

TRANSADVOCATE

Transmisogynistic Media Report on Murdered Trans Woman From Detroit Local Fox Affiliate

By Guest

Published April 4, 2012 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/transmisogynistic-media-report-on-murdered-trans-woman-from-detroit-local-fox-affiliate_n_6004.htm

Abstract

Update April 4, 4:00 AM: I propose we start a twitter campaign criticizing the Fox affiliate station for putting together this disrespectful and transphobic report on Coko's murder. Please tweet to FOX 2 News (<https://twitter.com/#!/FOX2News>) your criticisms and questions, and be sure to use the hashtag: #RespectCoko Please be polite but firm in your critique. [...]

Article

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Please tweet to FOX 2 News (<https://twitter.com/#!/FOX2News>) your criticisms and questions, and be sure to use the hashtag: #RespectCoko

Please be polite but firm in your critique. A suggested tweet:

*Your report on trans woman Coko William's murder was transphobic and extremely offensive.
@FOX2News apologize now! #RespectCoko*

Update April 4, 3:30 AM: The trans woman who was murdered yesterday in East Detroit was Coko Williams. A friend described her thusly:

"She was really a sweet, quiet girl," said Dada, who had known Williams for the past 15 years and told BTL that she sometimes worked as a hair stylist. "She was never shady or nasty. She wasn't that type of girl at all. She was always respectful of herself and to other people. It's sad for her to go out the way she did."

Her death has also been reported on tumblr.



Last night a trans woman, likely a sex worker, was murdered in a Detroit east side neighborhood. However, instead of presenting her death as a loss, local Detroit's Fox affiliate news station chose the path of blatant disrespect and transmisogyny.

The report begins with a comment from the studio, "one person is dead after a shooting on Detroit's East side." They then turn to Al Allen reporting from the neighborhood where the murder took place. Strangely though, we don't hear anything further about the murder until the last minute of the report. Instead, Allen reports,

Here along Woodward Avenue on Parkhurst ... neighbors are telling Fox News crime is killing their neighborhood. They say they've asked for help from the city and the police countless times, but they say no one will listen.

That's right: in a report about a human being who has recently died, the Fox local station appropriately begins the story by expressing empathy with the setting in which the person's body was discovered.

They proceed by interviewing an anonymous 25-year neighborhood resident who holds up a picture of some garbage he once found on the ground as evidence that, as Allen says, "the neighborhood is choking on prostitution, drugs and violent crime." The picture displayed features some "liquor, condoms, drugs and spent bullet casings."

They proceed to interview a couple more residents who also say there are issues, then, applying the delicate human touch, Allen comments that at night the neighborhood, "transforms to a haven for prostitution like bees around honey."

At about the 1:30 mark of a 2:30 minute report, they find a moment to comment on the woman who has just died, of course, misgendering her for good measure:

Neighbors say a male prostitute, killed over night, throat slashed, then shot to death. The second homicide in less than six months.

Then they drop the bombshell, interviewing neighborhood resident Durrail Sanders, who comments,

They're dealing with another guy and the guy just happens to figure out that's a man, and, you know, of course, something's gonna happen.

Wow. So trans women sex workers get shot, cause that's just what happens to trans women sex workers, huh?

By including this sensationalistic, extremely transmisogynistic comment in their report, Fox is promoting the idea that the woman was killed in response to the revelation of her trans status. However, considering that the woman was shot with a gun (by someone who bothers to carry around a gun in the first place) kind of suggests otherwise. That's not exactly a conclusion that requires heavy sleuthing.

Then, perhaps attempting to display some last minute shed of integrity, Al Allen makes a final comment suggesting that it might have been robbery after all.

It's really unfortunate that so many news outlets across the United States still don't take the half-hour's worth of work that is required to figure out how to report on trans people in a responsible manner. The Associated Press has adopted clear guidelines for dealing with these issues, which are presented on GLAAD's website.

I would encourage people to contact the Detroit Fox affiliate and politely but firmly describe why this media report is so offensive, and encourage them to adopt the standards set out by the Associated Press. Alternately, Facebook users may leave comments directly on the story itself.

Finally, at the very end, Fox bothers to mention the one clue they have regarding the identity of the murderer: the person escaped in a gold car.

cross-posted from leftygirl

Suggested citation

Guest. "Transmisogynistic Media Report on Murdered Trans Woman From Detroit Local Fox Affiliate."
TransAdvocate, April 4, 2012.

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