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A Pattern of Deception:

The Alliance Destroying Freedom



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The Supreme Court recently went along with the lies of the evangelical hate group: Alliance Defending (sic) Freedom. Given the nature of the Trump justices this is no surprise; they were appointed to satisfy the religious right and for no other reason.

In the recent web designer case the woman in question, Lorie Smith, wasn't designing web sites and hasn't done so. Nor was she asked by anyone to design a site on gay weddings. It was all a fiction.

Earlier, as this case was moving through the courts it was contended she had no standing in court because she was not running a business deemed in violation of some anti-discrimination law. ADF and the plaintiff then asserted she was asked to do so by a specific individual who is gay and this violated her religion of hate. National Public Radio reported:

About a month after the conservative legal group Alliance Defending Freedom filed the case in Colorado federal court in 2016, lawyers for the state said it should be dismissed partly because Smith hadn't been harmed by the state's anti-discrimination law. Smith — who did not plan to start creating wedding websites until her case was resolved — would first have to get a request from a gay couple and refuse, triggering a possible complaint against her, the state argued.

Smith's lawyers maintained that she didn't have to be punished for violating the law before challenging it. In a February 2017 filing, they revealed that though she did not need a request to pursue the case, she had, in fact, received one. An appendix to the filing included a website request form submitted by Stewart on

Sept. 21, 2016, a few days after the lawsuit was filed. It also included a Feb. 1, 2017, affidavit from Smith stating that Stewart's request had been received.

However, the individual they named as the rejected customer never approached Smith for a site, never wanted a gay wedding site from anyone, and contrary to Smith's claims wasn't even gay. He had no dealing with her whatsoever. But ADF claimed the man and his non-existent fiancé, Mike, requested the site. But the man they named was married to a woman for 15 years and didn't even know ADF and their plaintiff named him. ADF says he must have filed a fake request, either that or it's the fault of some mysterious activist out to make them look bad — I note said activist would have to have been psychic to know in advance that this was going to be a legal case.

Now in my time writing on these topics I remember three different legal cases where ADF presented "facts" to support their anti-gay jihad, facts that simply were fictions. I suspect an audit of ADF cases would turn up even more such incidents.

Based on Republican-induced hysteria and the natural tendency of evangelicals to invent falsehoods a lot of people think there were dozens of "gay wedding cake" cases. There were two. Now regardless of what you or I think, most people believe a business should not refuse service to someone because they are gay, black, religious, etc. ADF knows that so they make other claims but ones, which are patently false.

In the initial Masterpiece “cake case” ADF tried to present it as a free speech case and claimed the baker was being forced to engage in speech against his will. But there was no speech claim involved — that was invented. The baker refused to sell a cake — one without a message — to one customer because he was gay. The same cake would be sold to other customers just not an LGBT individual

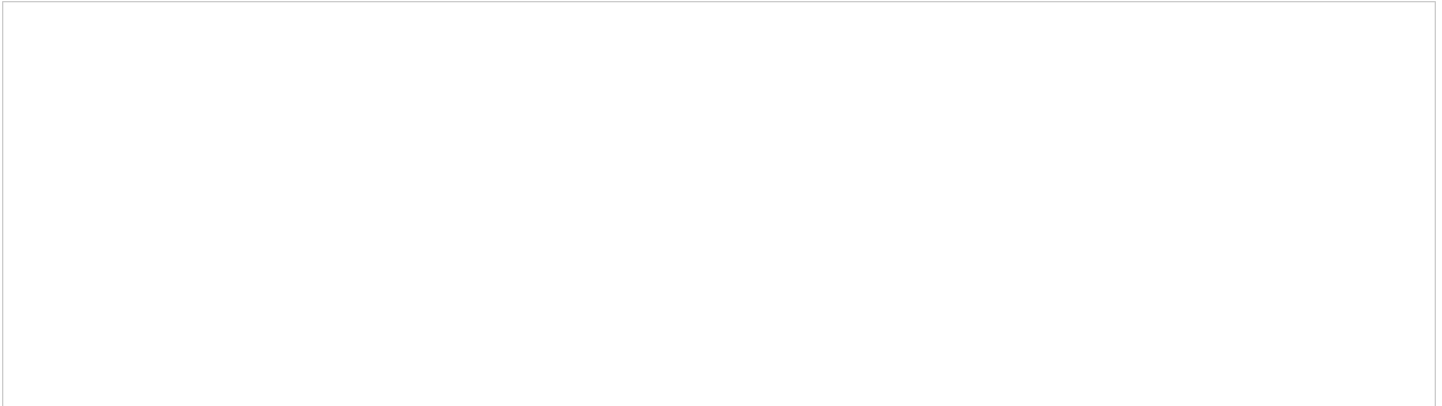
In the Masterpiece case the court ruling made it explicitly clear no speech claims were involved.

Respondents argue that if they are compelled to make a cake for a same-sex wedding, then a black baker could not refuse to make a cake bearing a white-supremacist message for a member of the Aryan Nation; and an Islamic baker could not refuse to make a cake denigrating the Koran for the Westboro Baptist Church.

*However, neither of these fanciful hypothetical situations proves Respondents’ point. In both cases, it is the explicit, unmistakable, offensive message that the bakers are asked to put on the cake that gives rise to the bakers’ free speech right to refuse. That, however, is not the case here, where **Respondents refused to bake any cake for Complainants regardless of what was written on it or what it looked like.***

In another case ADF took a private business and pretended it was a church. Their headline asserted government officials were threatening a couple of ministers with jail if they didn’t perform gay weddings in their church. All

of that was a fabrication.



Above is false headline from ADF website

In that case a couple of retired ministers purchased a private business, the Hitching Post, which was a wedding venue and planning service that bragged about doing either secular or religious services as the customer wished. There was no ministry, just a business founded in 1919, which they purchased from the previous owners in 1989. It continued operating as a business right up until they filed a lawsuit and it magically became a church.

ADF swooped in and had the website for Hitching Post washed of all references to it being a business. Nowhere did Hitching Post refer to themselves as a ministry but they did call themselves a business. I quoted their own site where they said they were in “the business of helping couples start their new lives together.” On another site, they advertised saying: “We also carry silk flower arrangements and other wedding items in our business, plus there are several photographers that work with us and local florists as well. Fees vary for distance weddings. Our fee in the chapel is by

the wedding, not the hour.” Please note they are selling “other wedding items in our business.” So Hitching Post was NEVER a ministry in spite of ADF claims.

But the dishonesty got even more obvious. Located in Coeur d’Alene, Idaho there were NO laws about discriminating against LGBT individuals — while it is illegal for gay-owned businesses to refuse service to Christians the reverse is a crime there — the law enshrines special rights to the religious that are denied to others.

This means the headline ADF still has on their website is entirely fictional. No officials threatened the Hitching Post and there was no law forbidding anti-LGBT discrimination. There was never a legal case. Not only that but there was never a complaint filed and there was no evidence any same-sex couple ever tried to hire this backwater business. All that was invented for the ADF lawsuit and fund raising.

In the current case ADF insists the false information given to the Supreme Court is the fault of unknown activists but not them or their client. NPR noted:

Kristen Waggoner — the president of Alliance Defending Freedom, who argued the case before the high court — has said her client doesn’t have a way of doing background checks on those requesting business nor is it her responsibility to do so. On Monday, Waggoner slammed suggestions that her client made up the request, adding that “the more likely scenario” is that “Stewart’ or another

activist did in fact submit the request.”

But don't false claims in the Masterpiece case, the Hitching Post case and this recent Lorie Smith case—all with ADF representation—indicate a pattern of deception?

Perhaps the greatest deception engaged in by this group is the pretense, in their name, that somehow they are defending freedom as they seek political power and do their best to destroy the freedom of others.

How anti-liberty they actually are is revealed by a piece *The Guardian* wrote in 2020:

In the last decade, ADF attorneys argued in favor of state-sanctioned sterilization for trans people at the European Court of Human Rights. Their brief argued, “equal dignity does not mean that every sexual orientation warrants equal respect.”

In Belize, the group sided with another organization pushing to criminalize gay sex. In India, the executive director applauded a supreme court decision ruling gay sex illegal (that was struck down in 2018). In Romania, ADF pushed for a referendum to oppose same-sex civil unions. In Jamaica, ADF attorneys defended anti-sodomy laws.

Throwing people in jail for being gay, or forced sterilizations are not defending freedom, even their name is part of an Orwellian pattern of

deception.

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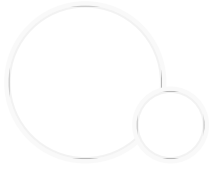
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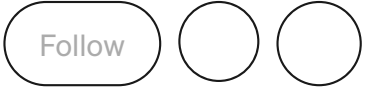
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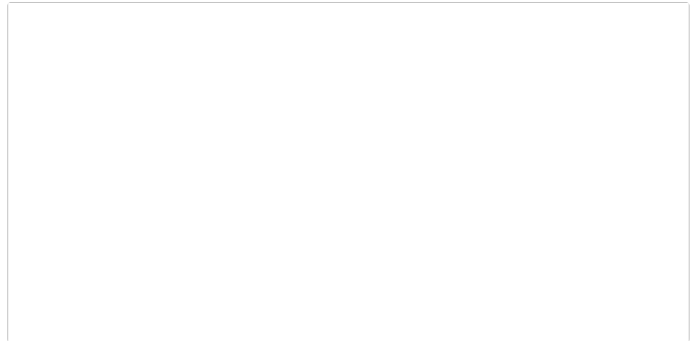
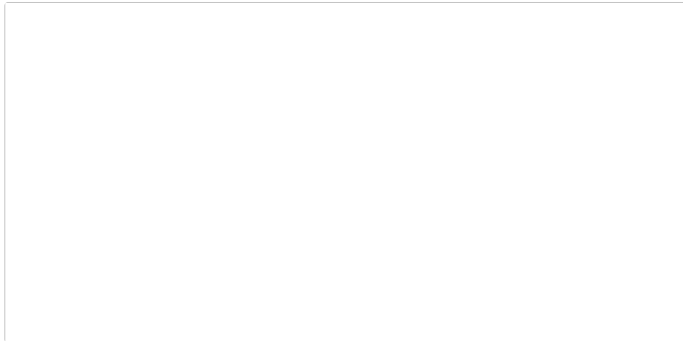
Written by James Peron

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James Peron is the president of the Moorfield Storey Institute, was the founding editor of Esteem a LGBT publication in South Africa under apartheid.

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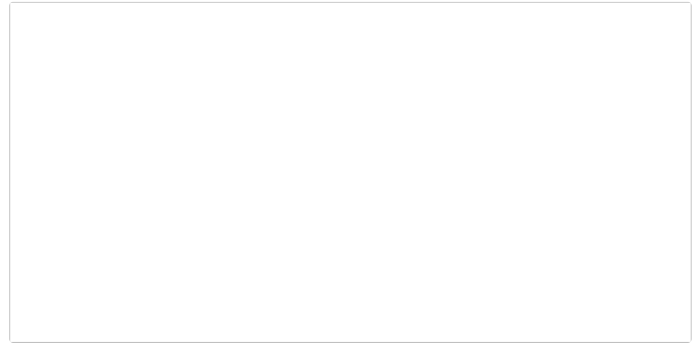
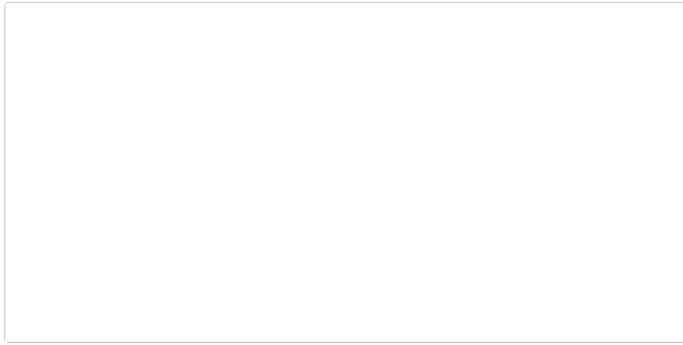
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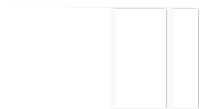
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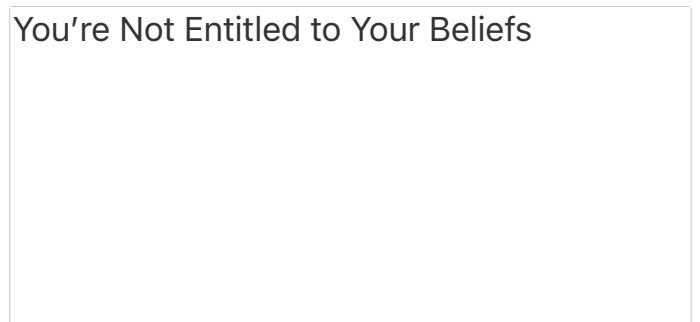
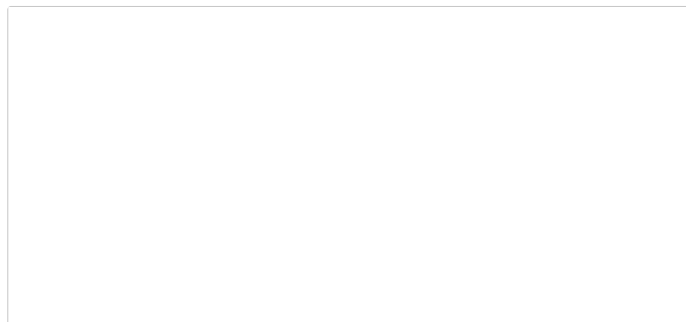
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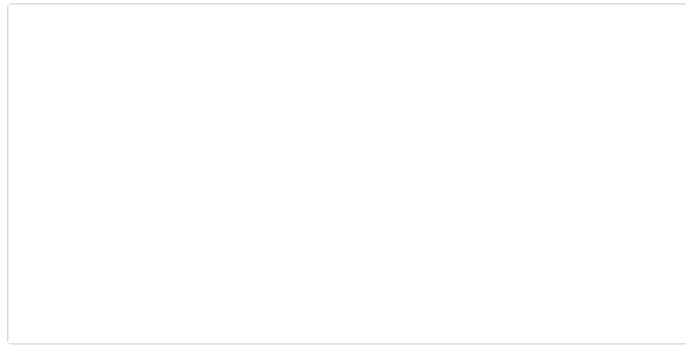
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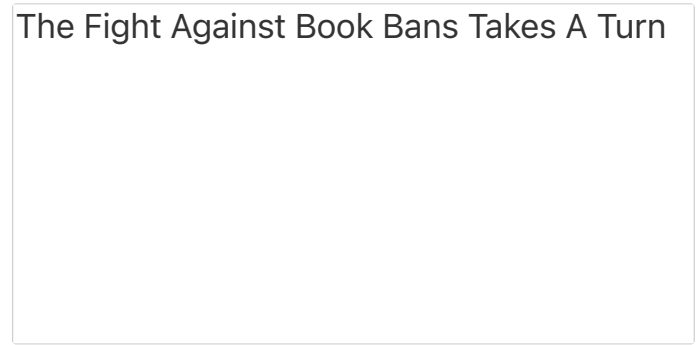
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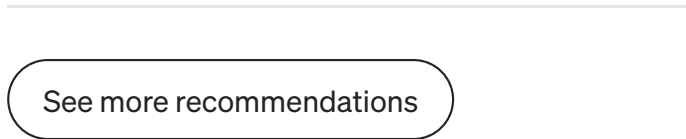
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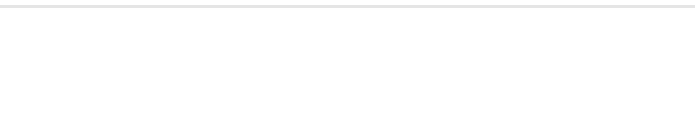
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