

The Reality That Dares Not Speak Its Name in Gay Blog Land

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Abstract

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Article

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Here is a timeline that apparently cannot be spoken of in Gay Blog Land.

- “jpmassar” posted the item New Hampshire to LGBTs: Happy New Year! Now Die. In the view of myself, Kathleen and some others, the post mischaracterized the legal position of trans people in New Hampshire.
- I took issue with it on that PHB thread - more vocally than any of the others. Kathleen occasionally chimed in as well.
- “Lurleen,” and others, took issue with my interpretation of the legal issues in question; all in all, nothing unusual given that ostriches people really don’t like to see the operational apartheid of gay-only rights laws spelled out - and they really, really don’t like to be reminded of just how unseemly it is for a state that has such a gay-only rights law apartheid to bypass trans equality and move on to the non-trans issue of gay marriage.
- Sometime during the afternoon of Jan. 1, one of “Lurleen”’s comments prompted Kathleen to ask - simply and tastefully - if Lurleen had a professional interest in the gay marriage issue.
- “Lurleen”’s response itself was inherently neither distasteful nor mean nor inappropriate toward Kathleen, but “Lurleen” did explicitly mention having a connection to Equal Rights Washington and furthermore made a specific claim to not be a sockpuppet.
- Kathleen thereafter looked on ERW’s website and found that the only person listed who was making a claim to a connection to PHB - as a ‘front page blogger’ no less - was someone named Laurel Ramseyer.
- Upon noticing that, Kathleen posed a question on the ongoing PHB thread - without openly connecting Lurleen and Laurel - as to whether someone with the background listed under ‘Laurel Ramseyer’ on the ERW site might have some sort of conflict in claiming not to have a vested interest in the marriage position she was taking on the PHB thread.
- Soon after, and without any advance warning or explanation afterward, Kathleen wasn’t merely

banned from PHB; the comment in which she posed the question and her entire presence on the site was erased.

- Kathleen informed me of what happened and then passed along what she thought was the connection: “Lurleen” to Laurel.
- Just by chance, I had left the browser on my upstairs desktop computer open to the page containing the “jpmassar” NH thread, refreshed at a point with much (though not all) of the “Lurleen”-Kathleen back-and-forth still present (my PDF dump of the page at that point can be found here; again: this does contain what led up to the question Kathleen posed, but not the question itself.)
- I did two google searches on the open internet and found the even-more-obvious connection between “Lurleen” and Laurel.
- I started the first ENDABlog post on this matter - just the first few lines of it, stating that I was aware that something was up (hence the rather weird title of the thing- which, hopefully, now makes sense.)
- When repeated efforts by Kathleen even to get an explanation as to what happened failed, she gave me the thumbs-up to go ahead and publicize the matter (via an amending of that first ENDABlog post, and the second one.)
- At some point thereafter, Laurel e-mailed me with a demand to take the post down, asserting that the information therein was private.

This, BTW, was the operative portion of that e-mail (subject heading “cease and desist”):

Please delete your blog post “This Post Doesn’t Exist [UPDATED: Now This Post Exists]” from ENDABlog <http://endablog.wordpress.com/2011/01/01/this-post-doesnt-exist/> . Please also delete any related comments or posts you may have posted elsewhere. You have published my private information without my approval.

Now, back to the timeline:

- My response to her was that nothing which can be found via two google searches on the open internet utilizing information that the complaining party herself published (her connection to ERW) in the open, is private in any sense of the word.

The wording of that e-mail to her:

You don’t get to pick and choose what people see - and, more importantly, how they see it - on publicly accessible internet pages. You posted about your connection to ERW, on whose website you openly tout your connection to PHB. I have not “published” anything about you either that hasn’t already been published by you - or that presumably you have allowed to be published - on publicly accessible internet pages. Nothing that is in the post to which you refer is, therefore, private in any sense of the word. If, on the other hand, you are claiming that I have incorrectly connected the dots between Lurleen and Laurel, then explicitly say and prove so and I will acknowledge any error that I may have made and I will remove the existing ENDABlog post. However, that would not alter the fact that Kathleen was improperly removed from Pam’s House Blend - and, per her as of my last communciation with her on the subject - still without any formal notification either that she was banned/erased from PHB or of what you assert to have been the specific violative wording. Even if she and I both inaccurately connected dots, she did not “publish” anything that your post did not all-but-directly

point her and anyone else who might have seen the post before you removed it toward via your reference to ERW.

Now, once again, back to the timeline:

- At some point thereafter I found myself banned* from Pam's House Blend, even though the only thing I uttered on the Blend in connection to the "Lurleen"-Laurel connection was expressions of desire to know what Kathleen had to say about whatever it was that I had just posted.

I'm not stating that that's my opinion as to what happened.

That's what happened - period.

The fault lies not on our end.

The fact that Pam owns Pam's House Blend and can do with its as she pleases is as immaterial to what has transpired as the fact that Bil Browning can do as he pleases with Bilerico and the insular, inbred Board of HRC can do what it pleases with HRC.

But ignoring, massaging, contorting and completely re-arranging facts to paint a false image of what is going on? That's how fake history gets created. And trans people - you know, us folk who, whenever any piece of legislation is introduced, have to use our uncompensated free time to combat the inevitable gay elite cries (inevitably amplified by gay elite media) that trans people are too new to the fray and trans rights are just too much to deal with now, yadda, yadda, yadda - have more than our share of experience with fake gay history.

Bil Browning, in one attempt to pull the wool over the eyes of LGBT blog-readers who haven't had the benefit of seeing aspects of the threads that have been erased - not to mention who might not have cause to be persistent about asking why certain contributors to certain blogs instantaneously ceased contributing - wrote:

If I may, I'd suggest leaving Lurleen alone. She's got nothing to do with the current drama and the LGBT community has a history of using fake names, etc to hide their identities. In our world, it's a necessity sometimes. None of the trolls freaking out over it have any inkling why she chose to do what she did; instead they've freaked out and tried to tear her apart for something they know nothing about. It's classless and tasteless.

Actually, Laurel "Lurleen" Ramseyer has everything to do with it - because she made a lame attempt to combat Kathleen's anti-gay-marriage-primacy line of reasoning by not only waving her connection to Equal Rights Washington but misrepresenting her presence at Pam's House Blend. Moreover, all "trolls" (way to keep on that high road, eh Bil?) have to do is read the unscrubbed bio of Laurel Ramseyer to make a reasonable guess as to why she wanted to keep a low profile - except that she didn't keep a low profile. She had no problem appearing in photos - and she used her position as a "moderator" at Pam's House Blend to erase someone (and ban another*) who refuses to subscribe to the insane notion that trans people actually have civil rights in New Hampshire because of gay marriage.

Upon being asked if he actually knew the facts about which he had just preached, Bil responded:

Good point, Kathy. I just dislike the inner-blog fighting. I remember when PHB and Autumn went after us with ferocity and venom; I wouldn't wish the same to them.

That said, I don't know the entire story, true. But I honestly think I just don't want to.

Oh, but he had no problem wagging his finger at us scummy non-kool-aid-drinkers, eh?

Remember - the fact that the religion of fake gay history exists isn't necessarily the problem. Its shit like that: a refusal even to give a damn as to whether what's being touted as 'the facts' are nothing more than fairy tales. Tell me, Bil - what day of the week is the sabbath in Stephen Clark-ism?

Has HRC engaged in a systematic subversion of trans polifical efforts over the last fifteen years?

I don't know the entire story, true. But I honestly think I just don't want to.

You get the idea.

At this point, I'll just quote the follow-up response to Bil:

It's certainly you're prerogative to not wish to be fully informed. As one of those involved - I don't think it's unreasonable to request you limit your comments in some way to those you have actual knowledge of.

Bil thereafter didn't respond to that - after all, we all (well, we trans folk anyway) have long ago learned that apparently it is indeed unreasonable to expect intellectual honesty and logical consistency from the gay elite (or even the gay blog elite.) Of course, Bil did later do a double-dose mainline of defending - not only "Lurleen" but the psychotic four-part Autumn vs. Ashley steel-cage death match that was going on at PHB, punctuating it with:

I just have a distaste for outing Lurleen since we don't know why she had to be anonymous; it doesn't necessarily have an ill intention

As I think I made clear above - and if I didn't, I'll do so now. Anonymity by itself doesn't - but the only reason that I (and everyone else) was able to see why "Lurleen" had a reason to want to maintain a low profile was that "Lurleen" did exercise ill intent (there's a reason the terms "gross negligence" and "criminal negligence" exist) by first making an attempt to 'pull activist rank' (for lack of a better phrase) on Kathleen via playing her Equal Rights Washington credentials and then erasing Kathleen from PHB history when Kathleen had the temerity to investigate the "Lurleen" connection to ERW- you know, the one about which "Lurleen" had just bragged - and then ask a question about it in the abstract (read: without actually making public on the thread a connection between "Lurleen" and Laureal Ramseyer.)

However much that Pam or anyone else may want to muddy the discussion waters, that question in no way violated the TOS at Pam's House Blend given that the question that itself did not in any way out "Lurleen."

"Lurleen" outed herself when she - of her own free will - made a comment in that PHB thread indicating that she was involved with ERW.

On the Jan. 14 edition of the Rebecca Juro Show Autumn Sandeen noted that Ramseyer has in the past done infiltration work against the religionist right and, as such, “not having people know what she looks like is benefecial, if that makes sense.”

Well, of course it does - up until the point that, in her dual-position as commenter-moderator at PHB, she used her connection to an organization on whose website she has not only her photo but a connection back to PHB as a means to attempt to trump a point being made by a non-gay-marriage-primacy-kool-aid-drinker.

Think about it: If, at some point prior to KISS’s Unmasked album, Gene Simmons had, in some discussion (be it musical, political or whatever) tried to win an argument by touting his connection to some organization whose official materials listed him as Chaim Witz and contained a photo of him sans make-up but with a bio-blurb mentioning that he was a member of a cheezy, overly-commercialistic hard rock band that likes to rock-and-roll all night, could he have really been shocked if someone - say, some poor shlub in a KISS fan club somewhere - used his own words to ‘unmask’ him? And, ultimately then, who really would be the one who actually did the unmasking? The shlub who hadn’t yet rock-and-rolled all night enough that he’d lost the cognitive ability to see what was actually before his eyes? Or the gazillionaire rock-oid who might have gotten pissed off that someone actually paid attention to what he said and was able to mentally process it?

“Lurleen” outed herself.

The fact that the elites of the gay blogosphere aren’t willing to acknowledge that in any manner is why us banned ones* - along with people who aren’t willing to settle for “official” scrubbed history - are coming to conclude that the epithet “Gay, Inc.” may well include some of what were once thought to be LGBT-populist blogs.

Ill intent?

Does anyone now defending the scrubbed PHB history ‘get’ what sort of symbolism there is for a transsexual in being summarily erased -even in terms of a screenname - without explanation? At least when our legal sex gets erased in a judicial proceeding, there’s usually a court opinion explaining what has happened (however ill-informed the opinion often is); and when it happens in a news story there’s usually either a correction or a pathetic explanation or even open transphobic obnoxiousness - but, again, its visible and open and can be critiqued in the open.

It was conveyed to me - and others - that, ultimately, what spurred Laurel Ramseyer to act as she did was a combination of fear and severe lack of techno-savvy-ness. Against my own better judgement, I made an attempt to play nice and accepted this explanation - and still acknowledge that, factually, it is what might have been the impetus for the erasure of Kathleen.

But, ummmm...

Remember?

How Kathleen was erased - without any warning? Or explanation? Or attempt by “Lurleen” to communicate privately with Kathleen a desire for Kathleen to drop the subject?

Remember that?

Well, if you're expected to be regarded as a good lil' soldier in Gay Blog Land, you're expected not to remember it.

I hate to be the one to break this to everyone, but if this was a legal dispute, lack of techno-savvy-ness would NOT hold up - not that it may not be true, but because of the positions she holds ('new media director,' moderator at the Blend, etc.) I doubt that a judge or jury would buy it. Someone acting sans moderation - whether this is the only instance of that or not - and lacking technical savvy being a moderator for an online forum? The factual specifics here allow anyone who wants to say 'well, its just those damn trannies again - what do you expect?'

Convenient, no?

Sounds like doubly-convenient fodder for a snarky Facebook thread doth protesting too much about a gay blog insider agenda, no?

2011, a Republican Congress, and - post-DADT-repeal - a seeming instantaneous willingness in the gay media (print and blog) to forget the duplicity and incompetence of HRC and move on...

not to employment anti-discrimination (be it for trans people in now-gay-only jurisdictions or for LGBT people in general) but to gay marriage.

As I posted at Bilerico - something to which Bil mysteriously didn't bother responding to:

*If two google searches - utilizing information that *you yourself* hastily plugged into a thread on a blog in a lame attempt to quash a point of view that differs from yours - results in you being 'outed,' then the person who did the outing was not the person who did the google searches, but you yourself. But, that's a reality that doesn't matter - especially when a circus conveniently comes to town while there's a gay marriage agenda to push (ahead of trans employment rights.)*

But now, we do indeed have a snarky 'doth protest too much' thread on Facebook:

Most entertaining PHB rumor out there: that we are all tools of Gay Inc. We're still waiting for our raises from \$0 to \$0...plus generous D&G gift cards....

Marti Abernathey's response to that quip from Pam:

There's also a rumor that you've got a sockpuppet moderator that scrubbed two trans voices on your blog too. There's also a rumor that you're a co-moderator at InsidersOUT, a "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". But not GayINC, eh? Those pesky "rumors". It must be really entertaining to scrub voices off your blog (that criticize someone that's engaged in sockpuppetry before according to Tom Lang of Knowthyneighbor) simply for asking if your moderator had any interest in promoting marriage over transequality in states that have gay and lesbian workplace protections but no gender identity protections. Strange form of "entertainment". We'll be discussing these "rumors" on TransFM.org tomorrow night but I'm sure it won't be as entertaining as silencing voices on your blog.

Pam thereafter responded:

Marti, I've gone over this already offline with the parties involved, and explained it all amongst them. Sorry, but I have no patience for the threadjacking on my wall.

Threadjacking?

So...

Beginning a thread with an oblique comment that refers to a controversy that, most likely, readers either don't know of or don't know the actual facts of - and referring to it in a manner which is likely to (and, of course, did) garner lots of adoring lemming-like derision for the trans point of view is okay?

But posting on that thread references to the actual facts underlying the the oblique comment that started the thread...

That's threadjacking? I've seen Pam write - justifiably I might add - about the bizarreness of seeing white male privilege ascribed to her, an African-American woman. However, with that "threadjacking" comment, she comes off sounding like she now has more in common with Chris Crain than with, say, Monica Roberts.

BTW...

The 'going over this with the parties involved'? My first communication about this from anyone actually involved with PHB was the laughable cease and desist e-mail from Laurel Ramseyer. After my reply to that, I never received another communication prior to noticing that 'KatRose' had been deactivated at PHB. And I never received any communication from Pam until I sent her an e-mail - consisting, in part, of the timeline I began this post with (though with slightly different wording; I didn't say anything about ostriches, for example.) I now quote from her response:

As far as your documentation of the events is presented, I don't have any qualms with that. Sadly from my POV, none of this should have progressed in the way that it did; I think that you and Laurel should have taken whatever discussion about her pseudonym and its purpose or role offline in order to ensure that both understood where the other was coming from. This would have avoided the entire problem.

Notice that she goes directly to my connection to this - not the substantive triggering event of her moderator attempting to have her anonymity and eat a transsexual too, or the fact that I never entered the "Lurleen"-Laurel identity fray until after Kathleen had already been erased.

This is where internet communication fails on many levels -- people are more inclined to lob public bombs out there and hope someone responds in a predictable way.

So what was it that Laurel Ramseyer was doing when, as "Lurleen," she tossed her involvement with ERW at Kathleen in an attempt to win the discussion point? Tickling Kathleen's ass with a feather? Was it an atomic bomb? No. But, in terms of her trying to prevail on that thread, it certainly was at least an M-80 or possibly even a grenade.

I didn't watch any of this unfold to weigh in since I've absented myself from moderation while on medical leave, and my posting has been reduced to maybe a couple a day or none at all. So I wasn't made aware of any of this until things had gotten to a head. Would I have made a different decision about the type of ban? Probably, I would have deactivated the accounts (meaning all prior content would have remained), and sorted things out offline. Laurel's moderation decision was still within the discretion of any moderator to do so.

The cascading events were not handled offline...

So why, then, has the original sin - "Lurleen" outing herself while attempting to rhetorically subdue an uppity trans woman - been forgiven?

And why is the entire gay blog world expected to act in conformity with that forgiveness by engaging in mass selective amnesia?

What we've witnessed over the last two weeks is an actual example of creation of fake gay history: Certain facts are ignored while others are erased - and at the end of the day, the 'screaming trannies' meme gets revived on a concrete slab in the laboratory of Dr. FrankInsidersOutStein and the 'all gay marriage, all the time' agenda engine gets a nitrous injection.

Ironically, even before all of this erupted on New Year's Day, I'd begun writing what I was thinking was going to be a rather pessimistic post. In the aftermath of the pandemic of HRC-related amnesia that instantaneously swept through the gay blogosphere following the repeal of DADT - and the equally instantaneous blogospheric shift to the issue of gay marriage - I was going to begin the post:

After a decade and a half of this, I've come to a conclusion: We have no allies.

...

No one has ever paid any price for lying to us.

No one has ever paid any price for subverting our movement.

There was more, even as 2010 drew to a close - but that is the theme.

What is key now is that I wasn't being too pessimistic. I was being too optimistic.

I started blogging at Pam's almost four years ago. After several years of being somewhat out of anything close to 'real' gay media (I'd drifted away from the Texas Triangle by 2003; and that paper died two years later - not even leaving behind an obvious internet presence), I was happy that what I had to say was at least tolerated there - and sometimes even pushed out to the front page.

Doubly so when, later in 2007, the Axis of Aravosisism went full throttle into anti-trans-inclusion propaganda mode when St. Barney pulled his ENDA bait-and-switch and Pee Wee Solmonese openly lied to trans people about HRC's position on ENDA. I cited heavily to Pam's House Blend threads from that episode in a law review article I published on the subject of just how dishonest the gay elite is when it comes to discussing trans law and its history.

Fast forward to Jan. 1, 2011 - with a DADT repeal that does nothing for trans people now in the gay rearview mirror:

The “Live Free or Die” State is about to choose option B for its LGBT citizens. In November Republicans were elected in veto-proof majorities to both Houses of their Legislature -- 19-5 in the Senate, 298-102 in the House -- and it is their stated intention to repeal the marriage equality law that went into effect a year ago today. Taking away their citizens’ freedom to marry, the state’s motto leaves them but one other choice: death.

We trans people are expected to believe that the gay marriage bill that was rammed through in New Hampshire instead of a rectification of the state’s gay-only rights law benefits ‘the trans community’ because trans people who are in post-transition same-sex relationships can get married...

even if they’re living under a bucolic covered bridge because they can’t find jobs.

Yes, we trans people are expected to believe that that is progress, progress that we must be thankful for and must genuflect to in any discussion of gay legal and political history right along with the unchallengeable stone tablet of ‘incremental progress’ - but, when the subject of how ‘acceptable’ trans issues are, no element of the gay elite has to acknowledge the fifty years of laws that, in various jurisdictions around the nation, already allowed post-transition transsexuals to marry partners of the opposite sex.

I’ve never been part of InsidersOut.

I don’t actually know who all is involved with it.

I don’t actually know if it really is a La Cosa Bloga and that it has actually mandated that its blog-capos and blog-soldiers maintain an ‘all gay marriage, all the time’ decorum, but...

That said, I don’t know the entire story, true. But I honestly think I just don’t want to.

If that’s good enough for Bil Browning, then it should be good enough for me and all transsexuals, eh?

* My ‘KatRose’ account actually did become active again at PHB - shortly after I posted at TransAdvocate about it not being so (and, of course, in the lead up to an edition of TransFM addressing the actual facts of what actually transpired in the days since Jan. 1.) As to whether I post over there again or not? Stay tuned.

Suggested citation

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