

Film Distributor Drops Josh Harris Documentary After Author Announces He's No Longer a Christian

Exploration Films announced Monday it will stop distributing Joshua Harris' documentary *I Survived 'I Kissed Dating Goodbye'* after the author announced he was no longer a Christian.

Last month, Harris announced on Instagram that he and his wife of 19 years, Shannon Bonne, were separating. A week later, he announced he was no longer a Christian.

"... I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus," he wrote on Instagram. "The popular phrase is 'deconstruction.' The biblical phrase is 'falling away.' By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian. Many people tell me that there is a different way to practice faith and I want to remain open to this, but I'm not there now."

Harris' documentary looks at people's responses to his 1997 book *I Kissed Dating Goodbye* and the "purity culture" that arose from its influence on conservative churches.

The film's website indicates that all profits from the documentary go to "further thoughtful Christian media content. Joshua Harris receives no compensation."

Stephen Penn, spokesman for Exploration Films, says Harris was not transparent with the company about his faith while working on the film, according to Christian Newswire.

"Unfortunately, Josh did not tip off his film team partners of

these surprising changes before his public post—nor how this would change our company's distribution efforts of the film he had worked with us on to promote," he says.

According to the distributor's website, it is a "leading distributor of faith and family movies and documentaries."

Exploration Films President Steve Greisen, explains that when Harris and director Jessica Van Der Wyngaard first brought the film to the company, they asked for a free version to be available to the public for a time.

"Regular interactions occurred with Josh and the film team on a daily and weekly basis to coordinate our efforts as part of the agreement," Greisen says. "Exploration Films just finished recording a podcast with Josh slated for later release, so these statements only days later caught us off guard and damaged our efforts together."

Penn says the film distribution company wishes Harris the best, "but due to the lack of transparency from Josh, we have no other choice but to halt promotion of the film."

He says hundreds of DVDs have already been returned because of Harris' faith announcement.

"Josh's current position on Christianity counteracts his authority to speak on how Christians should approach relationships," he says. "Discussions of this nature happen throughout the film, and the former pastor's public statements on marriage and especially Christianity undermine key parts of the film. It puts our team in an awkward position to promote it."