Darrell Berry: Gays in the Military

[00:00:00] **Bob Gatty:** Hey guys. Welcome to the Lean to the Left Podcast, where we focus on the important social issues facing us today. Now Donald Trump has wasted no time in pandering to his homophobic MAGA followers by targeting the lgbtq plus community and undermining protections for these folks across the government.

[00:00:21] His actions have included banning transgender individuals from serving in the military, Targeting gender ideology across government agencies, issuing an executive order, defining sex as solely male or female, and restricting access to gender affirming care. The administration has rescinded executive orders and regulations that had advanced protections for LGBTQ plus people in areas like healthcare, housing, and education.

[00:00:53] So our guest today is Darrell Berry, who retired from the Army after serving in both the enlisted and [00:01:00] officer ranks. He's the author of "Early This Morning", a novel about efforts to get rid of gays in the military, and that's a pretty timely topic. Darrell has a bachelor's degree in psychology, a master's in human resources, and a postgraduate diploma in strategic intelligence from the Defense Intelligence College. He served during the Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy era regarding gay service members and lives north of San Antonio, Texas with his two rescue dogs. Darrell, thanks for joining us on the Lean to the Left Podcast.

[00:01:37] Lemme me tell you, you're joining me with my rescue dog too. Okay. His name is Boomer and, oh, he's not here. Where's Boomer? Jackie And my wife Jackie is my studio audience. You just can't see her usually. Boomer's in here too. Yeah. Anyway Darrell, you served in the military both as an enlistee and then [00:02:00] as an officer.

[00:02:01] Did you experience anti-gay attitudes during your career?

[00:02:05] Yes.

[00:02:06] **Darrell Berry:** Although, not all the time, but yes, there were, there certainly were some periods, of course I served before Dont Ask, Don't Tell. And then a larger part of my service was in that time period of Don't Ask Don't Tell, which was 1994 through 2011, which, and don't ask, don't tell was simply you, it was still you still couldn't be gay and served right, but it was just a intermediate period where superiors couldn't ask you if you were gay, right?

And you shouldn't tell them if you were gay, but there were many people that were discharged during that period of time because they were found out for whatever reason. Is that right?

[00:02:46] People? Yeah.

[00:02:46] And then. Also, they weren't allowed to have all the benefits once they were kicked out of a vet.

[00:02:54] Now that did change later on in other administrations they started [00:03:00] getting them honorably discharged instead of something other than honorable. But yeah, it was a strange, a very strange period of time and yeah, I'm sure it was.

[00:03:09] What branch of the service did you serve? Army. You were in the Army, okay, and what type of, what did you do?

[00:03:18] When I,

[00:03:19] I was a enlisted personnel right at the very end of the Vietnam draft period, uhhuh, and I was a medic and an operating room technician. Okay. Then I got out, finished college, came back in as an officer, and I worked in medical Service Corps. We trained medical folks to be ready to deploy, and then later on in my career, I got into the intel field.

[00:03:42] It's called Medical intelligence Field, which is what prompted the book. It, the book deals with a little bit of biological agent warfare.

[00:03:50] **Bob Gatty:** Oh, okay. Yeah. I wanted to ask you, what prompted you to write the book?

[00:03:55] There are two reasons. One, the whole issue of being gay in the military and [00:04:00] people trying to get rid of gays in the military.

[00:04:03] And since I was familiar with biological agents, I just put those two together and made a, came up with a mystery novel. Okay. Let me say at the beginning though, although when I worked in Intel, nothing in this book is a secret.

[00:04:20] Okay. Okay.

[00:04:21] **Darrell Berry:** It's all open source. Okay. It's fiction, but I certainly used a lot of, oh, memories and things that happened to me in the past to, to come up with it.

[00:04:29] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Did you have, like personal incidents that occurred that you included in the book?

[00:04:36] **Darrell Berry:** Actually yes. One, one thing in the book has a, at the very beginning of the book when, when there's a lot of high ranking officers that are trying to spy.

[00:04:46] And see, even though it's don't ask, don't tell, they're trying to spy and see if the, if if there's any gay people going to a certain bar. I had things happen where some, I would be in a bar and someone unbeknownst to [00:05:00] me, but knew I was military apparently would come up to me and just say, they're here.

[00:05:06] That's all. Okay. They're here. That tells me military police, if someone's in the area, be aware. Things like that happened. And so I included that in part of my story.

[00:05:17] **Bob Gatty:** Huh. That's interesting. Yeah. How about giving us a little rundown on the plot and how it unfolds?

[00:05:24] **Darrell Berry:** Okay. There's a small group of officers generals in the Pentagon that are very homophobic.

[00:05:32] They're always trying figure out ways to get rid of gays in the military.

[00:05:36] And they're working with a small group of congressmen. They're doing the same thing. A mission comes down that's very dangerous and it deals with going overseas, spying on a small country that we believe are developing biological agents in quantities large enough to weaponize. Well, as the planning goes on, it's so dangerous that [00:06:00] it's doubtful that they could even do it because they think so many people will be killed. So they come up with the idea, say, let's just gather a bunch of gay men and women. Service members up, train them up and send them over.

[00:06:14] If they die, who cares? They're expendable,

[00:06:16] right?

[00:06:17] So that's the plot and then it, so the book goes on how they gather everybody up. They spy on 'em, they put 'em in a, in one company. And then the members of the company, are gay and lesbian and they start looking around saying, wait a minute.

[00:06:30] Whoa, I think I've seen you somewhere. And so it becomes very apparent that it's a company of homosexuals.

[00:06:36] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. All right.

[00:06:37] **Darrell Berry:** So you've got that going on and there's, I don't wanna give too much of away, but there's a mole in there that's not but anyway, they, you they deploy. And the congressmen are very interested in what they find out because this is gonna be a big win for them if they can actually find out that this country is developing biological [00:07:00] agents.

[00:07:00] On one hand, and then the other hand is it's just yeah, if one person dies, fine. If all of 'em die, it doesn't make any difference. We've got our information and we're better off without those, homosexuals in the army. So anyway, long story short that's the plot.

[00:07:13] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. All right. Sounds interesting. It reminds me of I told you I was in the middle of producing a podcast just before we came on to do this and that interview was with an author by the name of Steve Berry. And Steve Berry is a novelist that's, he's got 40 books of long, short, various all novels. And it's quite prolific. And he's got a book out called The List. And in the list, there's a company in Georgia that decided we have these expensive retirees and highly paid executives. We need to get rid of their salaries. And so [00:08:00] instead of firing them or giving them a buyout, they decide just to kill 'em off and.

[00:08:07] **Darrell Berry:** Kind of the same type of deal here.

[00:08:09] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah, it is. I just think that's a hell of a plot. It's, and I asked him, Steve, how did you get this idea? And he said I was working as a trial lawyer and I was representing this employee who was suing the company. And it occurred to me what would happen if the company just decided instead of, fighting this guy and going to court, they just knock him off.

[00:08:33] And that was how the plot was born.

[00:08:38] **Darrell Berry:** I'll be doggone. Yeah. I'm and he said it's called the list.

[00:08:41] I need to look at Steve Berry is not a relation to me at all. We're not related.

[00:08:45] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Okay.

[00:08:46] **Darrell Berry:** Don't even know him, but I know of him.

[00:08:48] I need to get in touch with him and say,

[00:08:50] **Bob Gatty:** oh, you should look, I just posted the thing on YouTube just 15 minutes ago. And so check that out. I will, I'll send you, [00:09:00] matter of fact I'll send you a link. But the the thing, it was really interesting, but we're not here to talk about him. We're here to talk about you. But I just brought that up because it was yeah. Yeah. It's along

[00:09:12] **Darrell Berry:** the same.

[00:09:13] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. All right. What's the what's the impact in your opinion of Trump's actions kicking transgender people out of the military service? What's the impact of that?

[00:09:24] **Darrell Berry:** I've been on several podcasts dis discussing the book and what's going on now, and. Of course at the time I wrote the book, I didn't know that we'd be living through these days.

[00:09:34] Sure. But a lot of people have been reminding me of this as they read the book that they're thinking, okay, that's a, it's an, it's a, it's interesting fast read a mystery novel. But, could something like this actually, is it possible that something like this actually happen again?

[00:09:51] Because of the current administration?

[00:09:53] And my answer is, yeah.

[00:09:55] Sure it could.

[00:09:56] Look what,

[00:09:57] **Bob Gatty:** that's what they're all about,

[00:09:59] **Darrell Berry:** yeah. Yeah. [00:10:00] Yeah. Unfortunately yeah, it's and the whole, the defense department is going, trying to get women outta combat roles, which is the craziest thing that I've ever heard of, because we've got so many wonderful combat female pilots.

[00:10:15] Sure. Our readiness would go down if we,

[00:10:18] The same thing would happen with the transgender folks, and what if they decide that, okay, we're gonna go back to getting gays outta here too.

[00:10:26] That's the kind of the question that I wanted to leave with people at when they read that my book.

[00:10:31] Yeah. Make them think, Hey, is could this actually happen? Sure. And yeah.

[00:10:36] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Alright, so what's your overall views of Trump's attack on the LGBTQ plus community?

[00:10:44] **Darrell Berry:** It's just more than one step back. Yeah. It's quite a few steps backwards. Quite a few and in a lot of areas in LGBT and women.

[00:10:53] Yeah. It's I'm just hoping and praying that we live through these next few years. All right. And can get on to, [00:11:00] to set the deal. So it's it's a, it's definitely a step back. There, that's all there is to it. Yeah.

[00:11:06] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. Now, what do you hope that you'll achieve with your book besides making a bunch of money?

[00:11:15] **Darrell Berry:** I don't know about that. The, if you had asked me a while back, what I would achieve it is just, I hope everyone enjoys a nice mystery, fast-paced mystery novel. Okay, now then. Though today I say I hope everybody enjoys an a, a fast mystery novel. But I also hope it makes him think about history. And what could happen in the future.

[00:11:42] **Bob Gatty:** Yep. All right. I hope it makes 'em think about fairness. Because this administration. It just doesn't care about being fair to anybody except themselves.

[00:11:54] **Darrell Berry:** About being fair and not being afraid.

[00:11:57] PE they seem like they want people to be afraid of [00:12:00] one another for their differences, really. Absolutely.

[00:12:03] **Bob Gatty:** Hey, I got a question. I got another question for you. You're 75 years old, man. I, yeah. All right. Isn't that a little old to be starting off on a career as a novelist for crying out loud.

[00:12:15] Yeah, it is. What'd you do it for? What'd you do it for?

[00:12:20] **Darrell Berry:** I don't know. I felt like I had Because you wanted to, right? I felt like I had a good book in me.

[00:12:24] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah. Did you? Yeah. You got another one in the works too, don't you?

[00:12:28] **Darrell Berry:** I do,

[00:12:29] **Bob Gatty:** yeah. What is it?

[00:12:31] **Darrell Berry:** That one is another mystery and it's going to deal with, a Lyft driver and the people that he meets as he's... the plot is, will be deeper than that. It's like I say, it's gonna be a mystery. Sure. But it's gonna deal with this Lyft driver. And all the characters that he meets

[00:12:51] Uhhuh over a period of time driving for Lyft Uhhuh.

[00:12:54] **Bob Gatty:** Okay. Who published your your current book?

[00:12:57] **Darrell Berry:** This one Atmosphere Press. Okay. [00:13:00] Which were wonderful. They're a hybrid publisher. I, they are the, their editing is just great. The whole business was really fine. I loved the app. I loved independence. You pay for them to publish it, they do a, or this atmosphere press did a wonderful job.

[00:13:15] Yet I have control of a book.

[00:13:18] That's great. That is really good.

[00:13:20] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah, I published, I self-published a book on Amazon and got no help at all from Amazon. Matter of fact, I couldn't even advertise it on Amazon because it had Trump's picture on the cover. And yeah, that's, they said, I've heard you're not too political.

[00:13:36] **Darrell Berry:** You're not the only one that's told me that about yeah. About Amazon. Anyway, I would consider Atmos, you need to consider atmosphere press. I don't hold any stock in there, but I'll tell you they're really, they're

[00:13:47] **Bob Gatty:** really good. I'm making a note of that because I have a novel in the works myself and I'll check them out.

[00:13:55] That's great. Yeah. Yeah. Alright where can people find your [00:14:00] book? It's on Amazon,

[00:14:02] right?

[00:14:02] **Darrell Berry:** Yeah. Amazon really, that's the main, it's a little bit tricky trying to get it. Of course my, in my local library, yeah, they wouldn't allow the book, I'm sure. I'm here in central Texas, so I don't think they would even allow, just 'cause it's

[00:14:17] **Bob Gatty:** got this plot that deals with homosexuals. Is that the reason?

[00:14:22] **Darrell Berry:** Yeah, that, and there's a few, a few shady words. So I don't think it would, I don't think they would at all. Yeah. But anyway to answer your question it seems the be atmos, Amazon, right? It's so easy to buy anything off of Amazon.

[00:14:35] **Bob Gatty:** Yeah, for sure. And hey, you guys if you're interested in his book I will put a, direct link in the description of this episode, so that you could just click on that and and easily get it. So that'll be convenient for you. So is there anything else you'd like to add?

[00:14:52] **Darrell Berry:** The the other thing, could I just give you my, my website? Oh yeah, absolutely. Sure. It's d Berry [00:15:00] books.com.

[00:15:00] Okay. And that's B-E-R-R-Y?

[00:15:04] Yeah, it's D-B-E-R-R-Y uhhuh books.com. All you know, all one. Got it

[00:15:11] **Bob Gatty:** all lower case. Yep. Okay. Alright listen, I appreciate you coming on and thank you.

[00:15:16] If you have any other words of wisdom, lay 'em on me, man.

[00:15:20] **Darrell Berry:** Oh, no, I, I don't I hope everybody enjoys the book. And if the, if they have any comments, whether they be negative or positive, if my website, let me know. Okay. And that'll help me out writing the next one.

[00:15:33] **Bob Gatty:** That's great. All right. I appreciate that.