

TRANSADVOCATE

Gender Nation: Transphobia, Termination, and Tinder

By Gwen Smith

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https://www.transadvocate.com/gender-nation-oscar-win-rupaul-fails-2_n_22164.htm

Abstract

Gender Nation is a bi-weekly column by Gwendolyn Ann Smith, the founder of the Transgender Day of Remembrance, reviewing news affecting the trans, intersex, and genderqueer community. A questionable search leads to lawsuit A lawsuit against a Louisiana prison claims that a transgender visitor to the facility was ordered to strip and reveal her genitalia before [...]

Article



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A questionable search leads to lawsuit

A lawsuit against a Louisiana prison claims that a transgender visitor to the facility was ordered to strip and reveal her genitalia before she would be allowed to leave.

China Nelson visited her brother, an inmate at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, Louisiana in September of 2017. While entering the prison, guards claim that their body screening equipment detected an “unknown object” in her pants. Nelson did explain to guards at that time that she was a

trans woman.

Guards then escorted her to a men's restroom and ordered her to strip. After she refused, saying she would wait in her car while other family visited her brother, the guards and a supervisor told her that she would be required to show her genitalia before she would be allowed to leave. Guards also requested to search her vehicle. After her repeated refusals to be searched, the visit was canceled. She has been barred from visiting the facility for no less than six months, after being on the "approved visitor list" at the prison for fourteen years.

Nelson is suing the State Department of Public Safety and Corrections, citing fourth amendment protections against unreasonable search and seizure. The suit would bar the prison from similar conduct in the future.

The Department of Corrections has refused to discuss the case, saying that they will not comment on pending litigation. A Deputy Warden from the prison claimed that Nelson has been informed that the strip search would be based on the gender on her Driver's license, and claimed that Nelson interrupted officials when they tried to explain the policy to her. Nelson denies the Warden's understanding of the events of that day.

Transgender people often face an increased level of discrimination when incarcerated; apparently, visitors can also be subject to unreasonable treatment.

Principal removed after announcing transition

Shannon Daniels, a 52-year-old trans woman in Massachusetts, has been removed from her position at Principal for Swampscott Public Schools.

Daniels, who announced their transition in a letter sent to parents of students at Stanley Elementary School in February, has been placed on administrative leave until the end of this year, and according to Superintendent Pamela Angelakis, she will not have her contract renewed. Angelakis has declined to state why Daniels is being removed as principal, but her reasoning seems particularly obvious.

Daniels served as principal since 2012.

Tinder algorithm fails trans people, once again

Twenty-five-year-old trans woman, Ariel Hawkins is suing popular dating app Tinder.

Hours after Hawkins added the phrase "Pre-op trans woman" to her online biography, her account was terminated by the app. In an email sent to Hawkins, Tinder claimed that she violated their terms of service and deleted her account. Tinder has to date refused to state exactly what Hawkins did to violate their terms of service.

Hawkins is not alone; many other trans Tinder users have faced account termination, including popular YouTuber Kat Blaque, who wrote on Twitter last year that every single account she's created on Tinder has been deleted. "At this point," said Blaque, "it's very, very, very hard for me not to believe that I am either being targeted by transphobic trolls or being banned because I'm trans."

Tinder has faced issues with transgender harassment in the past, and has attempted to combat its

anti-trans reputation by hiring trans activist Munroe Bergdorf to front their #AllTypesAllSwipes campaign, and later adding 37 different gender identity options to the app.

In response to her account termination, Hawkins has sued Tinder, attempting to get Tinder to change its policies and procedures towards banning accounts.

As Tinder uses a “complaint-based algorithm,” if an account received enough complaints, it would be automatically deleted. Therefore, is likely that Hawkins was mass reported by many anti-trans Tinder users.

The use of automated systems which cause apps and websites to bar a user without human interaction has long been an issue on the Internet, and has a long history of affecting transgender people from issues with America Online barring words such as “transsexual” from their service in 1993, to Facebook’s infamous “real names” policy targeting transgender people using names other than those on their legal documents.

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