

De-transitioned in Death, How the Media Disrespects Transgender People

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Abstract

I'm tired. Tired of the so called "liberal media" disrespecting our dead. Hell, even our own "LGB(t) media does it. Ya know, "Today a transgender woman, Jane Doe, who was formerly known as John Doe, was murdered today." A few examples: "The Essex County Prosecutor's Office reported today that the victim of a fatal shooting [...]

Article

I'm tired. Tired of the so called "liberal media" disrespecting our dead. Hell, even our own "LGB(t) media does it. Ya know, "Today a transgender woman, Jane Doe, who was formerly known as John Doe, was murdered today." A few examples:

"The Essex County Prosecutor's Office reported today that the victim of a fatal shooting in Maplewood on Sunday was Victoria Carmen White, formerly James White. White had legally changed her name to Victoria Carmen following sex reassignment surgery." - Maplewood Patch

"Detectives originally thought the 28-year-old victim, from Roxwell, near Chelmsford, Essex, may have drowned, but a post mortem has revealed unexplained head injuries. Ms Chappel, formerly known as Bryan Hooley, underwent a sex-change operation in 1994." - BBC News

But it's not just the mainstream media doing it. Edge, a "Gay, Lesbian Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) news and entertainment portal", posted this:

"Johnson's arrest for prostitution last winter led to a police interrogation in which Johnson-formerly known as Dwayne Johnson-was beaten by police officers." - EDGE Boston

and On Top ("a gay advocacy website"):

"Andrade has confessed to killing Zapata, formerly known as Justin Zapata, in a fit of rage when he confronted her about her sexuality." - On Top

and the latest example:

"Police spokesperson Sgt. Ray Evers said Blahnik, whose birth name is Michael Lee, was strangled with a pillowcase." - Philadelphia Gay News

It's 2010, and as the Transgender Day of Remembrance comes close I think it's time that ALL media stop disrespecting our dead brothers and sisters this way. As a health care worker, I could be fired for revealing personal health information (HIPAA) of a patient. If not illegal, revealing personal health information after death is highly unethical. And publishing the birth name or surgical status of these murder victims doesn't serve any purpose, other than titillation. Go back and reread each one of these articles and remove the transgender person's birth name. Does it change the story at all?

I know that in the past transgender people were outside of the public eye and that maybe media outlets didn't know any better (never mind widely accepted journalistic standards). I hope that from this day forward every media outlet can be more respectful of our fallen transgender brothers and sisters. Many died living their truth. If you're a journalist and you post their former name, you're effectively stripping their lives of that truth.

Please, just stop it.

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