

Should LOGO pull RuPauls drag race?

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Abstract

I suppose the headline of this article should actually read, “Will LOGO ban RuPauls drag race?” Then, all of those who truly understand the dynamics of the situation at hand could answer, “Probably not. But they most certainly should.” For some of us, the question is, “Why is it unlikely that LOGO will separate from him?” Let’s face it, money [...]

Article

I suppose the headline of this article should actually read, “Will LOGO ban RuPauls drag race?” Then, all of those who truly understand the dynamics of the situation at hand could answer, “Probably not. But they most certainly should.” For some of us, the question is, “Why is it unlikely that LOGO will separate from him?” Let’s face it, money and power breeds privilege.

When segments within minority groups begin to gain privilege, the struggles of others might not seem very important. Those (now) privileged minorities, in a continuing cycle of oppression, may begin to oppress other minorities. Being aware of this tenancy, when I first heard that LOGO dropped the RuPaul’s “Shemale” game I clapped for joy. I thought that LOGO actually cared about trans people and wouldn’t stand for more callousness coming from RuPaul. Yet, it was only a matter of time before RuPaul took up the cross of being opposed by trans women:

RuPaul has given an interview about the use of “tranny” and its’ going to piss off a lot of advocates. She notes that it had a very different meaning in the past. She also says that it’s not the larger transgender community that has an issue with her use of the word. “It’s not the trans community. ‘Cause most people who are trans have been through hell and high water... But some people haven’t and they’ve used their victimhood to create a situation where, ‘No! You look at me! I want you to see me the way you’re supposed to see me!’ - LOGO’s blog

What gives with this? Why does RuPaul repeatedly get to come back again and again to support slur words used against trans women? Of course, trans women can guess at the answer. It’s the answer RuPaul has already acknowledged: money.

LOGO is a business and businesses are in the business of making money. While a businesses might sometimes issue a carefully vetted apology, a business will act to protect its bottom line and for now, that bottom line is RuPaul. Being in the absolutely untenable position of promoting a she-male or female segment, LOGO apologized and removed the segment. However, RuPaul has drawn a line and made it clear that he supports the continued use of tra**y. This means that RuPaul intends to promote the language cisgender people use when bashing trans women [TW: beating, public humiliation] to a largely cisgender

audience.

One must wonder if LOGO would associate itself with a rap artist who openly call for the use of the word faot or if they would support that group if they called the gay men who objected to the use of faot “bitches” for complaining about it? How would LOGO react if the group told gay men that they just needed to get stronger? Because, let's be clear about this; LOGO is supporting the leading proponent of pushing tr**y into the cisgender media.

It's true that many gay people find the word faot offensive while some do not. Likewise, many trans people find trny offensive while some do not. I don't have an issue with reclaiming what has historically been a tool of oppression. If someone wants to personally identify with those terms, I'm okay with that. However, that in no way changes the fact that for the rest of the wider culture, these terms represent the language of oppression, violence and death.

I am concerned when I hear icons of the gay community say that those who are fed up with the promotion of terms the wider culture knows to be slurs should simply suck it up. I am concerned when a gay icon who is not trans calls me, and everyone else who disagrees with the promotion of a slur word used against trans women a “bitch.” Moreover, it concerns me that he further tells me that I need to “get stronger” while insinuating that I've not paid my dues. It concerns me that such smug, privileged callousness continues to be supported by LOGO.

My concerns are both real and warranted and no, I'm not part of a fringe group as RuPaul suggested. I am no more part of a fringe group than individuals of other minorities are parts of ‘fringe groups’ when they are disgusted at the promotion of slur words that relate to them. Much of our trans community is saddened by so much of the GLB world dismissing our concerns.

Trans people have always had a lower social status then lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in this country. Years ago, before I stepped foot outside of my house to hit my first LGBT friendly space, I thought that it would be different. For the wider culture, we were all the same in their eyes; we were all faots and if we somehow violated gender norms, we were not only faots, but we were tr**nies too. I thought that we were in this together and that we had each other's backs. I believed that we saw ourselves as a community but as more time passes and I become more aware of rifts like the ones that RuPaul promotes, the more I realize how naive I once was.

RuPaul is not immune from being insensitive to minorities with a lower social status than himself, and LOGO is not immune from caring more about potential profit than they are the “T” in LGBT. However, LOGO could change this and prove themselves better than those who have gone before.

They could do things the right way. If anyone could, LOGO might be able to help RuPaul become aware of the privilege he's promoting. If anyone could, LOGO might have a change to help RuPaul become aware of the pain and enmity his callousness is causing. If anyone could, LOGO might be able to inspire RuPaul to be a force of healing within the LGBT community and if RuPaul wasn't willing to step up, they could also choose to not work with him again until he cleans up his act.

Of course, they could also choose to become willfully blind to the behavior and divisiveness they're supporting. At the moment, I don't hold a lot of hope that RuPaul will back away from his condescension, dismissal and belittling of the pain he's creating within the LGBT community anytime soon. However, I

certainly do hold out hope that in the long-run RuPaul and LOGO will act as community leaders and abandon a media standard that not even Jerry Springer is willing to promote.

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