

'Survivor' Contestant Fired From Job After Outing Transgender Competitor

Jeff Varner, the *Survivor* contestant who made headlines for outing a fellow contestant as transgender, was fired from his job as a real estate agent in North Carolina this week as a result of the incident.

The *News & Record* newspaper of Greensboro reported on Thursday that Varner was let go from his job as an agent for South Carolina-based Allen Tate Real Estate following the April 12 airing of the *Survivor* episode, which was shot last year in Fiji.

During the closing tribal council sequence, Varner disclosed that fellow contestant Zeke Smith is a transgender male, a move seen as a bid to gain advantage in the elimination competition. The tribal council wound up voting Varner off the show. After the airing, the incident sparked an online backlash against Varner and much discussion about the ethics of outing another person.

Varner, who is gay, apologized to Smith on the show and has repeatedly apologized in numerous interviews this week.

The *News and Record* reported Varner was told he was fired because he was "in the middle of a news story that we don't want anything to do with."

North Carolina has been in the center of a transgender rights struggle after the state last year passed a law that banned cities from allowing transgender people to use public restrooms of the gender with which they identify. The move generated a swift response, with a slew of major corporations and organizations such as the NBA and NCAA pulling business

out of the state. The law was repealed late last month. {eo}