

TRANSADVOCATE

Hiring Teh Trans

By Guest

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Abstract

Today's guest blogger is Michelle Diane Rose. Michelle is a communications student and the co-author of The Color of Sunlight. She lives in Portland, Oregon and works for a non-profit. (I dunno why I've taken to using "teh" instead of "the". A sneer seems to be creeping in from offstage somewhere and I'm thinking it's [...])

Article

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Would you hire a tranny?

C'mon, this is Oregon, a blue State through and through, right? We have the Oregon Equality Act, which prevents discrimination in hiring and employment practices, right? So any employer ought to be able to nod and say, "Yes, we would most certainly consider hiring a trans person for any position available if that person were qualified." Right?

Right.

And I have a bridge in Brooklyn for sale. Cheap.

Like hell any of you will. You will like hell hire me and people like me, even if we are more than qualified. You will like hell hire people like me under any circumstances.

You won't hire us simply because the law says you have to or should. The law says so, but damn few employers are going to even consider that law. They will instead develop ways to legally circumvent that law and devise ways to terminate any trans employee who transitions on the job if it becomes politically expedient to do so.

Cis-gender folks will read this, shrug and say, "So what? Most of you trannies are pretty gross-looking, y'know? I wouldn't hire you either."

(Would it do any good to note that our appearance has absolutely nothing to do with how well we do our job or how qualified we are or even how intelligent we are?)

(I didn't think so.)

Yeah, some of us look pretty weird, myself included. Trust me, we don't like it, either. You don't like looking at guys in dresses? (News flash: most of us don't wear dresses to the office.) Uh, well, now that you mention it, neither do we. We'd rather look in the mirror and see ordinary-looking women. We'd rather you did the same when you look at us, especially if you're male.

(sigh) But you don't, do you? If you're an employer or a co-worker and especially if you're male, you look at us and instead of a woman, you see a man trying to look like a woman. And everything you've learned from your parents and teachers and peers and everything that you absorb from the the media, either manifest or latent, tells you that this is all about sexual expression.

Not identity.

Sex.

It's as if a tranny hooker in six-inch platforms had just strolled into your office, adjusted her micro-miniskirt to cover the obvious bulge and drawled: "Honey, I need a job. Got anything I can do on my knees?"

Signification.

Gender=Sex=Behavior. That's the paradigm we face. If we are only men who seek to be women then we must be men who seek to be sexually submissive/provocative/promiscuous women.

That's the paradigm and there ain't none other, sweetheart.

Men set this paradigm and men enforce it and men signify it and men hire and fire as their gonads demand.

And you wonder why we don't want to be men? Get a clue, bubba.

(It's not so much that I don't want to be a man. I never was a man in the first place. I just don't like being stuck in this effin' male body.)

Can you look past that signification? Nope. This is what they mean by social pressures being overwhelming. We can prove to you, over and over again, that we're just as qualified, just as able, just as deserving, just as willing as any cis or 'normal' woman (or man!) and it would be a waste of effort.

Senator Barney Frank kinda summed it up again. Good ol' Barney, that traitor and backstabbing snob of a faggot (I use the derogatory label deliberately and deservedly) commented thus on the still-amorphous ENDA bill: "But we won't have any guys with beards in dresses using the ladies john, That's certain."

(It's always about the goddamned restrooms, isn't it?)

Safe bet, Barney, ol' buddy. (But you're known as a man who covers his ass at every opportunity.) No, we probably won't have that and it won't require a law, either.

But where's your dividing line, Barney? At what point do you say: "This guy doesn't look nearly feminine enough to be considered a woman, so he shouldn't be allowed to use the ladies room." Too masculine of a face? (FFS and laser/electro is fiendishly expensive. Trust me, I speak from experience.) Big, bulky

masculine frame and size? (Can't do much about that. None of us can.) Deep voice? (see above. Voice lessons are expensive, too.) Simply not feminine enough?

Aha. Now we come to the meat of it.

Let's put this into a male perspective, shall we? If you're a male job recruiter or a male supervisor, whether you're willing to admit it or not-and there are an astonishing number of men who will admit this-your approval of anyone's femininity is based on one simple rule of thumb:

Is she fuckable?

That's it. That's all.

I can hear the screaming in the back: "Not true! It's all about the background and experience!"

Crap. NYC has had an ENDA law on the books for almost a decade now. They just did a blind study to determine whether a job applicant is less likely to be hired if he/she presents as trans in the interview or in any face-to-face encounter. They found that trans folk were sixty percent less likely to be hired.

Well, I suppose that's better than one hundred percent.

Then again, it's better than a poke in the eye with a flamin' stick, too.

Fuckability is about the only criteria a male uses in determining a woman's worth. He doesn't consider her mind, her talents or skills and he damn sure doesn't consider her worth as an employee. Instead, he considers what she would look like with no panties and her heels in the air.

And if he thinks she's got the wrong kind of plumbing down there, he's not going to hire her, even if it's just running a friggin' cash register.

Let's take my experience as an out trans woman on the job, going on almost two years now. (Yes, take it, please, because it pretty much sucks...) I work for a guy who considers himself extremely liberal. He thinks he's liberal, in the way that Barney Frank thinks he's liberal: he's willing to extend privilege and rights to those he thinks deserve it, but he's savvy enough to realize that he's not bound to a moral or ethical code which demands that he do so.

So he cheats, my boss does. He lets other people harass me. He lets the customers assault me verbally and sometimes physically. His supervisors approve. They don't want me there, either, mostly because they expect me to endure the abuse or, hopefully, quit out of sheer disgust and frustration and fear for my own safety.

But that doesn't stop my boss from gathering information for eventual termination. I'm willing to bet that they started that the second I informed the HR department that I intended to transition.

That's what I get for trusting a charity to honor my individuality and respect my rights.

I'm probably going to be fired within a few months. My co-workers, most of whom are women, are reaching a break point with me. Most of them have complained loudly about me using the ladies room, not working as hard as they do, and, most important; not knowing instinctively what women do while working in that

particular environment.

Really.

Want to hear what both of the lead cashiers have said about me? (When they thought I wasn't present. I'm paraphrasing both.) "Well, if he was really a woman, we wouldn't have to explain it to him!"

(I should have butted in right there with one of my patented job-destroying comments but I didn't. instead, I hurried into the back room because it was suddenly very difficult to see. Something in my eye...)

Both lead cashiers are very attractive women. One is extremely resentful of me and complains about me on a daily basis. How do I know this? The boss let it slip during a 'counseling' session and I think he kinda regrets it.

They're both good-looking women. I have no doubt what my boss sees when he looks at them. I also have no doubt what he sees when he looks at me.

I'm not fuckable. Not by cis-male standards.

So: soon enough, I'm going to find out how difficult it is to find a job, now that I'm out and "socially" transitioned. I already know why so many of my tribe turn to sex work for any kind of income, because that's the only option left. Kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy, isn't it? Men believe that the only reason a man becomes a woman is to have sex as one and lo and behold! The prejudice becomes the truth.

Sure. If that's the only option we have. That or die.

I'm not ready to die. Not yet.

Neither will I sell my ass for a handful of cash.

Reposted from Chez Rose

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