**Head/Title: My So-Called Ex-Gay Life**

**Outlet Name: The American Prospect**

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**How the story made an impact**

Beginning with his own experience in "ex-gay" therapy as a teenager, Gabriel Arana’s March 2012 article in *The American Prospect* tracked the rise of the ex-gay movement through the late 1990s and early 2000s. Through much of that period, testimonials of success promoted by the Christian Right trickled through the mainstream media, giving the “therapy” a legitimacy it had not enjoyed since the American Psychiatric Association declassified homosexuality as a mental illness in 1973. Arana’s piece took on that myth. Through in-depth interviews with leaders of the ex-gay movement, former patients, and leaders of the psychiatric community, Arana’s article illustrated the harm caused by such therapies when patients found themselves unable to change. Perhaps most significant to the article’s impact was Arana’s interview with prominent psychiatrist Dr. Robert Spitzer—the man whose infamous 2001 study had seemed to validate ex-gay therapy. The interview prompted Spitzer to retract his study -- Arana’s article had shredded ex-gay advocates’ last claim to scientific respectability.

The most-read story in *The American Prospect's* history, Arana’s article touched readers far beyond the gay community. Spitzer's repudiation was widely reported across major media outlets, leading to a front-page *New York Times* story and a fifteen-minute segment on *The Rachel Maddow Show*. The story was instrumental in prompting another lead proponent of ex-gay therapy to renounce the practice; shortly after Spitzer's retraction, Alan Chambers of Exodus International—the country's largest ex-gay organization—said his organization would no longer recommend the practice but rather would encourage its members to live a celibate life. The piece was cited by the California legislature in their recent legislation banning ex-gay therapy for minors, and it prompted the American Psychological Association to issue a statement reiterating its position on sexual-orientation change efforts.