

THE LGBT VOICE SINCE 1978

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COMING OUT FOR EQUALITY

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CHAIRING THE HRC GALA
LAS VEGAS PRIDE PETS
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PEOPLE & PET PHOTOS



A portrait of Mike Manning, a young man with short dark hair and blue eyes, looking slightly off-camera. He is wearing a black tank top and has a tattoo on his left shoulder. His hands are clasped near his neck. The background is a blue sky with clouds. The photo is framed with a white border.

MIKE

by Randy Slovacek

COMING OUT FOR EQUALITY

MANNING

In 2010, Mike Manning, openly bisexual college student, became the breakout star of MTV's reality show "The Real World: Washington, D.C."

Since then, he's graduated from college, begun a career as an actor in feature films and traveled extensively on behalf of the Human Rights Campaign. He'll be speaking at UNLV on April 21st about coming out and his journey to LGBT activism.

“THE ONE ISSUE CLOSEST TO ME IS GAY YOUTH. WHETHER IT IS GAY YOUTH WHO ARE KICKED OUT OF THEIR HOMES, BULLIED IN SCHOOLS, OR THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE – THAT’S THE ISSUE THAT’S NEAREST AND DEAREST TO MY HEART”



i n t e r v i e w

"When we look back at the Obama administration, people will be pleased with the amount of progress that we've had."

Thanks for taking the time to talk. Where are you right now?

In Hollywood. I went back to Colorado after *The Real World* to finish school, and then moved out here in June.

How do you like it?

I love it man. It has everything I loved about Washington, DC – people being driven and passionate about what they do. But LA doesn't require a suit and tie. I'm a working actor now and I've done several short films and independent movies. I have my first feature film, a romantic comedy, coming out in a few weeks called "e-Cupid."

What was your biggest take-away from *The Real World* experience?

Living in front of a camera for three months definitely made me not shy. Now I have no shame, no bubble, no personal space issues. Now I'm not afraid of being in front of a camera and doing anything. Well, I mean, I don't want to say it like that.... There are still some things I won't do in front of a camera (laughing).

Once the show finished airing, I traveled the country for the Human Rights Campaign attending Gay Pride events. I walked in parades and talked to people about getting involved with the HRC. A lot of people were fans and would come up and talk about the show, and in doing so I would get talk to them about getting involved with the HRC and the fight for equality.

You're coming out to Las Vegas on behalf of the Human Right Campaign. Have you been to Las Vegas before?

I was actually in Vegas about two months ago. I went there with Bryan Singer, the director of "Superman." He flew me and a few friends out there to see "O" the Cirque show, we hung out at the club, saw the water show at the Bellagio – I love the water show, it was breathtaking. We ran into James Cameron, who just happened to be shooting some footage for Cirque du Soleil. He pulled us into his trailer and showed us footage that he just shot and then he talked to Bryan Singer about his new movie "Jack the Giant Killer". It was amazing. Coolest night ever.

What can people expect at your event for the Human Rights Campaign at UNLV?

I love talking to college students about how easy it is to get involved and why it's important to get involved at a young age. There's a perception that there's a glass wall between voters and lawmakers in Congress. It's not true at all. It's as simple as a phone call or an email to make a difference.

Mainly for the HRC, I go around the country as part of their college speaker's tour. It's called "Coming Out For Equality with Mike Manning." HRC is really trying to get more involved with young LGBT activists and partnering with grass roots organizations. Really trying to reach the college market and get them involved with the fight for equality. Let's face it – we're the next generation of activists. ►

Is there a particular LGBT issue that's particularly important to you?

I think the one issue closest to me is gay youth. Whether it is gay youth who are kicked out of their homes, bullied in schools, or thinking about suicide – that's the issue that's nearest and dearest to my heart. I had a meeting yesterday planning an event in L.A. to raise money for homeless youth. Every night in Los Angeles alone there are 3,000 homeless youth – the majority being gay or lesbian – out on the street. And that's just sickening to me.

Would you ever consider a career in politics?

I'm planning on doing entertainment for roughly ten years or so. But I'd like to eventually move back home to Colorado and run for Senate.

Some LGBT activists feel the current administration hasn't moved fast enough on gay issues and that some mainstream LGBT organizations, like the HRC, could be pushing harder. Your thoughts?

There's a lot that goes on that people don't see or acknowledge. I feel the Obama administration has been more progressive on our issues than any other administration ever before; from repealing the AIDS ban to providing same sex hospital visitation rights to being so vocal about supporting the rights of same sex couples. I think when we look back at the Obama administration, people will be pleased with the amount of progress that we've had. ■

**MEET
MIKE
MANNING**

THURS APRIL 21

**"COMING OUT FOR EQUALITY
WITH MIKE MANNING"**

1PM AT UNLV STUDENT UNION
THEATER

AND LATER THAT DAY...

**HRC & QUENCH
3RD THURSDAYS**

LA CAVE AT THE WYNN
6PM-8PM

