

TRANSADVOCATE

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# From Cradle to Grave: Trans People are Disrespected, Repudiated and Scorned

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## Abstract

*I was absolutely horrified, but sadly not surprised, to read about the treatment of Lashai Mclean at her own funeral. The article “Mass Walk-Out at Trans Woman’s Funeral” discusses how the minister presiding over the funeral engaged in victim-blaming and typical religious fundamentalism about “the wages of sin” to effectively dishonor and disrespect the memory [...]*

## Article

I was absolutely horrified, but sadly not surprised, to read about the treatment of Lashai Mclean at her own funeral. The article “Mass Walk-Out at Trans Woman’s Funeral” discusses how the minister presiding over the funeral engaged in victim-blaming and typical religious fundamentalism about “the wages of sin” to effectively dishonor and disrespect the memory of a trans woman who had been viciously murdered in a probable hate crime. At her OWN FUNERAL.

What the case shows to me, is to remind me that us trans people are debased literally from cradle to grave in this deeply transphobic and cissexist society. From the time we are born, we are placed into a gender role that we do not identify with. This, to me, is akin to rape. This nonconsensual gender assignation is the beginning of a life of being mis-gendered, disrespected and dehumanized. From abuse on the playground, to teachers and administrators doing nothing to stop it or blaming us for the abuse, to non-accepting parents, to being thrown out on the streets, to facing severe economic hardships including homelessness, sex survival work, and lack of access to medical care, to being denied housing, public accommodations, employment and credit based on our gender identity/expression, to being taunted on the street, to being beaten up, to being murdered for who we are, to being ignored by the criminal justice system, to being blamed for our own murders, to being defamed in the media and the press, to being incarcerated at a much higher rate than cis people, to being buried in the clothes of our birth sex, to being buried beneath a grave stone that has our birth name on it, from being mis-represented and mis-gendered in family-penned obituaries, to being admonished and scorned in religious eulogies: taken all together it is nightmarish. It is horrific. Yes, it is THAT BAD. From cradle to grave, we are the recipients of some of the most persistent and consistent abuse, prejudice, discrimination and oppression of any social group in our society. If we are people of color, poor or working-class, disabled, of size, or sex workers, that oppression is magnified exponentially.

Just because someone wears a collar, and quotes biblical scripture, doesn’t make them infallible or what they say “the truth.” Furthermore, why wasn’t this esteemed reverend frothing at the mouth about the sin of murder against an innocent person, instead of the made-up “crime” of daring to be different?

What it shows to me is that, even in our death, we do not get basic respect. We have NO RIGHTS. It was Octavia St. Laurent who once said in a speech (I am paraphrasing): “Women have rights, Black people have rights. Animals have rights. Gays people have rights. But transsexuals? We ain’t got shit.” The lowest of the low, even when we die we have fingers pointed at us. “It was your fault. The wages of sin will lead to things like this. Your lifestyle brought this on.” If the victim-blaming against people with AIDS has somewhat died down, it has intensified for transsexual and transgender people. SHAME on this preacher and SHAME on the people who condone it as just being about the bible, or just being what a preacher does. Sounds an awful lot to me like “boys will be boys.” BULLSHIT! These people use the power of their rank to get away with all kinds of mess, and I for one am sick and tired of it. Here’s a brief and very partial list of the mis-deeds of some of the so-called sacred clergy: raping and molesting children and getting away with it; denouncing homosexuality and gender-variance from the pulpit while having sex with under-age young men; buying prostitutes and lying about; stealing church money; using child pornography; drinking and drugging addictively, etc. And I am supposed to listen up when these hypocrites say I am living in sin because I am trans? HELL NO.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all the trans people and allies who stood up and walked out. I salute you! The only problem: the entire church should have stood up and walked out. I don’t know Earline Budd and Jeri Hughes personally, but if they were correctly quoted in the article, they come off sounding extremely ignorant and like they condone what our dear reverend said, rather than condemning his hateful words. Also, did they get up and walk out? And if they didn’t, why the heck not? To those who would have the audacity to say that those who walked out were rude or did so in poor taste: what the minister did was infinitely more rude, dis-tasteful and inappropriate! Either we as a people deserve respect, especially at the time of our deaths, or we don’t. Period. I side unequivocally with those who stood up and walked out. We dishonor and sully her memory by not denouncing the antics of this supposed man of god in the strongest possible terms. Lashai Mclean deserves nothing less than our collective outrage not only at her murder, but at those who would so cruelly disrespect her memory and her legacy.

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