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Fox's "Daddy" Trouble



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By Julie Keller

One Fox affiliate has decided to disown *Who's Your Daddy?*



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WRAZ-TV in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, has pulled the plug on tonight's airing of Fox's controversial new adoption-themed reality special, opting to run a more family-friendly, feel-good adoption documentary.

The station offered no comment on the move, but it is most likely buckling under the increasingly heated pressure from adoption groups. Several organizations have berated Fox and parent company News Corp. for the show, which features an adopted woman trying to pick her biological father from a group of candidates for \$100,000 cash.



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(If she chooses right, she keeps the cash, if she chooses wrong, the impostor banks the money; either way, she gets to meet her real dad.)

For now, only a 90-minute special is scheduled, but six episodes of the show have been shot. Although the show has not been screened and TV critics have yet to weigh in, a variety of adoption groups have called it "reprehensible," "offensive," "insensitive and harmful."

One such group, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute in New York has called for a sit-down between network execs and the adoption community.

"This is still the holiday season, a time when we should be celebrating our families and embracing our children, not worrying about the impact a reprehensible television show may have on them," Adam Pertman, executive director of the institute, said in a statement.

Apparently, WRAZ-TV agrees. They'll be running *I Have Roots and Branches: Personal Reflections on Adoption* in *Daddy's* 8 p.m. time slot tonight.

"We are proud to share this enlightening and heartwarming program, both as informative, appropriate family viewing, and as a public service as well," Tommy Schenck, the station's VP and general manager, said in a statement.

For now, Fox is standing by its *Daddy*. The network says all the women featured on the show were willing participants and that in the end, reuniting

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adoptees with their dads is a good thing.

They do, however, support the rights of network affiliates to pass on programming.

"Any network affiliate that feels the programming may be inappropriate for their individual market has the right to preempt the special," Fox said in a statement. The North Carolina station is the only one of the network's 182 affiliates to nix the show so far.

Daddy, meanwhile, isn't going to be the only source of strife for the network. Fox is also taking on burgeoning criticism over the Jan. 9 debut of *24*.

At least one Muslim group is outraged at a story line that portrays a Muslim teen and his parents as terrorist plotting an attack on Americans.

Rabiah Ahmed, spokeswoman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told *Broadcasting and Cable* that the show is "taking everyday American Muslim families and making them suspects...It's very dangerous and very disturbing."

Fox officials had no immediate comment on the 24 complaints.



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