

Full SFGN Interview: ‘I am not a bigot’ Says Gender Identity Watch’s Cathy Brennan

By Cristan Williams

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Abstract

Recently the South Florida Gay News interviewed me for an article on the TERFs, Cathy Brennan and her group, Gender Identity Watch: The Web is where this feud appears to have escalated with Brennan trading barbs between journalists and advocates from the transgender community who claim Brennan and her blog are insensitive. “I believe the petition [...]

Article

Recently the South Florida Gay News interviewed me for an article on the TERFs, Cathy Brennan and her group, Gender Identity Watch:

The Web is where this feud appears to have escalated with Brennan trading barbs between journalists and advocates from the transgender community who claim Brennan and her blog are insensitive.

“I believe the petition served to clearly demonstrate that many thousands of feminists view the GIW team to be a hate group,” said Cristan Williams, editor of Transadvocate.com. “I think that it also offered a chance for Brennan’s victims to connect with many others and understand that they were not alone.”

Brennan discounted Williams’ accusations as “nuts” and said “Cristan has an axe to grind and let her grind it.”

Meanwhile at the Southern Poverty Law Center, where the Intelligence Project has been heralded by the National Review as “one of the most respected anti-terror organizations in the world,” Beirich acknowledged there have been some issues with Gender Identity Watch, but refused to deem it a hate group.

“It’s not that we don’t consider some of the things that have happened there to be really ugly,” Beirich said. “It doesn’t qualify as a hate group under our definition because a hate group has to have some membership, like a group.”

Some have claimed that the article failed to adequately describe the issues. The piece is short and only briefly quotes the interview questions I answered. Missing from the SFGN piece is any historical context. For the sake of clarity, here are my complete answers to the SFGN’s interview questions:

South Florida Gay News: What is your prior experience with Cathy Brennan and Gender Identity Watch?

Cristan Williams: The historical TERF movement was directly involved in stripping access to

psychological and medical care from the trans community in the 1980s. The term TERF (Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists) was popularized in 2008 by the non-transgender feminist community because these women felt as if their discourse was being colonized by an extremist faction. Feminist women began using this term as a way to distinguish the TERF rhetoric from larger feminist discourse.

I encountered Brennan as being an opinion leader in the modern iteration of the TERF movement. I became aware of Brennan a few years ago as the power behind an effort to have trans people stripped of UN protections. The ideology promoted by Brennan's group is featured in TERF conferences, meetings, lectures and direct actions across the globe.

GIW calls itself a team, not a group. The GIW team promotes a world view in which trans people and protections are not only watched, but correlated with the suffering of cisgender women. Racist groups employ similar tactics by tracking improvements in racial equality while correlating gains in equality with perceived wrongs committed by groups they exist to oppress.

For instance, here are a few posts from today's GIW social media stream:



Figure 1. In Brennan's reality, this isn't bigotry



Figure 2. Promoting propaganda from an ex-gay group

Note that GIW features the talking points of a known ex-gay group and proudly attacks known trans activists.

Brennan's group asserts that the term TERF is a pejorative and rejects the idea that people are born with a subjective awareness of the body's physical sex. Brennan's brand of "feminism" promotes the

notion that women can and probably should choose to become lesbians (the so-called political lesbian) and that people - like myself - who disagree with her are men's rights activists (MRAs).

SFGN: What are your thoughts about the petition to ask SPLC to declare GIW a Hate group?

CW: The petition was created by a feminist group called, Secular Women. I believe the petition served to clearly demonstrate that many 1000s of feminists view the GIW team to be a hate group. I think that it also offered a chance for Brennan's victims to connect with many others and understand that they were not alone.

SFGN: What is your role with The TransAdvocate.com?

CW: I am the editor.

- Cathy Brennan attempts to censor LGBT magazine
- Popular TERF front group is fake
- You might be a TERF if...
- TERFs & Trans Healthcare
- [UPDATED] #RadFem2013 Lies, London Irish Centre Truth + a Preview of Sheila Jeffreys' New TERF Book!

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