

Super Secret Lesbian Barista At Pam's House Blend and The Trans Lunch Counter Sit-in

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Abstract

Kathleen, a transwoman and commenter on Pam's House Blend (PHB), asked a very compelling question: "It's hard to justify pushing for national orgs to focus all their resources on marriage & no such push for basic employment rights in the same state." She was referencing states like Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, Hawaii, Maryland, Delaware, [...]

Article

Kathleen, a transwoman and commenter on Pam's House Blend (PHB), asked a very compelling question:

"It's hard to justify pushing for national orgs to focus all their resources on marriage & no such push for basic employment rights in the same state."

She was referencing states like Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, Hawaii, Maryland, Delaware, and New York that have basic employment protections for gays and lesbians but do not protect transgender people. With that in mind, Kathleen's questioning of a "LGBT" community puts so much effort in passing marriage equality before basic employment rights of transgender people is very valid. It is elemental if we are to believe we are one community. With that question in mind Kathleen asked a simple question of "Lurleen":

"Can I ask if you have a professional interest in the marriage rights issue?"

For that question she was erased from Pam's House Blend by one of the blog's moderators, Laurel Ramseyer. Five years of posts, five years of comments, five years of trans history erased from PHB. Gone. Kathleen was quoted over at Endablog saying:

"I've still had not even a notice that my account was deleted or a response to my emails asking for info."

and

"She wants to be out about being [Capacity 'B'] & about being the Communications Director working mostly on marriage online but have others not be permitted to speak of this public info. While at the same time have the ability to link the two publicly for her benefit - but punish others for even questioning whether disclosure is warranted."

Tonight on the "Rebecca Juro Show" Autumn Sandeen responded to the charges leveled against Sandeen, Ramseyer, and Spaulding: A synopsis of the interview is this: Laurel Ramseyer is-

1. Involved in legal cases and needs to keep a low profile.

If true, is being a blogger and moderator at a prominent gay blog a good idea for someone that needs to keep a low profile? Do popular anonymous bloggers ever stay anonymous? Hellllllooooo? Jessica Cutler and Richard Horton? And if she's so anonymous, why would she post this picture ON PAM'S HOUSE BLEND!: and say this on PHB:

"professional interest? I volunteer (meaning I DO NOT get paid and NEVER HAVE) for equal rights washington..."

2. a secret agent

A secret agent that has her profile posted all over the internet?

3. done nothing wrong, trust us.

A look at Ramseyer's past says we should do otherwise. From Tom Lang over at KnowThyNeighbor:

"This has become a bit of a personal issue for KnowThyNeighbor as if it is true, and there is no reason to doubt the facts, that Laurel Ramseyer works for Equal Rights Washington then she was indeed acting as a sockpuppet for Josh Friedes at Equal Rights Washington during the Referendum 71 battle which could have redacted by people's amendment the Expanded Domestic Partnership Rights of WA for same gender (and opposite gender couples). I remember Josh Friedes during that fight calling me to tell me that KnowThyNeighbor via our affiliate WhoSigned.org must not post names of the signers of the anti-gay Referendum 71, that "Lurleen" is working on a piece that would criticize our strategy and he asked me in such a way whether I 'knew who Lurleen was?' like she was some sort of force to be reckoned with. All the while "Lurleen" was Laurel Ramseyer part of Josh's minions and is now ERW's Communications Direction possibly acting in a consultant capacity."

and in the comments section said:

"When Lurleen was crazed against KnowThyNeighbor in 2009/10 I contacted Pam Spaulding on her email. Lurleen, not Pam emailed me back immediately telling me that all the Blenders see emails to Pam and how dare I take this up with Pam. Pam Spaulding NEVER emailed me back on any of this and there were multiple emails to her. When I brought this dual personality bit up with The owner of BluMassGroup in MA and told him what was going on, he told me the emails are "off the record" and yet he denied knowing anything. When I told him I wanted to be on the record, he told me if that is indeed my choice he would be forced to go to the parties involved ie Lurleen/Laurel and I assume Pam. What you are exposing here, I believe is alpha netroots and how it tries to control the strategy, the online presence and altering the history of our movement."

Kathleen's question SHOULD be asked. It NEEDS to be asked.

4. We're not affiliated with GayINC because we're not getting paid.

I would ask Autumn this question: If you're not a mouthpiece for gayINC, are you a member of

InsidersOUT? InsidersOUT is a group formed by Mike Rogers and co-moderated by Pam Spaulding. They define themselves as:

"a mix of leaders in the national LGBT movement including senior staff members of state wide and national LGBT organizations, well known community bloggers, journalists, political folks, and others engaged in building alliances in and with the LGBT community".

If this isn't GayINC, I'm not sure what is. And payment isn't always done with a cash payment. As Katrina Rose said:

"I believe George Washington put forth a magnanimous image in having served as general without a salary - but his expenses, which he did require compensation for, rivaled that of royalty."

and Kathleen pinpoints even more:

While it is not alleged she is being paid by EQWA - others (Autumn - all the guest posters brought in) - disclose their leadership roles in orgs - compensated or not. I don't believe Autumn is paid for being on the GetEqual Board. But - not being paid by EQWA - isn't the superset of all places one could receive compensation from.

Sandeen's underlying suggestion seems to be that you must be paid to be a mouthpiece for GayINC. You don't need to be paid to be guilty of Uncle Tom Syndrome. Access is payment. Promotion is payment. Looking the other way while other members of your community are silenced on your co-moderated blog is payment. I'm not going to let this injustice go. I'm going to keep blogging about this until:

1. Both Kathleen and Katrina Rose's accounts are restored at PHB.
2. Pam Spaulding issues an apology to both these women and to the community at large for engaging in this sockpuppetry and silencing of trans voices.
3. Laurel Ramseyer is removed as a moderator at PHB.

Voices shouldn't be silenced because they ask inconvenient questions. Kathleen's most recent comment over at Bilerico frames it perfectly:

"Bil, while not going into the issues on many other sites it's important to note that Lurleen was not outed on Pam's. Her real name was never mentioned there at all. She was asked to disclose - but not named."

and

"I would suggest the issue of the firestorm regarding Autumn's articles have received more than a fair share already. The other is approaching that as well. But all of these issues take place within a larger political context. And the banning of someone questioning working exclusively on marriage when others don't have rights in that geographic area and the distraction of those people who are left out from those rights interfering with those efforts is a higher level part of that context. Dana Beyer approaches this in her article on wither ENDA in the Metro Weekly : 'The Silent "T" Leaders need to overcome their fears and represent everyone in the LGBT community' Though I think she misses where the ability to foster change in the next year or two resides. The push for marriage

alone in Delaware stifles the push to include trans people in the existing LGB nondiscrimination bill or pass a local one in say Wilmington, the push to only work on marriage in New Hampshire stifles the push to include trans people in the existing LGB nondiscrimination bill or pass a local one in say Portsmouth as examples. Not doing these things now not only stands in the way of righting a wrongful exclusion from legal equality, it sets the stage for the next exclusion on a larger scale. When some will say in the future about ENDA - 'people didn't do enough education', 'This doesn't exist in my district', 'if you can't pass this in X, how can it pass nationwide.' This isn't a new tune, it's not even a new dance. And while sockpuppets may not be involved, their organizational equivalents are alive and well."

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