

Exhibit 28



[OUT NEWS](#)

Once-prominent 'conversion therapist' will now 'pursue life as a gay man'

Described as the “intellectual godfather” of “ex-gay therapy,” David Matheson told NBC News he is now dating men.

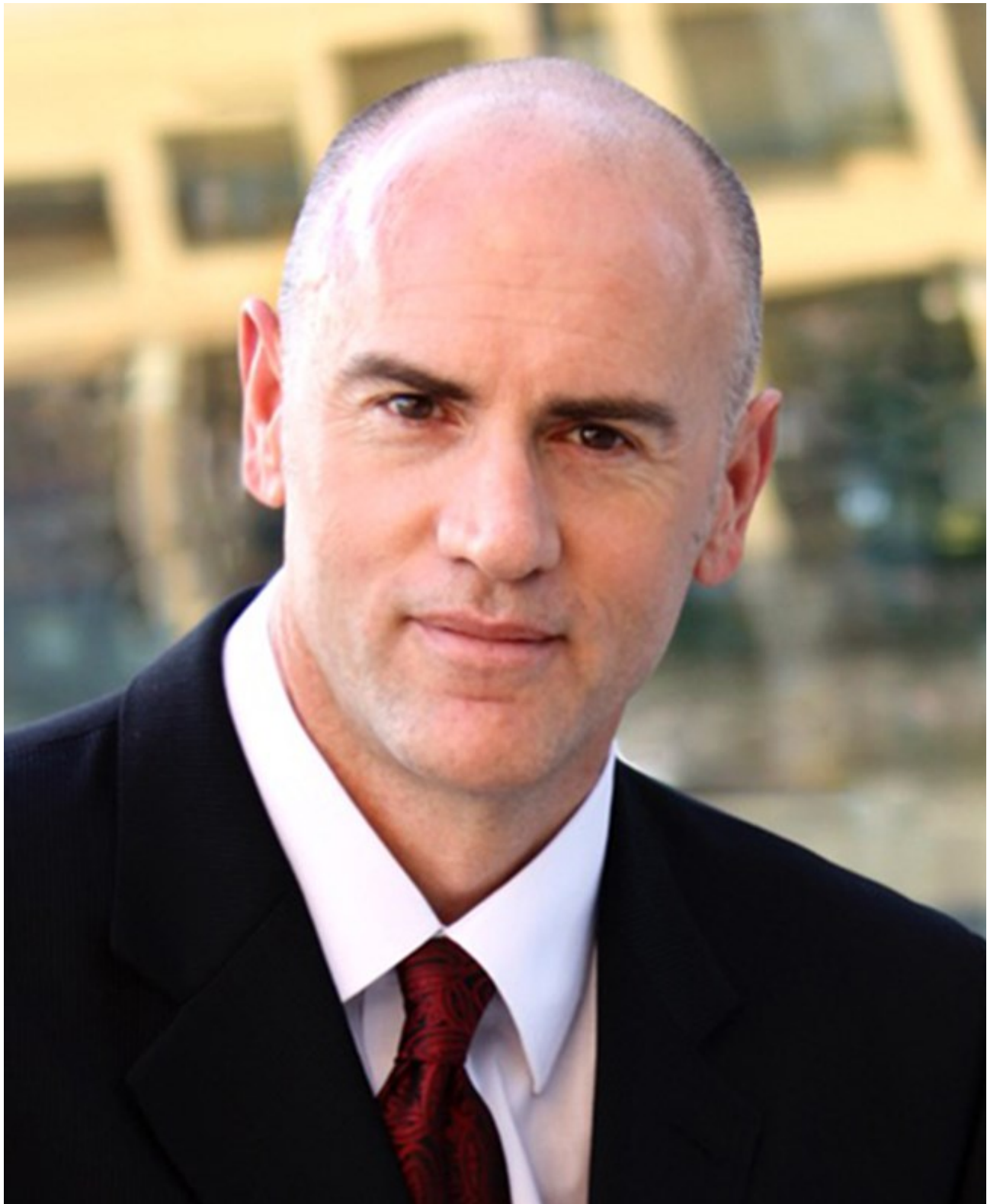
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By Julie Compton

David Matheson, a once prominent Mormon “conversion therapist” who claims to have helped some gay men remain in heterosexual marriages, is looking for a boyfriend.

The revelation broke Sunday night after the LGBTQ nonprofit [Truth Wins Out](#) obtained a private Facebook post made by “conversion therapy” advocate Rich Wyler, which stated that Matheson “says that living a single, celibate life ‘just isn’t feasible for him,’ so he’s seeking a male partner.”

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David Matheson, a former gay conversion therapist, has come out as gay.

Courtesy of David Matheson

Matheson then confirmed Wyler's assertions on Tuesday with a [Facebook post of his own](#). "A year ago I realized I had to make substantial changes in my life. I realized I couldn't stay in my marriage any longer. And I realized that it was time for me to affirm myself as gay," he wrote.

Matheson, who was married to a woman for 34 years and is now divorced, also confirmed in an interview with NBC News that he is now dating men.

So-called gay conversion therapy, which is sometimes referred to as “ex-gay therapy” or “reparative therapy,” is a pseudoscientific practice that seeks to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. Talk therapy is currently the most commonly used technique, but some practitioners have also combined this with “aversion treatments,” such as induced vomiting or electric shocks, according to a 2018 report by UCLA’s Williams Institute (Matheson stressed he never participated in “aversion therapy”). Nearly every major health association, including the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association, has denounced the practice.

Matheson acknowledged his work has hurt some people, but he would not fully renounce “conversion therapy.” Instead, he blamed what he referred to as the “shame-based, homophobic-based system” of the Mormon church in which he was raised. He acknowledged that he perpetuated that system, but he also argued that he helped some men who wished to live “in congruence” with their faith.

“I know there are people who won’t be satisfied by anything less than a complete and unequivocal renunciation of everything,” Matheson said. “That’s hard, because I want people to feel the genuineness of my change of heart, but people need to understand that there is more than one reality in the world.” To those who feel harmed by his past work, he relayed a message: “I unequivocally apologize.”

To Chaim Levin, who said he was psychologically hurt by programs Matheson helped create, an [apology is not enough](#).

“While I am pleased for Mr. Matheson that he has found a path forward for his life, I can’t help but think of the hundreds if not thousands of people who are still stuck in the closet, a closet that was created in part by Mr. Matheson himself,” Levin told Truth Wins Out. “I hope that Mr. Matheson will do whatever he can to rectify the harm that he’s inflicted on many people in the LGBTQ community, myself included.”

Nearly 700,000 LGBTQ adults in the U.S. have received “conversion therapy” at some point in their lives, according to the Williams Institute. Its [2018 conversion therapy report](#) notes that efforts to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity are associated with poor mental health, including suicidality.

More and more states are banning the controversial practice on minors, a step that Matheson said he now supports. Just last week, [New York became the 15th state to do so](#), but the practice still remains legal across the U.S. for consenting adults. A California bill that would have designated paid “conversion therapy” for adults as fraudulent under the state’s consumer protection law [was shelved in August](#) after opposition from religious groups.

'INTELLECTUAL GODFATHER' OF 'CONVERSION THERAPY'

Truth Wins Out founder Wayne Besen, a longtime anti-conversion-therapy activist and former investigative journalist, referred to Matheson as a figure who many in the “conversion therapy” movement looked to as “the intellectual godfather.”

“When they wanted an expert, they would go to him,” Besen said, “and when your expert is now coming out of the closet and dating men, I think that speaks volumes about how reparative therapy is damaging and ineffective.”

One Man's Quest to Ban C...



Matheson was an early protege of Joseph Nicolosi, who founded the notorious National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality (NARTH). Matheson’s involvement in developing “conversion therapy” programs goes back decades, though ironically, he has long been open about his attraction to men. His 2013 book, “Becoming a Whole Man,” chronicles his “six-year quest” to rid himself of “unwanted” homosexuality, according to the book’s Amazon.com description.

In a statement Matheson emailed to Truth Wins Out on Sunday, he refused to renounce his past work or condemn what he called “mixed-orientation marriages.”

“I continue to support the rights of individuals to choose how they will respond to their sexual attractions and identity,” he wrote. “With that freedom, I am now choosing to pursue life as a gay man.”

Besen said he found Matheson’s statement “to be all about his journey” with “very little concern about his victims that he has harmed.”

“I would like to see someone more contrite and willing to reach out and help the people whose lives he’s ruined,” Besen said. “I’d also like to see him consider refunding the money to the people that he bilked out of their paychecks for therapy that clearly wasn’t even working for himself.”

Matheson is far from the only ‘ex-gay therapist’ who has either come out as gay or been exposed for living a double life.

In 2000, “conversion therapy” advocate and “success story” John Paulk was photographed at a Washington D.C. gay bar; a decade later he issued a [formal apology](#) for his “ex-gay” past. Alan Chambers, former president of the now defunct “conversion therapy” organization Exodus