

# Lesbian Commander Booted Air Force Sgt. for Beliefs, Suit Claims

The shocking stories of religious hostility in our nation's military continue, and now Liberty Institute represents Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk, a 19-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force who was relieved of his duties because of his faith and moral convictions.

Monk, who served as a first sergeant at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, recently returned from deployment and found he had a new commander who was an open lesbian.

"In one of our first meetings, she was talking about her promotion, and she mentioned something about a benediction," Monk told Fox News. "She said she wanted a chaplain but objected to one particular chaplain that she called a 'bigot' because he preached that homosexuality is a sin.

"She then said, 'I don't know what kind of people actually believe that kind of crap,'" Monk continued. "I knew I was going to have a rough time in this unit and I would have to be very careful about what I said."

Issues arose when Monk was asked to advise his commander on a disciplinary matter involving an Air Force instructor who was accused of making objectionable comments about gay marriage. After a thorough investigation, Monk determined the instructor meant no harm by his comments, and he suggested that his commander could use the incident as a way to teach about tolerance and diversity.

Monk, a devout evangelical Christian, says he was told he wasn't on the same page as the commander and that if he didn't get on the same page, they would find another place for him to

work.

Later, the commander ordered Monk to answer the question of whether people who object to gay marriage are discriminating. Monk responded that he could not answer the way his commander wanted and feared an honest response would put him in legal trouble.

At that point, Monk was relieved of his duties.

"I was essentially fired for not validating my commander's position on having an opinion about homosexual marriage," he told Fox News.

Monk also told Fox News that while he is scared to speak out, he is doing it to set an example for his three teenage sons.

"Every night after dinner we read the Bible together," he said. "I tell the boys we've got a lot of stuff going on in this world and we need people to stand up. My boys know what I'm going through. They are looking at me, wanting to know how I'm going to handle this."

Click below to watch Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford and Senior Master Sgt. Phillip Monk on *Fox and Friends*.