilly talks about almost every gay issue under the sun, from the gay pride parade ("It's offensive, it's foolish, it's counterproductive, and it backlashes against you") to gay adoption (he supports it and did a terrific interview with Rosie O'Donnell, but adds, "I'm not looking out for the gays here; I've got to tell you the truth. I'm looking out for the kids").

O'Reilly's show reaches some 20 million viewers a week, and his books are megasellers. He is the de facto face of hard-line conservatism, the way Rush Limbaugh, Pat Robertson, and Jerry Falwell once were. But O'Reilly is more of an iconoclast than you might imagine. He opposes the death penalty, admires Susan Sarandon, doesn't think much of Jesse Helms, and supports the decriminalization (but not legalization) of marijuana. He also states flatly that gays and lesbians deserve the same rights in the workplace as everyone

else and shouldn't be fired because of who they are. He thinks gay-inclusive antidiscrimination laws should be enacted in every state and opposes the repeal effort against such an ordinance that's on the ballot September 10 in Florida's Miami-Dade County.

And he wouldn't mind in the least if someone thought he was gay.

"If people want to think I'm gay, fine," he says. "In fact, I wish I were gay. I'd get a lot more free meals, OK? Somebody take me out to the movies once in a while. I'm sure in my career—because I didn't get married until very late in life—that people said I was gay. I'm sure they did. I never heard it. But I'm sure it was said once in a while. I wasn't going to say, 'No, I'm not gay.' I don't care what they say about me. I couldn't care less. Because that was empowering those people. I learned that very early in life."

Later, while walking down the hall to his studio, O'Reilly greets another employee by name and then suddenly asks her, "Am I gay?"

"Are you gay?" she responds, looking both aghast and bewildered. "Who's saying that? That is ridiculous. Every single famous person gets that eventually."

O'Reilly quickly says, "But in my case, I am!"—jokingly—before turning away and striding toward the elevators.

"The problem with homosexuals is, there's a feeling among some leaders that they have to force people to accept them," O'Reilly says. "My thinking is, Why waste your time? There are millions of Americans who are never going to accept you, primarily on religious grounds. There are millions of Americans who fear you, primarily on psychological grounds—their neurosis. Why play into that? That's just going to bog you down. You're never going to cut through it. You're not going to convince the Holy Rollers that you're not an abomination, because they're going to quote the Old Testament."

That reference to Holy Rollers—a possibly pejorative term that certainly won't endear him to the religious right—is one reason O'Reilly can be such a fascinating figure to some gay

activists. Surely his stance on gay adoption and comments like that don't play well with the typical conservative Fox News viewer.

"The only heat I take on the gay stuff is from very, very religious-driven people," he insists. "I don't take any heat from Republicans or Democrats. This is where you guys have it wrong: 90% percent of Americans don't care what you do; 10% are fanatics. They think you're going to hell, and they want you to go to hell. All right? Ignore them."

And what does he mean by religious fanatics? "I mean, people who think you are going to hell and are going to quote from Revelation that you're going

and it gets the juices flowing."

O'Reilly does play tough with all his guests. But it could be argued that he spends more time and energy criticizing gay activists than he does disagreeing with the people who condemn gays in a manner he considers un-American, illogical, and un-Christian. In part, it's because they have areas of agreement.

For example, at first he flatly opposes gay marriage. "Now you're in a different area," he says, differentiating marriage rights from, say, employment rights. He opposes same-sex marriage on legal grounds, social grounds, any ground he can get a solid foot on. But present him with a specific injustice,

"Look, society does not have the right to judge what you do behind closed doors, but they will do it. They will do it... If you want to live the life where you have the most options—which is really the benefit of America—shut up. Shut up."

there. I think that's a little ridiculous, don't you? Those are the people. The guys waving the [Bible] saying, 'God hates you.' How do they know? Let God sort it out. I have no idea whether God hates you or not."

So "religious fanatics" would include Falwell, Robertson, and the like? "Look, I'm not naming names because I don't know where they are—maybe they're evolving. I don't know. But anybody I see saying, 'This group is going to hell?' I mean, come on."

Still, O'Reilly is hardly a friend to gay activists. "I don't think I'm disrespectful to any gays on the air," O'Reilly says. "I treat everybody pretty much the same. We do a confrontational program and we get passionate about our arguments

such as a gay person not being able to visit his or her partner in the hospital because they're not "related," and he'll quickly agree that "if you can't get into the hospital, that's a bad thing. And it shouldn't happen."

And while he's never tired of an argument, he can grow restless after he's made his point and dull practicalities like visitation rights replace the broad brush strokes of debate.

"Look, I couldn't care less, to tell you the truth," he says eventually of same-sex marriage. "You want to get married? Knock yourself out. Go to Vegas; have a good time."

Really? He wouldn't oppose gay marriage if it were legal? "If you can get that changed, I'm not going to jump ▶

Liz Smith



The future's perfect

THE WORLD doesn't want to hear about labor pains. It only wants to see the baby," said **Johnny Sain**.

MELANIE GRIFFITH shopped for back-to-school clothes for her girls, got her fortune read and found a good book all in one afternoon last Sunday. Without makeup, the gorgeous star, just turned 45, attended a girly soiree at the designer **Tracee Ross** hip-and-happening boutique on the Sunset Strip. The store was also celebrating first-time novelist **Rebecca Bloom**'s tender coming-of-age fiction "Girl Anatomy."

Rod Stewart's daughter, **Kimberly**, said she couldn't put the book down and read it in one sitting. Around her whirled cranberry martinis, finger sandwiches, vanilla cupcakes, high-end clothes and chances for handwriting analysis.

Melanie, with daughters **Stella** and **Dakota**, stayed for several hours, sneaking upstairs for a private reading with **Kyle Matthews**, psychic to the stars. She liked him so much he was invited to her house the next day for more.

In spite of the Holly Golightly atmosphere, **Paris Hilton** looked subdued. No dancing on display cases. The newest "it" girl was **Brooke Burns** whom you can find in the Aug. 26 People magazine. She is the host for NBC's game show "Dog Eat Dog" and made her mark as a "Baywatch" babe. The Dallas beauty is now a single mom with a 2-year-old daughter named **Madison** via Aussie hunk **Julian McMahon** of "The Profiler" and "Charmed."

Said Brooke: "I think our divorce is final in two weeks." She didn't really want to talk about how her ex had been charmed away from her by his co-star **Shannen Doherty**. "I hate to talk about the reasons why we broke up. It's so mean. We get along great, and he's a killer dad and that's the most important thing. We're best friends; we shopped together this weekend for a new nanny!"

SUZANNE SOMERS has always taken herself very seriously (she talks of her role in the '70s sitcom "Three's Company" as if it were comparable to Lucille Ball's Lucy Ricardo). But Somers, though sometimes humility-challenged, has been an admirable survivor, too. She overcame Hollywood black-listing when she negotiated herself out of "Three's Company" by asking for too much, too soon. She overcame also an abusive childhood... family alcoholism... breast cancer. She brilliantly resurrected herself as a TV pitchwoman, author and, eventually, a star on TV — again! Now Suzanne is putting her life to music in an extravaganza titled "The Blonde in the Thunderbird" — this is a reference to her bit part in the movie "American Graffiti" which launched her career. Suzanne will sing, dance, boast and emote with the help of the award-winning writing/composing team **Mitzie** and **Ken Welch**.

"Blonde" debuts next year in performing arts centers all over the U.S. and Canada.

THE ADVOCATE does a bang-up job of interviewing the controversial **Bill O'Reilly** of Fox News in its September issue. On same-sex marriage, instead of vehemently opposing it, Bill opines: "You want to get married? Knock yourself out. Go to Vegas; have a good time."

O'Reilly will surprise some of his right-

ist admirers in this interview. He is described by writer **Michael Giltz** as an "iconoclast." He opposes the death penalty, admires **Susan Sarandon**, doesn't think much of **Jesse Helms**, supports the decriminalization — but not legalization — of marijuana. He believes gays and lesbians deserve the same rights in the workplace as everyone else. He says, "I want you to have a good time. Carve out a good life for yourself. Find a good companion. But nobody has the right to know what you do in your private life." In other words, the O'Reilly thesis is "Don't ask! Don't tell!" He adds, "If you want to live the life where you can have the most options — shut up." (Bill admits, "I'm sure you could find some inconsistencies in what I say.")

Here's a last O'Reilly opinion — "The Gay Pride Parade? It's offensive, it's foolish, it's counterproductive, and it back-



Nina Prommer/Globe Photos

BROOKE BURNS
Soon-to-be single.

lashes against you."

On this issue, I think he is 100 percent right. So sue me; and Bill O'Reilly.

USUALLY I totally agree with **Jim Mullen**'s acerbic "Hot Sheet" in Entertainment Weekly. But have to take issue with this remark: "Cher's farewell tour. At 56 the diva says she's had enough. It's time to let someone else make the entourage miserable and unhappy."

Jim is talking about some bizarre Cher from a parallel universe. The for real Cher is by far one of the most grounded, earthy, honest and just plain likeable stars around. Backstage and behind-the-scenes feedback on Cher is almost always flattering. She may be a big star and a healthy ego, but then, she's been in the fame game forever.

I've known Cher since back when **Chastity** was a baby and she was still the Cher of Sonny and Cher. She really hasn't changed much. Recently I interviewed this diva goddess again for a coming Good Housekeeping cover story and found her as straightforward, interesting and to-the-point as ever. It's a great Q & A coming in October, but I can't take much credit for it. This woman just can't give a bad interview.

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O'Reilly Interview Shocker

FOX NEWS Star Knocks "Religious Fanatics" Who Oppose Gay Rights

Exclusive to About, by John Aravosis

 (Hear snippets from **Bill O'Reilly's** *Advocate* interview by clicking on the box to the right.)

My Article begins here...

America's religious right does not tolerate those they believe to be ideologically impure, and that's why they're bound to be a bit upset with FOX TV superstar Bill O'Reilly.

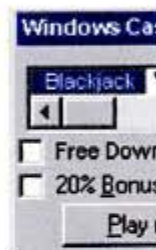
O'Reilly is the host of "The O'Reilly Factor," a no-holds-barred slugfest of ideas that regularly lambastes feminists, Democrats, the ACLU and anyone else (usually on the left) who ticks the Irish-Catholic O'Reilly off on a given day. Gays and lesbians are a particular target of the hit show, getting more than their fair share of negative air time, and that's why O'Reilly's upcoming interview in America's premiere gay magazine, the *Advocate*, is raising eyebrows even before it's publication. (Liz Smith is already calling the interview a "bang-up job" in her [nationally-syndicated column](#).) It's odd enough that TV's top conservative pundit is talking to a

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gay publication, but even more surprising is what he tells them. (The interview will hit the new stands on September 3).

O'Reilly Pro Gay?

According to Michael Giltz, a freelance reporter (and personal friend of mine) who conducted the interview live in O'Reilly's Manhattan office, O'Reilly not only reiterates his previous support for gay adoption, but he goes on to call the US military "homophobic" (though he still thinks the gay ban is necessary), says that gays should have the right to visit their same-sex spouses in the hospital (in many locales they cannot), thinks every state should have laws protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination in the workplace (only 12 states currently do), and opposes the repeal of a gay rights ordinance in Florida's Miami-Dade County (the hotly-contested repeal measure is on the ballot September 10).

That's enough right there to make the religious right grab for a Maalox. But there's more.

On gay marriage, one of *the* hot-button religious-right issues, O'Reilly starts by telling Giltz that he opposes it, then when pushed by the reporter, finally concedes: "Look, I couldn't care less, to tell you the truth... You want to get married? Knock yourself out. Go to Vegas; have a good time... If you can get that changed, I'm not going to jump up and down and say I think it's wrong, because I don't."

Who You Calling a Fanatic?

Then things get really interesting. O'Reilly calls people who quote the Old Testament to label gays an abomination "holy rollers" (a term often perceived to be pejorative). Then he refers to vocal anti-gay advocates as "fanatics." ("90% percent of Americans don't care what you do; 10% are fanatics," O'Reilly tells Giltz. "They think you're going to hell, and they want you to go to hell. All right? Ignore them.") When asked to clarify exactly who he means by "fanatics," O'Reilly responds: "I mean, people who think you are going to hell and are going to quote from Revelation that you're going there. I think that's a little ridiculous, don't you? Those are the people."

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Hear snippets from Bill O'Reilly's *Advocate* interview by clicking on the box to the right.

O'Reilly Won't Name Names

In all fairness, when the *Advocate* pressed O'Reilly to name names (for example, were Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson "fanatics"?), he demurred. Nonetheless, it's difficult to avoid the conclusion that members of the religious right were among the fanatics and holy rollers to whom O'Reilly was referring, as they clearly "care what gays do" and regularly claim to be quoting the Bible in suggesting that gays will not be going to Heaven:

- The Family Research Council, a lead religious right anti-gay activist organization, issued a press release on October 16, 1998, the day of slain University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard's funeral, supposedly quoting the Bible as saying that "homosexuals are included in a list of sinners, who, if unrepentant, will not inherit the kingdom of God."

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- An essay on the Web site of the [American Family Association](#), another lead anti-gay organization of the far right, echoes the same sentiment.
 - As does the [Coral Ridge Ministries](#), another lead group of anti-gay activists.
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But more important than the nuance of to whom he might be referring, is the fact that Bill O'Reilly is one of America's favorite right-wingers, and his TV show reportedly tops Larry King's in the nightly ratings. O'Reilly is a force to be reckoned with in conservative politics, and when he starts agreeing with gay rights advocates about the legitimacy of aspects of their cause, that's news.

Religious Right Has Always Been Suspicious

Interestingly, even before details of the *Advocate* interview were made public, the religious right had its qualms with Bill O'Reilly's supposed pro-gay agenda.

In a statement recently issued by a [lead religious right activist](#), and re-published by the [Concerned Women for America](#) (a lead religious right group), O'Reilly's show is referred to as "The Gay Spin Zone," mocking O'Reilly's oft-repeated phrase that his show is a "no-spin zone." The statement says that "the homosexual movement even got to" O'Reilly, that the TV host plays "on 'both sides of the fence' on the issue of homosexuality," and that he's "caving into the homosexual's sinister plan." And in a blurb on their Web site home page, the Concerned Women for America (CWFA) even refer to O'Reilly as a "conservative" between-quotes, suggesting the moniker may not be correct: "Pro-homosexual media bias is getting so bad," CWFA says on their Web site, "that even 'conservatives' like FOX's Bill O'Reilly are going out of their way to show they are 'gay'-positive."

A few days later, on August 27 of this year, the ultra-conservative Washington Times (a newspaper owned by the Moonies, and with very close ties to the religious right) [reprinted](#) the portion of "The Gay Spin Zone" that attacks O'Reilly, alongside a large picture of the TV host.

(The religious right has also not been happy with the fact that O'Reilly will be appearing in a panel discussion at the National Lesbian and Gay Journalist Association in September.)

Of course, O'Reilly's views on gay issues shouldn't come as a

complete surprise to anyone who's done their homework. Giltz pointed me to two paragraphs from O'Reilly's top-selling book, "The O'Reilly Factor," that echo what the pundit said to the *Advocate*:

O'Reilly on Fanatics:

"On the other hand, religious fanatics who demonize gays and other alternative groups aren't covering themselves with glory, either. Yes, I know about the references to homosexuality as 'an abomination' in Leviticus, but I also know what the Old Testament says about slavery. As long as a sexual issue is not intruding on your freedom or endangering your kids, leave it to God to sort it out. The Deity is a lot smarter than we are. That's also in the Bible." ("The O'Reilly Factor," p.34)

O'Reilly on Anti-Gay Job Discrimination:

"And here on earth our legal system is the place to go sort out problems such as civil rights being violated because of sexual preference. To someone gay who is the victim of discrimination or abuse, I say exchange the high heels for a sensible business suit, because that's appropriate for the playing field, and hire a lawyer who will put the screws to whatever bastards are interfering with your rights to *private sexual expression*." ("The O'Reilly Factor," p.34)

religious right leaders questioned O'Reilly's Catholicism and state of mind (you can listen to the 18-minute or so interview [online here](#) (RealPlayer required):

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"[To] continually refer to himself as a Christian, as an Irish Catholic, I think that many people are offended by Bill's statement to be a Christian as well as an Irish Catholic... For a man to come right out and say that he does not believe in the Old Testament... I think that many Catholics across this nation as well as the world are offended by Bill O'Reilly claiming he's an Irish Catholic." - Stephen Bennett, ex-gay leader who in the coming months will be speaking officially on behalf of the Concerned Women for America (CWFA).

"The Bible says that my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Bill is an exemplary example of the American Christian who does not know what God's word said, he does not know." - Sandy Rios, President of CWFA

"He's confused... on this issue, he can't find his voice, he kind of stumbles when he addresses it.... Then he goes and slams people like us and says, well they're fanatics." - Bob Knight, head of the CWFA's Culture and Family Institute

"He's very confused." - Sandy Rios, head of CWFA, on O'Reilly

"So he doesn't believe in heaven and hell. It didn't mater that Jesus sacrificed his life on the cross. This is a very extreme statement... that the whole idea of hell is ridiculous." - Bob Knight of CWFA.

UPDATE

8/29/02 - Noon EST

Washington Times Reports on O'Reilly Interview

The uber-conservative *Washington Times* reports today on the *Advocate* O'Reilly interview, [click here](#). (Note: Once you get to the *Washington Times* site, you'll need to scroll down to the "Mr. Tolerance" article.)

UPDATE

8/28/02 - 7:30PM EST

Religious Right Blasts O'Reilly

Since this story about O'Reilly's *Advocate* interview was published, the religious right has been quick to respond. A [lead spokesman](#) for the religious right, who is often quoted in their literature and broadcasts, had the following to say on

August 28, 2002 about Bill O'Reilly's interview that is discussed in the article below - the entire paragraph was written by the religious right spokesman:

Bill O'Reilly has long been lifted up as the conservative's champion and spokesperson. However, in his quest of popularity, on this issue of homosexuality, O'Reilly has shocked and disappointed many viewers and supporters who put him where he is today. He has been elevated to a position by conservative America that was never intended, and viewers may have put 'too much trust' into this man. According to an O'Reilly insider who asked not to be named, 'The Factor' is not what people think it is... "Bill O'Reilly and The Factor is about two things... ratings and entertainment." And as stated by another unnamed source, "...the real guy you're all looking for here is Sean Hannity. This guy is genuine -- and legit." After the commentary below, see the link for Bill O'Reilly's upcoming interview in the September issue of the national gay Magazine 'The Advocate' - sharing all of his pro-gay views, and mocking comments towards Bible believing Christians - the 'fanatical' religious right who should just be '...ignored' - sadly, you won't believe what he says.

[Note: This statement has since been removed from the religious right Web site. "Coincidentally" the man making the statement was just invited to appear on O'Reilly's show.]

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O'Reilly on Gay Adoption

And on gay adoption, O'Reilly's views were already staked out earlier this year when fellow talk show superstar Rosie O'Donnell appeared on "The Factor." O'Donnell, who is a foster parent and recently revealed that she is gay, is contesting Florida's law banning gays from adopting children. In response to O'Donnell's appearance, O'Reilly didn't simply endorse gay adoption, he branded gay adoption foes (who are usually on the far right, religious right, or both) as having "gay fear" and suffering from prejudice:

"It is just a matter of time before the legislature in the Sunshine State puts the welfare of hard-to-adopt kids ahead of gay fear. Most clear-thinking Americans realize it is better for a child to live in a nurturing home run by gays, than to be on the merry-go-round of foster care....

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"[Banning gay adoption] is a foolish prohibition based on the groundless fear that homosexuals will somehow corrupt any child over which they hold sway. Bad parents and sexual molestation are not tied to one group. It is flat-out prejudicial to deprive responsible homosexuals of the right to save kids from transient foster care." ("Adopting a Philosophy," by Bill O'Reilly, *WorldNetDaily*, March 20, 2002)

- [Who Opposes the Religious Right?](#)
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O'Reilly on Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson

Then shortly after September 11, when religious right icons Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, on open television, blamed gays, feminists and the ACLU for the attacks - and other religious right groups rose to the duo's defense - O'Reilly let them have it:

"Believe me when I tell you that everybody I know is appalled," O'Reilly told a religious right representative who was on his show and vacillating on whether her group would deal with Falwell and Robertson in the future. "And I know some very conservative, very religious people, and everybody - there's nobody that I know that can justify, condone, defend those remarks."

O'Reilly on Anti-Gay Militant Robert Knight

On June 6, 2001, one of America's lead anti-gay militants, Robert Knight of the Concerned Women for America, appeared on "The O'Reilly Factor" to talk about the religious right's concern that President Bush has a "homosexual agenda." O'Reilly starts the discussion by asking Knight: "How militantly anti-gay are you, Mr. Knight?" Later on in the interview, Knight suggests that gay rights defenders are not very tolerant, and O'Reilly responds in kind:

KNIGHT: ...This is not a very tolerant movement we're dealing with.

O'REILLY: Well — but you don't sound like a very tolerant guy either. You see what I mean? You're not real tolerant either.

Knight then tries to get O'Reilly to condemn gay relationships:

KNIGHT: What about the behavior, Bill? Let's

talk about that for a minute. You're a common-sense guy. You can't possibly sit there and tell me that two men having sex together is moral and healthy and ... something God would ordain.

O'REILLY: It's not my business. It's not my business.

O'REILLY: It's not my business. It's not President Bush's business. It's not the Constitution's business.

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U.S. Politics: Current Events

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O'Reilly Interview Shocker - page 4 of 4

Hear snippets from Bill O'Reilly's *Advocate* interview by clicking on the box to the right.

The Left Doesn't Always Love Him Either

Ironically, O'Reilly is just as suspect to those on the left. And the truth is, his show is quite often a daily diatribe against the supposed evils of liberalism. But I've been a guest on the show about half a dozen times, and got a sense of something else as well. For all his bluster, Bill O'Reilly seems to be a man who lives by a solid set of core beliefs. And when confronted with facts that, when combined with those beliefs, lead him to a conclusion that might not please some of his more conservative fans, O'Reilly sticks to his principles and states his conclusion, to hell with the critics. (Over a period of eight months, I personally witnessed O'Reilly shift from being an ardent defender of Dr. Laura Schlessinger and her anti-gay rhetoric, to someone who later blamed Schlessinger for her own demise.)

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting Bill O'Reilly will be

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dancing anytime soon in a gay pride parade near you (though, reporter Giltz did discover that O'Reilly was quite a disco dancer in his day), and O'Reilly himself is the first to say that he's not staking out these positions with the express intent of helping gay people. I also suspect that sometime in the near future, Bill O'Reilly will again say something on his show that will really tick me off. Nonetheless, this is a man to watch.

- [Who Opposes the Religious Right?](#)
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He may be bombastic. He may yell and scream. And he may even at times cross the line. But he's also a man who listens to his opponents, and respects them if they have a good mind, a good heart, and can express their opinion without coming off like a nut. And more importantly, if you get him on just the right day and with just the right facts, America's favorite conservative might even agree with you - even if you're gay.

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News and political dispatches from around the nation.

sincerely deciding not to run because nobody's going to draft a candidate who says he doesn't expect to win. Chatterbox predicts there will be no McCain race for president in 2004 on any ticket."

Mr. Tolerance

Bill O'Reilly approves of same-sex "marriages," favors allowing homosexuals to adopt children, and condemns those who disagree as "fanatics" and "holy rollers."

"The only heat I take on the gay stuff is from very, very religious-driven people," the host of Fox News Channel's "O'Reilly Factor" says in an interview with the Advocate, a magazine for homosexuals. "Ninety percent of Americans don't care what [homosexuals] do. Ten percent are fanatics. They think you're going to hell, and they want you to go to hell."

Mr. O'Reilly told the Advocate: "There are millions of Americans who are never going to accept [homosexuals], primarily on religious grounds. You're never going to convince the holy rollers that you're not an abomination, because they're going to quote the Old Testament."

Audio excerpts of the Advocate interview were posted by political columnist John Aravosis on About.com.

"I was never opposed to gay adoption," Mr. O'Reilly told the magazine. "Is it better for a kid to be in a foster system that's chaotic, or to be in a nice, stable home with two people who love him? It took me 10 seconds to figure that out."

Of same-sex "marriage," Mr. O'Reilly said: "You want to get married? Knock yourself out. Go to Vegas; have a good time. If you can get [marriage laws] changed, I'm not going to jump up and down and say I think it's wrong, because I don't."

In fact Mr. O'Reilly, who is married, tells the Advocate, "I wish I were gay. I'd get a lot more free meals, OK? Maybe somebody would take me out to the movies once in a while."

Florida love fest

A debate among the Democratic candidates for Florida governor turned into a love fest Tuesday as former U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and her rivals painted a target on their larger foe, the incumbent Republican Gov. Jeb Bush.

Not a harsh word was exchanged as the candidates united in criticism of President Bush's younger brother, Reuters news agency reports.

In their only meeting before the Sept. 10 Democratic



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Gossip

Oh, Really?

Friday, 30 August 2002

The Advocate hasn't gotten this much mainstream press since they swallowed what was left of Out magazine.

Seems a soon to be printed interview with iconoclast blowhard Bill O'Reilly has gotten everyone's panties in an excited wrinkle, with Liz Smith leading a phalanx of giddy community cheerleaders stacking themselves up, throwing themselves about and shouting the letters to O'Reilly's name like he scored the winning touchdown.

Truth be told, it makes us a little nervous.

Sure, we think it's terrific that a man who has done more to turn television news into a forum for angry white (straight) guys shouting themselves red in the face over supposed liberal and/or Democratic outrages doesn't share most of his compatriots' passionate dislike of gay people.



He doesn't hate us!!!

But is the fact that this is "news" this late in the man's career concern anyone besides us? Not to rain on anyone's Labor Day Parade, but how many of his fans are likely to read The Advocate interview, anyway? Or Liz Smith's column, for that matter? How much of this has he said on the air? Will he be interviewing himself anytime soon?

5 Days of Dish

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- > [N' Space](#)
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Don't get us wrong -- we think it's just super O'Reilly doesn't think too much of Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson or the lunatics who think their poisoned tongues speak for Good God Almighty, but if they end up backing the same people politically, what the hell kind of difference does it make?

(Because if someone has thought of a way to pass gay friendly legislation without politicians, we missed the press announcement.)

Ah well, let them have their fun. Just remember, an enemy's enemy might be considered a friend in some circles, but that doesn't mean we have to invite him out to the beach for the weekend.

Dirty Dishpan

In terms of gay heroes, he's right up there with....

- ☐ Pat Buchanan
- ☐ Donna Summer
- ☐ J. Edgar Hoover
- ☐ Kevin Spacey
- ☐ Camille Paglia
- ☐ George W. Bush

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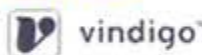
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By Elaine Dutka

TELEVISION

O'Reilly Fending Off Conservative Critics

Though he eschews the label himself, Bill O'Reilly has ridden to fame for views that appeal to conservative viewers of Fox News Channel, where his show "The O'Reilly Factor" airs. So some of them were caught by surprise--and angered--when he gave an interview to the gay-themed magazine the Advocate supporting gay rights and recommending that "fanatical" anti-gay activists be ignored.

Postings on an Internet Web site operated by Concerned Women for America, for example, suggested O'Reilly was confused on the issue and was an example "of the American Christian who does not know what God's word said."

O'Reilly used his show Thursday night as a platform to respond to the critics.

"My stance is simple," he said. "We're all Americans here. Nobody should be discriminated against. I'll leave it to God to figure out who's going to hell and who isn't. I'm not qualified, and nobody else on Earth is either."

More Americans Sit in Front of the Tube

The national TV audience will grow again next week, as Nielsen Media Research issues revised population estimates for the 2002-03 television season.

The pool of U.S. viewers, age 2 and over, is now pegged at 272 million, up slightly more than 2 million (or less than 1%) compared to the previous TV season. The number of households with television also rose, to 106.7 million from 105.5 million. Each rating point represents 1% of that total.

Nielsen revises its estimates annually based on research and census data. Population growth over the years has helped offset steady losses by the major networks in terms of the percentage of viewers they reach.

THE ARTS

Another Guggenheim on Gehry's Project List?

First New York City and Venice. Then Berlin and Bilbao. Can another Guggenheim be far behind?

Frank O. Gehry & Associates, the Los Angeles-based firm behind the Bilbao project, has been approached to build a similar site near the Leath docks in Edinburgh, Scotland. A representative of the firm told the newspaper the Scotsman that the area "was appropriate if a Guggenheim were to be

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Bill
O'Reilly:

PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS GAY!

By Gregory Michaels

HERE'S some straight talk from popular pundit Bill O'Reilly — he's NOT gay, but a lot of people used to think he was. And he doesn't mind one bit.

The mistake folks made about his sexuality stems from the fact that he didn't marry until he was 46, he says.

"I'm sure that people said I was gay because I didn't get married until very late in life," the Fox News hothead tells the gay magazine *The Advocate*. "I don't care what they say about me. I couldn't care less."

Even more bizarre, the conservative newsie says: "In fact, I wish I were gay. I'd get a lot more free meals. OK? Somebody take ME out to the movies once in awhile."

In reality, O'Reilly, 33, is a devoted family man. He and his wife Maureen, 35, a public relations executive, have a 3-year-old daughter and live in a Long Island suburb of New York.

His strong support of gay rights, including gay adoption, has some family values groups up in arms, but O'Reilly — a devout Catholic — refuses to clam up.

It's gays and lesbians who ought to keep their mouths shut, he says. "I've never understood why anyone would want to tell the world what their sexual preference is," he

Bill O'Reilly:

says. "It's no one's business but their own. New York's gay pride parade is offensive, it's foolish, it's counterproductive and it backlashes against you," he tells the gay mag.

"The problem with homosexuals is, there's a feeling among some leaders that they have to force people to accept them. My thinking is: Why waste your time? You're never going to cut through it."

O'Reilly's refusal to condemn gays on religious grounds has sparked an outburst of criticism from stunned conservatives.

"O'Reilly makes his living using a hard-nosed, take-no-prisoners approach in his interviews, and that's why people love his show," says Donald Wildmon, chairman of the American Family Association.

"But he crossed the line."

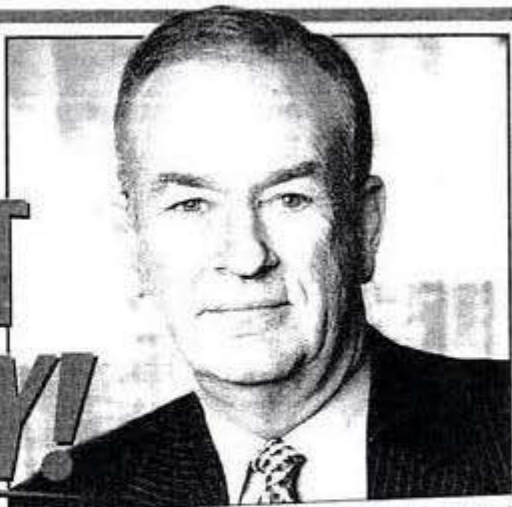
"There's no need to be insulting to the millions of Americans who believe in the Bible."

Don't expect outspoken O'Reilly to back down, though.

"Bill is his own man," says an associate.

"He's a conservative at heart, but he reserves the right to keep people guessing!"

PEOPLE THOUGHT I WAS GAY!



'I wish I were gay. I'd get more free meals!'

Conservative commentator Bill O'Reilly is a strong supporter of gay rights

All about Randy

I just wanted to applaud *Queer as Folk*'s Randy Harrison for enriching the all-too-small ranks of actors who are starting their careers by bravely being out from day one ("Randy Gets Real," September 17).

I hope that other young actors out there can read his interview and be emboldened by his example; clearly he's not suffering for it.

Anthony Rapp, New York, N.Y.

As soon as I finished laughing, I had to write and ask, Has writer Michael Giltz ever listened to O'Reilly's syndicated radio show? My guess would be no; I listen to it daily. One of his first shows dealt with gay marriage. One of O'Reilly's comments was, "If we pass this, the next thing you know, we'll have gays wanting to marry basket hounds." Tolerant? When I E-mailed him and took him to task on this, he read my E-mail on the air and replied, "You will never receive parity.

shut up. As a gay man, I am tired of seeing the "victimized" types in the community who think everyone has to accept him or her. If you accept yourself, you don't need validation from those outside you. Coming out to people is merely a ploy to come to terms with yourself; you want others to accept you so you can feel normal. If you don't think you're normal, then you're uneducated—clear and simple.

Greg Wirth, Scottsdale, Ariz.

"I applaud Randy Harrison for enriching the all-too-small ranks of actors who are out from day one."

—ANTHONY RAPP, New York, N.Y.



I doubt that an *Advocate* interviewer would ignore a racist reference by a white subject or a heterosexist assertion by a straight person. So I was surprised when you overlooked Randy Harrison's misogynist remark about some actors being too "pussy" to come out. Hopefully, Mr. Harrison will grow up to realize that a hateful slur against any oppressed group hurts him as well.

Jim McKinley-Oakes, Charlottesville, Va.

The O'Reilly factor

I was totally astonished by the interview with Bill O'Reilly ["Bill O'Reilly Really Likes You," September 17]. He's in favor of gay rights, but we should just shut up about it? Come on, Bill, would you have said to Martin Luther King Jr., "I'm in favor of equal rights, but do you have to march?"

No social change is made without honesty and visibility. Unfortunately, it's when these two things occur that conservatives reply with such ludicrous statements as his.

Bob Poshedley, Twinsburg, Ohio

Never! You are promoting an alternative lifestyle. Alternative? What's my alternative? To live a complete lie by marrying a woman and having children? Hardly an alternative.

In your interview O'Reilly states, "I've never understood why anyone...would want to tell the world what their sexual preference is," then a few sentences later he states, "I didn't get married until very late in life." Married? The act still reserved strictly for heterosexuals? Maybe he didn't tell the world, but he did tell every *Advocate* reader exactly what his sexuality is.

I wish the gay media would stop gobbling up these false morsels of tolerance tossed to us by these conservatives so we won't boycott their advertisers. When he says "Shut up," my interpretation is, "Look, I've given you your interview, I've said what you want to hear—which isn't necessarily what I believe—so now will you please shut up!"

Mark G. Poirier, Boston, Mass.

I liked your article on Bill O'Reilly, and I agree with him: Shut up. Just

Bill O'Reilly really likes me? Are you kidding? It is hard to tell if he is that desperate for ratings as to be soliciting the gay community or if he really believes his nonsensical opinions. He wishes to come across as the "everyman," Mr. Common Sense, a "nuts-and-bolts guy" telling it "straight" with no spin, but strip off the thin veneer of gruff frankness that gives the semblance of logic and you have wrongheaded idiocy. O'Reilly comes out for gay equality? Telling gay people to be quiet is not supporting us. We would have no equal rights at all and still be in the false safety of our closets following that kind of advice. The day O'Reilly doesn't interrupt the people on his show and truly listens to someone instead of always thinking of the next thing to say is the day I'll "shut up" (whatever the hell that may mean or entail) about being gay.

Duane Boyer, Los Angeles, Calif.

Bill O'Reilly is among the new batch of seemingly LGBT-friendly conservatives who carry their "live and let live" motto as a banner for the American way of life. When in American history has remaining silent about inequality ever produced change? This is not the way American political life works, and he knows it. His tolerance of homosexuals clearly does not mean acceptance. O'Reilly says he does not understand why anyone would talk about their sexual orientation and that it is "no one's business but yours." While this may be true, O'Reilly speaks from a position of heterosexual privilege (to add to his white male privilege), where sex- ▶

uality is not important because it is assumed. He does not have to worry about talking about his private life because it will not be used to deny him basic civil rights. If O'Reilly and others like him (including many gay conservatives) truly find gay pride offensive, foolish, and counterproductive, then they should deconstruct the system that makes heterosexuality invisible and therefore "normal" while making homosexuality visible and "abnormal."

Matthew Nelson, Columbus, Ohio

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Une entrevue étonnante dans

États-Unis - Média

Par : Eve Springer [29-08-2002]

Selon le journaliste indépendant (et ex-Républicain) John Aravosis, le magazine américain The Advocate publiera dans son prochain numéro, en kiosque aux États-Unis le 3 septembre, un entretien avec Bill O'Reilly, présentateur vedette de l'émission The O'Reilly Factor sur Fox News, émission à très grande écoute (l'audience dépasse souvent celle de Larry King) où les gays et les lesbiennes, les Démocrates et tout ce qui tend à pencher vers la gauche en prend régulièrement pour son grade. Bill O'Reilly est conservateur et fier de l'être, ce qui fait de lui le chouchou de la droite américaine.

Mais pas de la droite religieuse, et pour cause: dans l'entretien accordé à Michael Giltz, Bill O'Reilly se prononce pour le mariage des couples de même sexe («Vous voulez vous marier? Allez à Las Vegas et prenez du bon temps. Si vous réussissez à faire changer ça, je ne sauterai pas partout en disant que je crois que c'est mal parce que c'est faux.») et qualifie, à mots couverts, les extrémistes religieux tels que Jerry Falwell de «fanatiques» («90% des Américains se moquent de ce que vous faites. 10% sont des fanatiques.»). ☐

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