



### **BUSTED: OLTL QUILTS ON GAY COUPLE**

One Life to Live's recent firings of actors Brett Claywell (Kyle Lewis) and Scott Evans (Oliver Fish) demonstrate ABC daytime lacks the courage to stand behind its gay couples (another example – All My Children's Bianca and Reese). Some have said the reason the popular duo was let go was because of OLTL's declining ratings. This excuse doesn't hold water.

Kish, as the couple became known to their legions of fans, was one of the most popular couples on the show. New viewers were drawn to OLTL just to see the storyline of this groundbreaking pair unfold. The writing - unlike the rest of the show - was always consistent for Kyle and Fish. We understood them and their motivations and we rooted for Kyle to help Fish out of the closet.

To make them the scapegoat for OLTL's poor ratings is unfair at best and homophobic at worst. The reason ratings were down during the time of Fish's coming out and his subsequent love story with Kyle might have more to do with the other storylines being showcased at the same time.

There was the storyline of long established heterosexual Dorian pretending to be gay so she could court the gay vote in her mayoral campaign. This was followed by her marrying her female faux fiancée when she won the election and legalized gay marriage in Llanview. At the same time, annoying stripper Stacy was on every day, and religious fanatic Mitch Laurence was on the loose, spouting scripture and claiming to be "The Messenger," every chance he got. This nasty bit of business culminated in Mitch kidnapping his daughter Jessica, before giving her electro-shock treatments and attempting to rape her to produce a "true heir."

I think more people were turned off by the plots of faux lesbians, faux preachers and incest than they were by watching a pair of gay men who truly loved each other. Before casting the blame on the gay couple, OLTL needs to examine what else is happening on their canvas.

At the moment, the show is playing Gigi and Rex every day - a couple the writers seem to favor, but one that hasn't really caught fire with fans. In addition, they're featuring a plot about a

30-year-old who has lost her memory (thanks to her psycho dad's shock treatments and attempted rape) of anything past age 17, and who has gone back to high school. In her mind, Jessica is 17, but she is acting more like a 13-year-old. Jessica didn't even act this immature and obnoxious when she was 17.

It's ludicrous to ask long time viewers to suspend belief when Jessica doesn't recognize her Uncle Todd because he has a new face, yet she recognizes Cristian, the supposed love of her life, as well as her father Clint, who also have "new faces" thanks to recasts. In fact, another actress played Jessica thirteen years ago, a fact OLTL could acknowledge with a wink when Jessica talks about how much older she looks.

This nonsense is what OLTL has chosen to give airtime to instead of Kyle and Fish. With Fish finally admitting he is a father and taking custody of his daughter, there is still so much story to play. OLTL had a chance to shine a light on an important issue and show that all families are capable of loving and raising a child. It would have been educational as well as entertaining, to watch Kish go through the normal struggles of parenting an infant together.

The outrage over Kish's firing has been swift and heartfelt. A campaign was immediately set up at [www.savekish.com](http://www.savekish.com) that organized protests outside ABC studios on both coasts, as well as petitions. Hopefully, the powers-that-be are listening, and willing to take a look at other areas of the show where they can make cuts. Fans won't accept anything less than Kish living their life together in Llanview - onscreen.

## **BLISSFUL: Y&R'S STRANGE BEDFELLOWS**

I was intrigued from the first moment The Young and the Restless began showing Billy Abbott and Victoria Newman - whose families are the modern equivalent of the Montague's and the Capulet's - flirting.

Billy (Billy Miller) likes older women, as evidenced by his hot hookups with Sharon (Sharon Case) and Heather (Vail Bloom). Victoria (Amelia Heinle) has a predilection for younger men, as evidenced by her marriage to JT (Thad Luckinbill). Neither has met their perfect match though. Victoria and JT started out hot, but after they married when she awoke from her coma, they became boring. Coincidentally or not, this coincided with Heinle and Luckinbill's real life

marriage.

Miller has had chemistry with every woman he has been paired with (except for Billy's true love Mac, played by Clementine Ford) but has yet to find a pairing that sticks. He now has an opportunity for soap opera super couple status along with Heinle.

On paper, Billy and Victoria should never be together, which is perhaps why they work so well. She is going through a divorce and a custody battle. He is a playboy with a penchant for acting before he thinks. Their families have hated each other for decades. Any one of these reasons alone might be enough to deter a lesser passion, but for Billy and Victoria, no matter how hard they try, they can't stay away from each other. Their friendship and flirtatious banter was fun to watch develop, and now that they're sleeping together, their potential to fall in love against all the odds is a tantalizing prospect.

Both Miller and Heinle are approaching this budding romance with a renewed vigor. The actors' regard and affection for one another feels genuine and comes across in their work. They appear as if they're having the time of their life with this new material and their enthusiasm is contagious. Miller has brought out a lighter, more playful side of Heinle that has heretofore been hidden under her character's strum and drang life. Their witty banter and charged repartee is reminiscent of a young Tracy and Hepburn.

Good for Y&R for not following the tried and true path of keeping the real life husband and wife together just because they're married. For whatever reason, their chemistry was missing, and by breaking them up, Y&R has opened the door for a great love story to unfold.

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