

## NEWARK'S TRUTH TELLERS: DEMANDING RECOGNITION FROM FAMILY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH

- TRUTH Steve Malick - Panel 1

“Finally, I came out, came out. Actually, I came out to my dad and my mother my sophomore year. My dad's response was—my parents were divorced at this point. My dad's response was, ‘Okay. Don't get AIDS.’ I'm like, ‘Oh, thanks, Dad. That's really uplifting.’ That wasn't positive. My mother's response was like—I had been super angsty. I struggled with mental health issues my entire life. I was particularly in a depressed mode. I told my mom. My mom's a high school dropout herself. She thought that I was getting into drugs and alcohol, and she was like, ‘Oh, you're gay. Thank God.’ *[Laughter]* It was this weird opposite reactions. Then I came out to them, but then I went right back in the closet shortly thereafter and dated. I finally came out, came out officially finally, ‘I'm here, I'm queer, get used to it,’ when I was studying abroad in France.”