

British Muslims issue fatwa on Jesus playwright

By Sally Pook

A FATWA has been issued on the award-winning author of *Corpus Christi*, a play that portrays Jesus Christ as a homosexual, a militant Islamic leader said yesterday.

Terrence McNally was sentenced to death by the Shari'ah Court of the UK as his play opened in London.

Police are understood to have alerted Mr McNally — a Pulitzer Prize winner and four times Tony Award win-

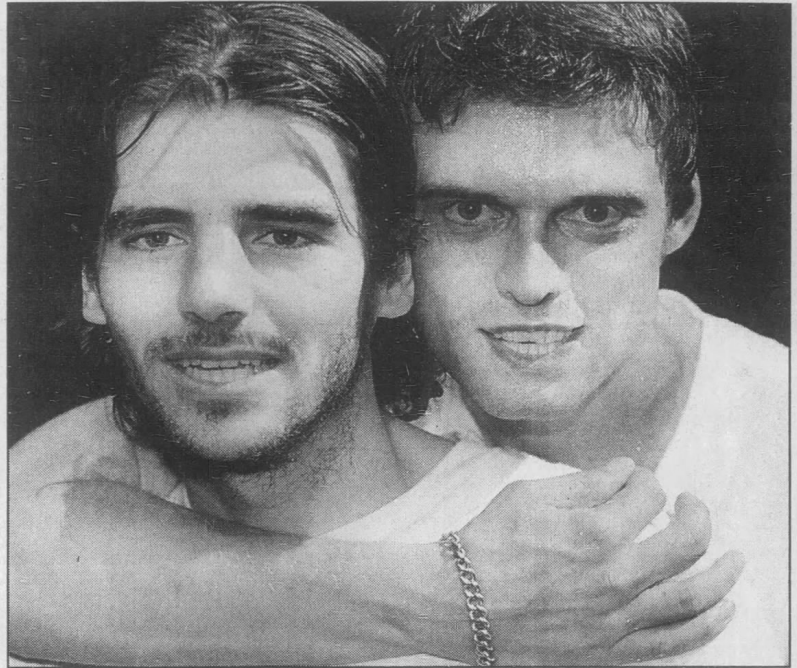
ner — at his New York home. Muslims regard Jesus as a prophet so the play, in which he is crucified as "king of the queers" was declared blasphemy by the Al-Muhajiroun (Defenders of the Messenger Jesus).

A 40-strong group of Roman Catholics were quietly praying in protest outside the Pleasance Theatre as the play opened on Thursday when a noisy group of extremist Muslim demonstrators arrived to hand out copies of the fatwa.

It was signed by Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, judge of the Shari'ah Court of the UK, who yesterday insisted that the death sentence must stand.

He said the fatwa should only be carried out by an Islamic state, meaning the playwright would face arrest and execution if he travelled to Muslim countries such as Saudi Arabia or the Sudan.

The Muslim cleric and former citizen of Saudi Arabia, who last year voiced support



Mel Raido and Stephen Billington star in the play at the Pleasance Theatre



Terrence McNally

for the bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, added: "We would warn individual Muslims not to try to carry it out.

"This should only happen on their own soil. We do not believe in political assassina-

tion, but obviously he would face capital punishment. He will be arrested and there will be capital punishment."

The Charity Commission yesterday said it would be investigating the Muslim and Cultural Society of

Enfield and Haringey, a registered charity, for producing the copies of the fatwa. However a spokesman for the society — of which the sheikh is a trustee — claimed it was merely fulfilling its role as an educational trust.

Corpus Christi Fatwa

Clipped By:

ianlharris

16 Nov 2024