

TRANSGENDER

Show the Blood

BY TOBIAS NOVAK

Media's portrayal of transgender individuals is increasing in frequency and intensity, and its representation of who we are as transfolk is generally inaccurate, sensationalized and damaging to the safety of our trans brothers and sisters.

As transfolk appear more and more in the public eye through news programs, television shows and print, transfolk, their allies, the media, and society at large must be aware of the impact of public scrutiny of trans lives. Full accountability

labeled as sick, diseased or mentally ill, or as being trans because of a bad childhood.

With the number of trans (and other gender variant) people killed each year simply because of perception of their gender (which is not always entirely accurate), the media should be held responsible for promoting violence when they portray transfolk in a negative or inaccurate light.

Let's call media that portray transfolk in such ways and tell them: "Enough of your lies!" There are transpeople being killed because people believe these lies. You have



PHOTO: DOK WRIGHT

your sick and disabled, your elderly and your children. We walk among you, helping you, talking to you and contribut-

Nobody deserves to die because of who they are.

must be taken for negative and inaccurate representations.

Just as with lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals, the media far too often focuses on the "cause" of transsexuality. This is a grave error. Much like sexual orientation, gender identity is part of your makeup at birth, and the "cause" is therefore irrelevant. Focus on the "cause" of transsexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality and lesbianism creates a violent backlash from extremists against our trans and queer brothers and sisters.

My gender as a transman? It has never felt female. The gender of other transfolk I know? It has never matched their biological sex. Some of these people have bad childhoods; others don't. And most people I know who have bad childhoods are not trans. How do you explain that? The general medical establishment has long since established that transsexuality is a medical condition that people are born with. You're either trans or you're not, and no amount of childhood trauma will change that.

You can choose who you sleep with, but ultimately you cannot choose who you are attracted to. With a trans person, we do decide whether or not to change our bodies through hormones, surgery and other "passing" techniques. How we act on things (who we date and sleep with or how we modify our bodies) is our choice, but we as transfolk should not be

blood on your hands when you broadcast this hate speech.

Let's take the blood from off the networks' hands and spread it all over the streets for everyone to see. If you see statistics of murders against transfolk rise, call the media and hold them accountable. Show the blood dripping off their palms and fingertips, and spread it everywhere.

When you watch a television program and see inaccuracies about transness being broadcast, show the blood. When you see lies about transfolk printed in your local papers, show the blood. When you hear people in conversation bashing transpeople, show the blood. When your friends and family say things about transfolk that aren't true, show the blood. When your schools spread misinformation about transfolk, show the blood. Take this blood and hold the media, society, and governments accountable for the rise in violence against transfolk. Do the same with anti-Arabic/Muslim sentiments, anti-Black sentiments, anti-Latino sentiments, anti-queer sentiments, anti-Semitic sentiments and anti-anything else we claim as identity sentiments (so long as that identity does not harm others). Show the blood of the media to anyone propagating and spreading lies.

Transfolk are not going away. We're here, and we are a part of your communities. We pay taxes, work and care for

ing to all of society. We did not ask to be given this difficult hand in life with our gender not matching our biological sex. We were handed this card from our God/dess, our Mother Earth, our mothers and fathers, our Universe, and we must live with it. We did not wish our transgender status upon ourselves, nor do we deserve to die because of it.

When you see trans-lies being spread, show the blood and hold those spreading the lies accountable for their actions. Otherwise, those who walk and live among you and contribute to your well-being and sustenance are not being sustained. Nobody deserves to die because of who they are. Show the blood of all those who advocate violence through irresponsible words and actions; and instead advocate peace, love, tolerance and sustenance. When one person is not being sustained, none of us are being sustained. A community is only as strong as one of its members, and when transfolk (or anyone else) are being weakened for who they are, we are all being threatened with dissolution and destruction; our lives are all at stake, and we are all on the cross, dying for reasons we cannot control.

Speak out for others, and others will speak out for you. ▽

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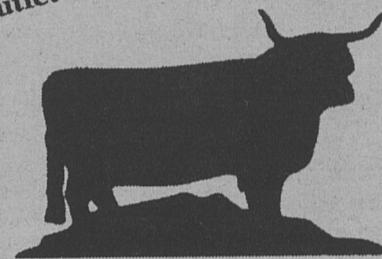
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