

TRANSADVOCATE

When Ticked Off Gay Men Attack: Misogyny As A Knife

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Abstract

Last week when I posted Tribeca Film Festival Promotes Exploitation of Transgender People, I never thought that the call to action would cause controversy within the GLBT community. As gudbuytjane said about the movie on her blog: I felt sick. I have seen the lives and even the deaths of trans people appropriated by cis [...]

Article

Last week when I posted Tribeca Film Festival Promotes Exploitation of Transgender People, I never thought that the call to action would cause controversy within the GLBT community.

As gudbuytjane said about the movie on her blog:

I felt sick. I have seen the lives and even the deaths of trans people appropriated by cis LGB culture before, but I didn't think anyone would be so crass as to describe in lurid detail the deaths of two trans people (ironic in how quickly many cis gays were to distance Jorge Mercado from any sort of trans identity before) to promote a COMEDY. A drag queen comedy directed by a cissexual gay man. Even more troubling is the pornographic description of their deaths. Do cis people not realize how incredibly triggering and damaging it can be having to read the detailed description of how a trans person was murdered? And then the sickening punch of realizing it was done in the aim of promoting a comedy?

But as I look at the the gay blogosphere this morning I see:

- gay men condescending:

"These large LGBT organizations always seem just one step behind, don't they. I don't know if it's because they are too large to be as nimble as they need to be, or it's a problem with the leadership, or something else, but fracturing the LGBT community -- as they have once again done with this -- while obfuscating their own involvement makes all of us LGBTs just a little bit more wary of Gay, Inc."

The portrayal of GLAAD as causing the fracture in this community instead of the film itself, is stunning. Many transgender people put out a call to action from GLAAD and they responded. GLAAD in this case has truly been a G-L-B-T organization with this call to action.

- gay men defending:

TrannyGate: “Tribeca’s statement corroborates what a star of the film already commented on Movieline, which is that GLAAD had been well aware of the film for close to a year -- and had even worked with the filmmakers -- but for some reason chose to use the misleading language “was recently alerted” in their press release.”

Which actually isn’t true. From GLAAD’s “Latest on the Call to Action”:

“Last month, GLAAD was asked to meet with the director and cast members prior to seeing the movie to educate them about transgender terminology and issues facing the transgender community. During that meeting, GLAAD was not shown the film and voiced strong concerns about the title and the use of the word “tranny.” While the word is used by some, it is largely an insult that is offensive to many transgender people. The filmmaker has elected to keep it, despite its potential offense.”

- gay men just being downright obscene:

JoeMyGod commenter:

“I might actually want to see this just for the laughter“

and

ps It is 5pm and bilerico has not yet broken this story -- surely the biggest outrage of human rights violation for them since transmen in Canada were refused public healthcare funding for the glue they use to attach their plastic penises when hitting the gay bar

An anonymous commenter on the blog of Alexandria Billings wrote:

“Every reiteration of ‘tranny’ stereotypes has the effect of normalising prejudice, unless there’s considerable care taken. No-one so far has suggested that that’s true.”

and I agree. The fact that mainstream sites like Movieline use the word “TrannyGate” without any apology just solidifies the point. I hate to be repetitive, but no one covering Hollywood would “NiggerGate”, “JewGate”, or “FagGate”. The argument that this film is art, dies on the same vine. But this isn’t something I thought I’d have to explain to someone else in the L-G-B-T community. Apparently some gay men didn’t get the memo that misogyny in any form is ugly and condescending hate.

Nelson C. asked on NGBlog:

“Is the blogger suggesting that a gay man lacks understanding on trans issues? She sure did, didn’t she.”

In response, I’ll quote Helen Boyd:

I have been working in and with the trans community for something like 10 years now. I am beginning to understand the incredible variety of lived trans identities. So if you think you’re hip to trans identities and trans lives, you probably aren’t. That doesn’t mean you can’t be an ally. That doesn’t mean you don’t care about the trans community. But what it might mean, and often does mean, is that when you have an entire community reeling in horror from a phrase (“hot tranny mess”) or a film (like

this one), then maybe, just maybe, you need to shut up & listen & not pull this patriarchal bullshit. Being gay (or a member of whatever other oppressed group) does not give a person instant knowledge of and deep compassion with other people's suffering. What it gives you is a chance to empathize -- a chance that you will waste entirely if you always think you're right.

Instead of doing that, Nelson says:

“When you have people suggesting that a gay man is incapable of understanding trans issues or is at a deficit because he's gay, then perhaps it's time to reconsider the T in LGBT.”

And there it is. If you don't like it, shut the fuck up or get off the bus.

But it's GLAAD and the trans-community who are fracturing the community....

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