

Thursday 13 May 2010 7.30pm

ITV1 Tonight Programme: Afraid to be gay



Afraid to be Gay

Former Wales rugby union captain Gareth Thomas uses hidden-camera footage to investigate attitudes to homosexuality, and explores why, despite all the legislation, homophobic attacks are on the rise.

Recently 'out' rugby star Thomas and ITV's TONIGHT team have uncovered stark prejudice on the streets of Britain while filming undercover. In *Afraid to be Gay*: TONIGHT, the programme shows Mancunian couple Nick and Nathaniel as they walk through Wigan and Leigh holding hands.

Filmed by a crew, onlookers appear on camera to voice their disapproval, but generally with a degree of good humour and tolerance. Then Assistant Producer Harriet Gill carries a concealed camera in her handbag. Taunts of "Batty boy" and "Queer" begin to fly. Everyone is alert to the possibility of violence.

The programme shows exclusive film from Thomas' coming-out party, interviews with Will Young, Dr Christian Jessen from Channel 4's *Embarrassing Bodies* and publicist Max Clifford, who advises Premiership footballers to delay coming out until they retire.

Current Affairs Producer Neil Barnes says the whole team were taken by surprise at the ingrained levels of homophobia uncovered while making the programme. "Britain might have some of the most liberal laws on homosexuality in Europe, but hate crime is still growing in Britain. We're proud to bring this to light in a compelling way."

Thomas also meets a teenager on the verge of suicide because of the taunts he receives about his sexuality, while an exclusive Tonight poll reveals what the nation really thinks about homosexuality in 2010.

If you need help or advice with any of the issues raised please contact the following:

[London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard](#)

[Stonewall](#)

[Childline](#)

For details on the international day against homophobia: www.homophobiaday.org

To contact Gareth: www.distinctagency.com