

#1617 The Profitable and Political Moral Panic Around Trans People

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: [00:00:00] Welcome to this episode of the award winning *Best of the Left* podcast, in which we break down some of the pseudoscience the trans panic is built on, look at the political drive to erase trans people, understand how language of moral panics shift over time, and present an alternate view of societal healing for a healthier humanity. Source today include *It Could Happen Here*, *The Thom Hartmann Program*, *Upfront Ventures*, *Medium*, *The Majority Report*, and *Variety*, with additional members only clips from *Medium* and *It Could Happen Here*.

The Anatomy of a Moral Panic Ft. Dr. Julia Serano - It Could Happen Here - Air Date 2-21-24

MIA WONG - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: I wanted to talk a little bit about "rapid-onset gender dysphoria," because that's been all over the place. There was a New York Times article talking about it two weeks ago, and it's really been a fiasco. Especially given how unbelievably tenuous the stuff they faked—or, not as they "faked"—unbelievably tenuous the "study" they did, that got retracted, was.

JULIA SERANO: This is [00:01:00] something that I actually saw developing firsthand and then did research on in 2019. Let me frame this, I'll tell my personal, short version—my oral history of this. It was around 2017 that I first heard the idea of children becoming trans because of social contagion, and it just seemed to come out of the blue. It's like, what? Gender identity is not contagious! If it was, trans people would have infected way more than the less-than-one percent of us that actually exist. Not a very effective contagion, as far as contagions go!

MIA WONG - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: (Laughing) "30 percent and rising!"

JULIA SERANO: Exactly. Once you start looking at it, it seems ridiculous. A lot of it was because, "My kid was hanging around a trans person, or started watching trans videos on YouTube and now they're trans!" Maybe they were hanging out with that trans friend and watching the YouTube videos because

they are trans and they just hadn't come out yet or they're just, they're still figuring it out.

2018 is when the Lisa Lippman paper on rapid-onset [00:02:00] gender dysphoria came out and I wrote this essay at the time talking about all the things wrong with it . Then in 2019, I'm like, "Where did these ideas come from?" I should say that rapid-onset gender dysphoria is basically "transgender social contagion" wrapped up in a medical-sounding diagnosis.

If you read the initial descriptions of transgender social contagion and the description of rapid-onset gender dysphoria, they're basically the same—it's that kids are "infecting" one another. The idea of rapid-onset gender dysphoria was meant to describe this quick infection of "transness" that supposedly was happening.

In 2019, I basically did a deep dive—I'm not an investigative reporter, but that's what I did—into where the origin of this was. Basically, all of this came down to the website *4th Wave Now*, which often worked in coordination with two other anti-trans parent websites.

4th Wave Now is an anti-trans parent website, arguably the very first one that came [00:03:00] out. A parent posted the idea that her child was being infected by a transgender social contagion. It's almost definitely clear now—I will leave a little caveat, even though I think the evidence is pretty strong—that was Lisa Marciano, who is an anti-trans therapist, who's very, very involved in anti-trans activism right now. Everything points to that being her, and she also seems to have, in some capacity, worked with Lisa Lippman. Basically, the first paper about rapid-onset gender dysphoria that came out was not Lisa Lippman's—it was actually Lisa Marciano's, which came out in 2017.

So it grew from these anti-trans parent websites. Within six months, not only was Lisa Lippman doing her survey, Lisa Lippman—being someone who has no experience in trans health ever before then —decides to go in and to only survey parents from three anti-trans parent websites.

And it gets taken very seriously [00:04:00] because the media fanned the flames. A lot of these groups were very excited to have something that seemed to be a case study on their side. The paper was heavily critiqued when it came out. There are now—I described this in an online essay I have, it's free, if you google my name, " all the evidence against social contagion," it's in there—there are now ten papers that have tested the idea of rapid-onset gender

dysphoria and/or social contagion, and found evidence that contradicts the hypothesis.

It's still being talked about by Pamela Paul. It was an op ed that looked like an article in the New York Times—it's not the first time Pamela Paul and/or the New York Times has done this. They seem to have a particular axe to grind against trans people and putting out specious articles suggesting that gender-affirming care, especially for trans youth, is bad when actually all the evidence points to the [00:05:00] opposite.

That's a brief discussion of rapid-onset gender dysphoria, which I think is the most popular of these pseudoscientific ideas, but there are definitely others. There are about four or five others that I could get into—I do get into in the afterward and in some of my other writings. I don't use the word "pseudoscientific" lightly.

There's "science," which is where different research groups try to answer a particular question, and if they all get similar answers, then that seems to be established. Now, let's work from there and ask more questions and do more studies.

"Junk science" is when you do a crappy study that doesn't really interrogate all the possibilities, that either doesn't use controls, or only looks a bias sampling size or a bias sample or small sample sizes and comes to a conclusion that it wants to come to. That's junk science.

And then "pseudoscience" is when multiple independent groups all find something different to what you're saying, [00:06:00] but you keep touting the thing you're saying as science. That's definitely where ROGD is right now. Same thing with one of these ideas that I talked about way back early in *Whipping Girl* and both academic papers and online essays about this concept of "autogynephilia," which is this really old theory— this zombie.

It doesn't matter how many groups find evidence to the contrary, it jibes with what certain gender-disaffirming practitioners and researchers and anti-trans activists—it jibes with what they want to say, so it continues to be out there.

MIA WONG - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: Something that—Garrison, we were talking about before this—is the extent to which the extent to which the rapid-onset gender dysphoria study is almost exactly the same study as the first anti-vax study.

It's the same thing, where you find a group of people who think their kid has autism because they were vaccinated, or you find a group of people who think their kids are trans because "social contagion" or something, and then you ask them about it. Then you report the results of the study— you report the results of you asking the people the [00:07:00] thing that they believe, and now it's a study. It drives me insane—the extent to which it is literally exactly the same thing!

Are Red States 100 Committed to Erasing Trans People - Thom Hartmann Program - Air Date 1-8-24

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: You have been covering trans issues and transphobia and violence against trans people and the, just the. This insane hatred of trans people that the Republican Party has been spreading just brilliantly. Today's piece that you sent out, Florida bill would make accusation of transphobia defamation with a \$35,000 penalty.

Tell us about this.

ERIN REED: Yeah, so this just came out this morning and a particular lawmaker in Florida filed a bill that would basically say that if you accuse somebody of transphobia or sexism or homophobia or racism they could sue you for defamation with a penalty of up to \$35,000. Interestingly enough usually the defense of defamation is truth is an absolute defense against defamation, so there is a separate paragraph that says that you cannot use their religious or scientific beliefs to prove truth of your [00:08:00] accusation.

So basically, a pastor, for instance, could get up on the pulpit and spew a bunch of hateful rhetoric, and you could not call that pastor transphobic or homophobic without risking a \$35,000 lawsuit.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: That's insane. That sounds like censorship more than anything else to me.

ERIN REED: It does. And in fact, the same lawmaker last year was famous for the "blogger bill", which made national headlines. It was essentially a bill that would require all bloggers to register with the state if they criticize the government.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: Wow. Wow. A couple of days ago you published a piece only five days into the new year and 125 anti-trans pieces of legislation have been introduced around the country. What is the state of the safety of trans people around the nation, and how bad is it getting in red states, and how clearly differentiated are red states from blue states right now on these issues?

ERIN REED: Of course. So in the three days since I've published that, we are now up to 151 and we continue to grow every day. In terms of [00:09:00] safety, I am in touch with many parents, family, friends, et cetera, who are fleeing these states and seeking refuge in blue states. I know some people, for instance, that have fled a state like Alabama to a place like Massachusetts and they are living out of their van because it is safer right now to be in a van in Massachusetts with your kid than it is to be in Alabama having your kid pulled off medication and potentially harassed in school, kicked out of bathrooms, and worse.

We see bills in some of these states like Florida and Ohio that make it impossible to get your health care. It pulls people off of medication. It makes it in Florida, for instance, if you go to the bathroom that matches your gender identity if it's not of your assigned sex at birth, you can be in jail for up to a year if somebody tells you to leave. And so the temperature is getting hotter and hotter.

And actually, I want to close off by saying in Texas, even if you leave, even if you get out and you go to Seattle, to Washington [00:10:00] state, the Texas attorney general, Ken Paxton has filed a lawsuit to pull all of those patients back to pull all of the medical records from Seattle children's hospital back into Texas.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: Presumably, so he can go after these trans people?

ERIN REED: Presumably. We know that, for instance, a couple years ago, he was the one who started child abuse investigations against the parents of trans kids in the state. And judging that he is now trying to grab medical records from out of state, from the people that left Texas, one presumes that he is going to use those records for some legal purpose.

THOM HARTMANN - HOST, THOM HARTMANN PROGRAM: Yeah. This is a guy who proclaims his great morality, but can't keep it in his pants with regard to cheating on his own wife. It's just bizarre.

You published a piece titled Governor DeWine uses anti abortion tactic to target trans adults with de facto ban. Tell us about that.

ERIN REED: Yes, of course. So this is a new tactic that I'm seeing that is an echo of a lot of the abortion bills that we saw during the Roe v. Wade [00:11:00] era, pre Dobbs. And so what we're seeing right now is in Ohio, we saw Governor DeWine veto an anti-trans bill that would allow trans youth to obtain gender affirming care, which was a great, it was a great thing that he did. However, he then turned around only three or four days later and released regulations that essentially act as laws that do not outright ban gender affirming care for transgender adults, but make it so that all of the clinics that provide that care would be closed.

I'm going to remind your listeners of what happened during the abortion fight whenever they, for instance, passed bills, that said that all abortion clinics had to have hallways that were 14 feet wide. And so what that does to all the clinics in the state is it says either you have to tear down your clinic and build it a new and extend out all your hallways or your clinic is going to shut down because you don't have the money to operate that clinic.

So we're seeing the same thing in Ohio. There are a lot of regulations. For instance, they say that a bioethicist has to be on your team and signing off on all your care, as well as a number of other professions. I don't [00:12:00] know when the last time you have visited a bioethicist to get basic health care needs met, but I'm just saying that's not part of most of our routines.

Jamie Lee Curtis Interviews ALOK on the World Beyond the Gender Binary - Upfront Ventures - Air Date 3-9-23

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: You've written many things, but this beautiful book, *Beyond the Gender Binary*, is incredibly special. In the beginning of it, you talk about:

" In other words, there's been a lot of talk about us, but very little engagement with us. This has led to misinformation and outright lies, which have distracted from the realities faced by gender non-conforming people. Bias and discrimination are not just being endorsed, they are being given the green light. This gives many people permission to harass us in public everywhere we go. I do not have the luxury of being. I am only seen as doing. As if my gender is something that is being done to them, and not something that belongs to me."

Now, it's 2023. When [00:13:00] did you write this?

ALOK VAID-MENON: I wrote it in 2018, it came out in 2020.

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: And where are we now?

ALOK VAID-MENON: Worse. There are over 400 pieces of anti- trans legislation that have been introduced in 2023 alone. And it's only March, mind you.

It's the best of times and it's the worst of times. It's "the best of times" in that our community is more powerful and resilient and visible than ever. It's "the worst" because we're having to deal with attempts to criminalize us for getting access to life- affirming healthcare. To criminalize us for existing in public.

And I think what breaks my heart the most is that there's been an orchestrated attempt to make people think that trans and non- binary people have access to some mythological power, but where was that power when I got beaten on the street? Where is that power when I get spat on, on the street? Where is that power when I am abused relentlessly online, [00:14:00] told to kill myself, and the same social media platforms that say happy pride to me are silent when we say it's happening?

Where's that power when queer and trans people have to deal with the stochastic terrorism that leads to incidences like Colorado Springs? When no one believes us that we're being hunted or attacked because it's easier for them to believe that we're resilient than it is for them to remove the hands that are wrapped around our necks?

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: Children— you wrote, "That's the thing about being an LGBTQIA + kid. You often don't have the luxury to come into yourself on your own terms because other people have made up their minds for you. I wish that my family had been more proactive. I wish they had introduced a conversation about bullying so that I knew I could speak about it happening, too. I wish that they could have let me know that this was not okay."

Today, young people are [00:15:00] more in a relationship with tech, than they are with people, I think. I fear. Sorry, but I do. I fear it. What role do you think tech is playing in this conversation, in the work you're trying to do?

ALOK VAID-MENON: On the one hand, tech has been so instrumental in helping us, as LGBTQ folks, connect with one another. We grow up often

feeling like we're the only person who experiences the world as we do, and then we can log online and say, "There's someone else who shares my pain, someone else who shares my beauty," and I think that's tech in its best form.

But then, at the same time, what we've seen happen in the past few years is a relentless disinformation campaign on these social media platforms where people are peddling lies about trans people, myself included, as a way to push an agenda. It's not misinformation, it's *disinformation*. It's intentional.

There's been an orchestrated effort to make people believe [00:16:00] that LGBTQ folks, and specifically trans people, are to blame for every ill will that there is. There's a long history of scapegoating. We shouldn't have to name it, but we have to every time. Vulnerable minorities are told that we have some mythological manufactured power because the people with power, the people who actually have power, like to create it as a diversionary tactic.

They give no economic plan. They give no agenda to stave off some of the biggest issues of our times, like climate change. They distract people by making up issues. Like criminalizing drag. Making up issues like going against the American Psychiatric Association, Psychological Association, Medical Association, and saying that trans healthcare is somehow ominous or wrong.

They make up these issues to distract people, and that's what social media has facilitated— a mass weapon of distraction where people think that targeting trans people is [00:17:00] somehow going to give salvation or stability, and it's not. That's why I feel so much sadness, even for the people who are harassing me. Because they, too, have been misled. They think that this is going to give them access to some kind of power or stability, and it's absolutely not.

I think what's really heartbreaking to me is that social media and many tech infrastructures are actually profiting from this hate. We spoke a little bit there about my experience as a child— it feels like being bullied, like when I was younger with everyone watching and no one doing anything, but what feels different now is that tech companies are making millions of dollars from it. We have evidence to show that Meta actually makes money from ads that call LGBTQ people "groomers." We have evidence to show that many tech companies make money from trafficking and anti- LGBTQ discourse online because it's viral. Because fear is a false prophet. Because it keeps people viewing their screens to view their ads.

What we really need [00:18:00] is a moment of reckoning that the self-regulating tendencies of tech aren't working, and that they're endangering our lives. And what that endangerment looks like is a constant sense of terror.

I wish I could be proud. I spent so much of my life wanting to be able to look like this. Wanting to be able to accept myself. And yet, when I look in the mirror I can't tell whether to cry or to smile because it's still so hard. Every single day I have to worry that people believe falsehoods about me and my community, and that those people are gonna come and target me.

That's the devastating part that I have to tell a lot of trans and gender non-conforming young people. It doesn't get better for us. And it's not getting better for us because people are profiting off of our subjugation.

How the Media Gets Trans Coverage Wrong - Medium - Air Date 8-19-23

KATHERINE ALEJANDRA CROSS - MODERATOR, MEDIUM: I think it's quite fair to say that the media landscape, especially although not exclusively in English language media, is either anti-trans or vigorously platforming anti-trans voices in the name of false balance and covering [00:19:00] the issues of the trans community. Certainly in the case of the British media, there's been an almost wholesale institutional capture by anti-trans moral panic. And yet as recently as 2014, there was a sense that we were at a trans tipping point, per a famous headline in Time Magazine, one that heralded a new age of acceptance. But in the nearly decade since, we've reached a nadir of moral panic, urged on by large sections of even liberal press.

So big question, I know, but how did that happen? And why, in your estimation?

JULIA SERANO: I think there were a whole bunch of different forces that all came together to conspire to make that happen. As someone who was already an established writer about trans issues when the tipping point happened, I would almost say that there was somewhat of a trend where the media had ignored trans people for a long time, and then suddenly there were all these TV shows and movies and stories about trans children, and the [00:20:00] media acted as though they had to catch up to that. So that was the only time in my life for a couple year period where mainstream publications would actively reach out to me without me doing anything and saying, "Hey, would you like to write for us about trans stuff?"

And that was going on for a couple of years. Most of those stories were positive, and then there was a backlash that happened again, for a number of reasons. A lot of it was very coordinated anti-trans activism, particularly around 2015 to 2016. A mixture of social conservatives, so called gender critical or TERFs. People who have anti-trans feminist views. Something that rarely gets talked about, but there's a huge anti-trans parent movement that's much like the anti-trans vax movement of parents trying to seek out their own information and then they stumble onto a lot of anti-trans, trans skeptical stuff.

And then there's some establishment gatekeepers and so on, medical gatekeepers, [00:21:00] who still hold anti-trans views. And all of that kind of came together to slowly create a moral panic in the media, particularly where there was certainly something wrong with all these trans people suddenly appearing.

And there weren't trans kids 20 years ago, were there? And so, it was very much coordinated is important, but also just feeding on the perpetual sense that trans people are a novel phenomenon that always needs to be explained.

JUDE DOYLE: Right, and if I can jump off that, the media does not have a really good immune system when it comes to dealing with this kind of misinformation, because there are very few trans reporters who have been around in the issue long enough to know who these hate groups are. There are plenty of trans reporters, but they're not typically employed at these big legacy publications.

So you have, most recently and most horrifyingly, the New York Times feeling that in the interests of fair coverage or impartial coverage, they need to give equal [00:22:00] airtime to both sides of this issue. And the anti-trans groups are incredibly coordinated, they're very good at playing the game, and they know how to reach out and say, "well, I'm just a concerned parent, and by the way, all of my concerns happen to come from this organization. You don't necessarily need to credit them or say that I'm aligned with them when you publish this on the front page of the New York Times."

So, it's really easy for misinformation to sneak into the mainstream because we are not comfortable with allowing trans people who just, on a practical level, are a little bit more able to identify the misinformation. We're not comfortable allowing us to write those narratives, and the level of education is so low that it's really easy for a bad actor to sneak on into the mainstream.

In some cases, some of these reporters are actively [00:23:00] facilitating that. We can all name a few reporters who have actively tried to sandpaper off the trademark and just push anti-trans talking points into the mainstream, but I genuinely believe that a lot of the reporters that are publishing this are just publishing it because they don't know better and it sounds like they're being fair if they quote enough people from both sides.

DEVON PRICE: Yeah. And that speaks to exactly what I wanted to say. It's a very coordinated series of hate groups that have tried to seed a lot of the discourse on this subject, but it's also been platformed by journalists, specific ones in a very deliberate way.

I think many of us who care about this issue remember the Atlantic piece *When Your Child Says They're Transgender*. That piece profiled a number of so called, and we'll talk about this more later, detransitioned people, but they were all actually detransitioned people who knew each other and were part of a coordinated TERF movement. And we only know about that now because there's people who have left that movement, like Ky Schevers, who also writes on Medium, by the way, who's talked about how this [00:24:00] was a coordinated effort to reach journalists who were already critical of trans people, to lay down the groundwork of fomenting a lot of fear and misinformation. And then it found its way in the hand of legislators who were all too happy to also feed on that that ideology.

And the only thing that I'll say to build on what Jude and Julia already both said is that the trans tipping point, as much as I'm someone who benefited from it someone who transitioned after it, it was in terms of media reception, it was a movement, I think, of personal identity rather than collective liberation or really talking about the policy demands that we need to make as a marginalized class and what some of the healthcare needs that we have, that we have in common with other groups, including detransitioners, including women with polycystic ovarian syndrome, lots of other conditions. Instead it was just a very personal identity, celebration of personal identity, making people as individuals more visible kind of movement. And visibility is not necessarily liberation. A lot of times it's vulnerability and putting a target on your [00:25:00] back.

The Anatomy of a Moral Panic Ft. Dr. Julia Serano Part 2 - It Could Happen Here - Air Date 2-21-24

MIA WONG - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: One of the things that you talk about both in the *Afterword* and in *Sexed Up* is about the relationship between stigma and contagion and how it's this incredibly powerful force for mobilizing moral panics. Can you explain how that works?

JULIA SERANO: Sure. This was something that when I was first working on *Sexed Up*, it wasn't my idea, I didn't think I was going to write about the concept of stigma that much, but it really ended up being very central to the more research I did into it. And so I think most of us are familiar with the idea of stigma in terms of feeling embarrassment or being made to feel lesser than other people because of some aspect of your person. And there is that aspect of it that's often called felt stigma, but then there's the way that other people view stigma. And so, people aren't necessarily stigmatized in that way themselves. They might view people who are stigmatized in particular ways, and one aspect of stigma that... I learned a lot of this [00:26:00] from psychologists, I think it's Paul Rosen—I know the last name is Rosen—and also Carol Nemeroff, and they both worked together and they had other colleagues who worked on this.

But a lot of this comes from this really unconscious idea of contagion, that seems to be, it's like pan cultural, it's just a way that people tend to view the world, kind of like, a lot of people in a lot of cultures have essentialist views, contagion is along those lines. It's often described as a type of magical thinking. And the idea is, if something in your mind has this contagion, if you get too close to it or you interact with it, it can permanently corrupt or taint you. So it has this kind of contagious like property in people's minds. People often view groups who are stigmatized, especially groups that are highly stigmatized, as essentially contagious, where that stigma that they have could rub off on you if you get too close to [00:27:00] them.

And so this happens, like when I was really young, the idea of if you were friends with a trans person, a lot of times people, or even someone who was gay back then, people would be like, "oh, so what are you? You must be gay too, right?" It's almost as if that stigma would then migrate to you.

And that's a lot of why stigmatized groups face a lot of ostracization in society. This idea of contagion has been around. I think groups who are lesser stigmatized, one of the ways that that plays out is they're viewed as less contagious. When I was really young, the idea of if you had a trans person in your life, people would really question you. Whereas, by the time I came out, you could have a trans friend and that would be fine, it wouldn't necessarily be contagious. Unless, of course, you were interested in them and then that stigma would, if you were attracted to them, then there's that stigma. And I think that stigma plays a lot into dynamics of, and I write about this in *Sexed Up* that the

whole idea of fetishes and chasers and all that, that's basically all the stigma, the contagion stuff [00:28:00] playing out in different ways.

Anyway, so I also think that, and I write about in *Sexed Up*, I think people view sex and stigma as really closely intertwined, such that I think people view, the average person views heterosexual sex as a stigma contamination act, where the male is the corrupting force, and it's the woman who is corrupted by sex, which is why virgins are pure, but then once a woman has sex, she's become contaminated or tainted. And she has a lot of sex, then people view her as ruined. So that idea is built in there. And I think this combination of viewing sex and stigma as intertwined leads to the sexual predator stereotype that we're seeing play out in really strong ways with trans people right now. But actually, if you look throughout history, a lot of marginalized groups deal in different ways with the [00:29:00] sexual predator trope.

And I think this really clearly plays out with what I call the groomer explosion that started in 2022, where people were accusing trans people being groomers before then, but it really exploded in 2022. And if you listen to what people are saying, they're using the word groomer, which sounds like a sexual predator thing, like there's a real thing of grooming children that sexual abusers do, but they're using it against trans people in a way that has nothing to do with that. What they're talking about is corrupting.

So their children who are presumed to be cisgender, and who often, I think this is why a lot of these anti-trans discourses continue to paint trans children as being girls cause, then it plays into these feelings of transgender people are the adult men corrupting young girls. It plays into a lot of people's messed up heteronormative views of sex, and fears of sexual abuse, [00:30:00] child abuse being a very real thing, but people greatly misinterpret it so that the people who are the usual perpetrators, which are usually by and large straight men who are adults who are close or sometimes even family members of the child in question. But when they say grooming, they just mean corrupting or contaminating.

And I think that both grooming and social contagion, I think both of these basically play off of this stigma contamination idea. The kids are pure, but then transgender is like a type of cooties that if one kid becomes trans, then they spread it to the other kids. And yeah, and so I, I feel like it plays a really big role, not only in moral panics, which almost all moral panics are. There's some kind of corrupting force that is often attacking otherwise pure and innocent children. Sometimes it's technology, and so people will be like, "Oh, we have to ban social [00:31:00] media apps, because it's hurting the children", or it could

be transgender people who are the things we need to ban because they're corrupting the children.

But I definitely think that both these ideas of stigma and contagion play a big role in the way in which moral panics... why they resonate with a lot of people, even though they don't make any rational sense if you just think about them from a very realistic, practical point of view.

The Unabated Red State Assault On Trans Rights w Erin Reed Part 2 - The Majority Report - Air Date 2-10-24

ERIN REED: And in fact, just yesterday we saw in Iowa the governor, Ken Reynolds, submitted a bill that would end all legal recognition for trans people and require trans people to have special markers on their birth certificates that identify them as trans. And in this bill, it actually redefines this...

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: On their birth certificates or on their licenses?

ERIN REED: It was going to be on the birth certificates and driver's licenses. Right now it's only on birth certificates. They've amended out the driver's license portion, but they have kept the birth certificate portion.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: Meaning amending someone's birth certificate with a little special marker?

ERIN REED: With a [00:32:00] marker that identifies them as trans. It'll have both gender markers on there. It's something that, a lot of people compared to the pink triangle laws back in the 1940s, where LGBTQ people were forced to identify themselves.

EMMA VIGELAND - CO-HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: I need people to sit with this for one second. That this legislation forces basically a scarlet letter of transness onto a birth certificate to amend someone's birth certificate so that employers, potentially, if you're giving documentation or if you're giving it to a bank, they get to be like, "oh I know what your genitals are." that is the purpose of this legislation, and that is... it shouldn't be astounding to me, but that is very disturbing in what it's trying to do.

ERIN REED: Absolutely. And not only that, there's another aspect of this legislation that didn't get much coverage until yesterday, in that the legislation actually redefines the word equal. It says that equal no longer means same or identical when it comes to trans people. And then it goes on to say separate does not always imply equality.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: So if I [00:33:00] understand what you're saying, they're changing the definition of what essentially discrimination would be to say that you can do these things based upon this information that you gleaned from the birth certificate. What ostensibly is the purpose? When there is a rationale that if I'm a trans person, I'm in Iowa, I got to go back and change my birth certificate to reflect this new marker as it were, what is their rationale for why this needs to happen? What is the problem that, ostensibly, they're trying to fix?

ERIN REED: Absolutely. And that question was directly posed to the representative. And one of the representatives who was sponsoring the bill stated that, "Well, it's your birth record and we need to have an accurate record of that." But then whenever you look into Adoption, for instance, we allow people to go back and change their birth certificates whenever it comes to adoption, so that rationale does not hold up whenever it comes to trans people. They don't have a rationale for it, not one that makes sense.

For instance, when asked about changing the word equal, the person was asked, "what does the word equal even mean now?" [00:34:00] And she responded, "equal would mean, I would assume it would mean I don't know exactly what it means in this context." That is specifically what she said.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: Where are they getting these ideas from? Is this an ALEC type of situation or is there some sort of, I don't know, more conservative cultural version of ALEC these days.

ERIN REED: Of course. So the Alliance Defending Freedom and Heritage Foundation are the two major players right now. We know that the Heritage Foundation released a report called Project 2025, where they intend to make transgender and LGBTQ people obscene and apply obscenity laws towards them, as well as ban LGBTQ people online as pornographic and a number of other things. Visions for the future of America, such as making the presidency absolute in power. This is what they were trying to do with these laws. This model legislation gets shotgunned everywhere. It was called out in Iowa for being from outside of Iowa. And in fact, 300 people showed up against the bill. Only three or four showed up in favor.

SAM SEDER - HOST, THE MAJORITY REPORT: Amazing. It's amazing though, the durability of [00:35:00] this as a issue within these groups, despite the fact that there doesn't seem to be a significant constituency that is actually genuinely interested in it. I think for a while it was probably providing some clicks for some podcasters across the spectrums, but in terms of just, real people. I think mostly people are just baffled by this.

You had a piece, I guess it was a week ago, there was audio from a Twitter Spaces where Michigan Republicans, along with Ohio Republicans, said their end game is to ban trans care for everyone, and as a Michigan Republican, aren't you like, "hey guys, maybe we should work on something else." But no. It's fascinating to me.

ERIN REED: Absolutely. And this is Representative Gary Click out of Ohio, the person who wrote the anti-trans ban in Ohio that was vetoed by Governor DeWine. It blew up into national news whenever DeWine vetoed it. He had a meeting with a bunch of Michigan Republicans, [00:36:00] where they stated that the endgame, and this is the words that they used, the endgame is to ban this for everyone whereupon Representative Click came back and said, "Yeah, but you gotta do it in small bits and incrementally, that way we can get there."

And so they're talking about this openly. They're talking about what they want to do openly, and they don't intend to stop, regardless of how popular it is, because at this point, they've got the dollars, the advertising dollars from the Alliance Defending Freedom and the Heritage Foundation. They've got the lobbyist money. They've got the very far christian right that has attempted to take hold of the country through the extreme wing of the republican party.

Jamie Lee Curtis Interviews ALOK on the World Beyond the Gender Binary Part 2 - Upfront Ventures - Air Date 3-9-23

ALOK VAID-MENON: I think what we really have to understand is that the majority of representation of trans people is not from us, it's about us. When people are getting to know trans life now, they're getting to know it from cis people's anxieties, fears, and projections about us—not our lived realities.

When people are Googling "transgender," they'll quickly be sent in two or three clicks onto a right wing news site that teaches them that trans people are predatory and dangerous. That's [00:37:00] what's fueling this anti-trans legislation and sentiment: misinformation and disinformation online. So, the

first thing that we need to do is we need to actually start regulating the rampant disinformation that's spreading complete falsehoods about trans life in this country.

We need to recognize that tech is actually one of the biggest media producers now. That when people are going for news, when they're going for entertainment, they're actually seeing content that sees violence against trans people as a form of entertainment. That's the reality that we live in right now, and we have to address it.

I think the second thing we have to do is we have to stop relying on LGBTQ communities to blow the whistle. At this point, it's no longer blowing the whistle, it's no longer a dog whistle, it's an emergency siren. I keep wondering, how bad does it have to get? How many of us have to die? How many of us have to be beaten?

How many incidents like Colorado Springs do there have to be for non-trans and non-queer people to recognize that this is a state of emergency. We need [00:38:00] everyone to say this is a state of emergency. We need everyone to say that there is no factual basis in the scapegoating of LGBTQ communities, and that we cannot profit off of these hate and fear mongering campaigns.

What we need is not just resisting this legislation, but actually creating proactive legislation that protects us, that includes us in discrimination ordinances, that includes us in workplaces. Ultimately, what we need is to reframe the dialogue. That's why I was so excited to speak with you.

This is not a minority issue. We can't talk about this as a majority of people offering to assist a minority. Why would we ever want to live in a world where people are hated for expressing themselves? That's not a world I'm interested in being a part of. There is no dignity, let alone decency, let alone glamour, let alone beauty, in a world where people are persecuted for self expression.

What this attack, what this crusade, what this theology that masquerades itself as [00:39:00] biology, is actually about, is about limiting possibility for all people. It's about telling people, "You have to stay in the boxes that you were confined to growing up. You don't get to figure yourself out on your own terms."

Of course, they're coming for trans people first—because we might be the most visible—but they're gonna continue to come for everyone else right after that

fact. That's what we have to reframe the dialogue. This is not about allyship. This is about the creation of a more beautiful world.

JAMIE LEE CURTIS: How do we do that?

ALOK VAID-MENON: I think we gotta heal. I sound like a broken record here, but you and I both know this. We live in a culture where everyone is trying to escape from their pain. We live in an escapist culture and an addiction culture that teaches people that they have to numb themselves to their pain.

That's what transphobia is—a mass coping ritual for people to numb themselves from their own pain. It is easier to demonize trans and non-binary people. It is easier to believe in lies about us than it is to confront the fact that you were made to feel like you were never [00:40:00] gonna be woman enough, that you were never gonna be man enough, and that it was people who said that they loved you who did that to you first.

It was people who tried their best to destroy you and called it "love." It is easier to demonize me than it is to reckon with your own heartbreak. So what I read the rising tidal wave of transphobia in this country as is a grief. An unprocessed grief that people are all actually suffering from gender norms.

The thing about suffering is that it's really difficult to stay in, so people look for escapes. I think that so often the question gets framed "trans people are *advocating* for our humanity," and I want us to refuse that. Actually, we know our humanity. It's those who hate us who don't. We are reminding you of *your* humanity.

That's the difference. The truth is, in a culture that is pain escapist—in a culture that seeks to anesthetize us from actually being present in our bodies—that's not what [00:41:00] humanity is. Humanity is compassion. Humanity is interdependence. Humanity is, "If they're coming for my friend, they're coming for me."

That's what's been lost. In the silos and the borders that have been created, people can maintain the ultimate western performance art called "individualism," and it's disintegrating. So people often ask me, "Why do you continue to dress as you do, to live as incandescently as you do, knowing that you'd experience violence?" To which I respond, why do you continue to lie to yourself, knowing that you'll experience depression?

Why do you continue to sacrifice your authenticity, knowing that you're never going to experience happiness? Why do you stay in relationships that aren't serving you? It's because you're afraid, and your fear is holding you back from actually being alive. You hate me because I template what it means to be alive.

You hate me because I show you that you didn't have to clip your own wings. That you didn't have to live an abbreviated version of your joy. That you didn't have to wait for Pride. That it could be [00:42:00] Pride 24/7. That you didn't have to dress up for the event or the red carpet. That every motherfucking street could be your red carpet.

That's why trans people are being targeted. It's not because we lack, it's because we love, and we have the audacity to love the parts of ourselves that other people hate in themselves. So what I want is, actually, a societal mass reckoning with healing. I want more comprehensive therapy for all people. I want more resources for people to understand what trauma does.

I want real conversations around addiction and escapist culture. I want real conversations around the crisis of domestic violence and intimate partner violence. I want us to actually say, the reason that you're typecasting an entire group of people as predatory and dangerous that you don't know, is because that's easier for you to do than implicate your own parents, than implicate your own family, than implicate the people around you.

The reason that you're scapegoating these strangers you don't know is because you have some unresolved pain in you. The truth is, your [00:43:00] hatred is not going to help you. It's gonna premature your own death.

Jodie Foster Thinks Warner Bros. Support for Greta Gerwig's 'Barbie' is 'New for Women Directors' - Variety - Air Date 1-20-24

INTERVIEWER, VARIETY: Alok, I was wondering, is there a politician or somebody that you would like to talk to speak to, and sit down and really drill down your message of responding to situations with love, and how that could impact so many things in the world that are wrong and not going well?

ALOK VAID-MENON: I'm down to have hot chocolate with any of them because I think at the heart of it, as I talk about in the film, people want to make these issues deep and complex.

But when you really distill them down to the DNA, it's because people are operating from fear, from pain, from grief that's unprocessed. When you zoom in on that, when you actually remind people that we're all human, it's hard to hate people up close. What I've seen happen, especially in my community, is more people report seeing a ghost than a trans person, which means I have to text back my friends, I know. (Laughing)

I feel like what's happening right now is people don't [00:44:00] actually encounter us face-to-face. They just read articles about us, they Google us, but they don't *know* us. Maybe I need to do a tour across America where I just invite anyone to come and have a hot chocolate with me and ask the questions. Because once you actually encounter us, you realize that we're dealing with the same issues and all this division is holding us back from our shared humanity.

INTERVIEWER, VARIETY: The documentary starts and ends with the pronoun of "we." What do you hope resonates with audiences about that idea?

ALOK VAID-MENON: I think there's a way in which so many issues get seen as "us" and "them." Even within the LGBTQ movement, there are allies and then there are people impacted. But why would we want to live in a world where people are persecuted for being glamorous?

That's not a world that's good for anyone. "Trans rights" is not just for transgender people. It accelerates freedom, joy, and beauty for all people. So, why "we" is important, is that the point of activation for all struggles shouldn't just be, "I'm in solidarity with." A world in [00:45:00] which Native filmmakers can tell Native stories creates a better industry for all of us, even if we're not Native because it reflects what life actually is.

And I think that's what the goal of cinema should be. For so long, it's been about marketing aspiration, but I hope the next generation is, "Let's *really* get honest about how painful and how wonderful the world is."

**BONUS How the Media Gets Trans
Coverage Wrong Part 2 - Medium - Air
Date 8-19-23**

KATHERINE ALEJANDRA CROSS - MODERATOR, MEDIUM: Yes, and speaking of that sort of thing, one of the recurring motifs in the moral panic has been the press sort of channeling this anxiety, whether sincere or cynical or some combination of both, about detransitioners, those people who took significant steps to medically transition genders but then reverted to their starting gender. And so, why is this and how might the story of this real but rare phenomenon be better served by the press?

JULIA SERANO: So, uh, I should say since we're, with this is *Medium* day, my most recent *Medium* article is called [00:46:00] "Spotting Anti-Trans Bias on Detransition" and I go to a lot there, including like delving into the statistics of detransition and regret, talking about dynamic transgender trajectories that sometimes involve people detransitioning or deciding, Hey, I'm non-binary now, and all of that.

The one thing that I feel that is really important as I was working on it is, even though detransition is a very complex phenomenon and people detransition for lots of reasons, including pressure from family, societal transphobia, the one thing that comes up over and over again is it seems like audiences and journalists really gravitate towards what I call in the piece the mistaken and regretted detransition or the mistaken and regretted transition. And this really preys on two biases that cisgender people generally have, which is, one, they just assume everyone's cisgender, so when people are transgender, [00:47:00] they tend to assume that we're merely confused or deluded cisgender people. And the second one is people tend to see, and this is true of all dominant majority groups, but with regards to cisgender versus transgender, cisgender is constructed as natural and pure and transgender is viewed as artificial, defective, and corrupted.

So, when you take that together, when people hear about someone detransitioning, they often jump to the conclusion that, Oh, see, they really were a cisgender person who realized that they were just confused or deluded, and now they must regret what happened to them because, God, what worse could happen to you than, you know, being a cisgender person trapped in a transgendered body?, which I kind of took that phrase from the more typical cliché that a lot of people are familiar with. But I think it immediately resonates with people and people immediately jump to the conclusion, when you say detransition, even though I know lots of people who have detransitioned for all sorts of different life reasons, that [00:48:00] is the conclusion they jump to and that conclusion very much plays into the idea that transitioning itself, especially for trans youth, must be suspect and dangerous.

DEVON PRICE: Yeah, I think that is a very real instinctual reaction, or, you know, maybe not actually instinctual, but you know, this knee jerk reaction that a lot of cis people have to the idea of detransition. And it also, again, bears mentioning that there was a very coordinated attack on the part of TERFs, first of all, to recruit, and conversion therapy people, primarily transmasculine people, into being members of their movement and into being the faces of "transition regret", and even some of those people, again, who have been really prominent voices in that movement have already desisted from the detransitioner TERF movement and recognized it as a hate group that it is, and been outspoken now again about the role that they once played in advancing transphobic legislation and how much they regret that.

People like Carrie Callahan, people like Ky Schevers, and [00:49:00] other people in the group Health Liberation Now, if anyone's curious about that. That was part of how, you know, maybe understandable given the understanding of gender that most cis people have, that those fears that they have, it was really taken advantage of and put to use by a really coordinated attack and one that even did get some trans people in the loop and weaponized them and they also played an active role in it to a certain extent.

BONUS The Anatomy of a Moral Panic Ft. Dr. Julia Serano Part 3 - It Could Happen Here - Air Date 2-21-24

GARRISON DAVIS - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: This is something that you mentioned briefly in the, uh, afterward. That's something that we've reported on is how a lot of this groomer thing that started in 2022 and a whole bunch of this kind of modern wave of transphobia. Is mirroring a lot of the anti gay stuff from like the 80s that was pushed forward by a lot of like evangelicals, and then into just like mainstream conservatism, and specifically how it functions as this sort of like moral panic and even social contagion, the way homosexuality was treated as this thing. And this sort of social contagion aspect is so common now. I mean, even the way, we've already alluded to Musk, even the way he mentions [00:50:00] like the woke mind virus is exactly this thing. And as it relates to like moral panics and stuff, right?, this was kind of predated by the critical race theory debacle which then got, you know, turned into the groomer thing.

MIA WONG - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: And it is now the DEI thing.

GARRISON DAVIS - CO-HOST, IT COULD HAPPEN HERE: Yeah, exactly. And now it's even changed again. And these moral panics can have like devastating results in terms of pushing forward legislation that outlasts the actual moral panic. But the actual things themselves are very short lived. They don't seem to have very much like staying power as like cultural moments. They move on so quickly. Like, no one talks about critical race theory anymore. You don't even hear this sort of groomer rhetoric as often as you did two years ago. It's being replaced by new versions. And yeah, like Mia said, the DDEI thing is the current thing that is wrecking American society, if you ask about maybe one third of the population. But yeah, how do you feel about the life cycle of these moral panics and how they relate to the social [00:51:00] contagion aspect?

JULIA SERANO: Yeah, yeah, no, I agree with all the things you're citing. I think these are all different variations of kind of the same idea. And I do really appreciate the idea of the woke mind virus as being kind of like the perfect, like, the exemplar of this, in that people were complaining about stuff being woke for a while, and you know, usually it's often coded as something that's woke is like antiracist or is something, like, it's very much associated with, infused with... when people complain about wokeism, a lot of times they're racist, or at the very least they have fears about the corruption of pure whiteness being corrupted by increasing people of color and, you know, like making gains in society, right?

But the woke mind virus, because no one could really explain what woke is, because then it keeps shifting and it refers to trans people or critical race theory and et cetera, and the woke mind virus is like perfect because [00:52:00] that's how they think it all works. Like, it's just this thing that infects people, especially children, and the way in which there is... a recent thing just today, I think it was Ackerman, the billionaire, who's been involved in a lot of this DEI stuff, complaining about his child being infected in college with Marxism, and Elon Musk had similar issues with his trans daughter, like, becoming pro-Marx or anti-capitalist, and so they just assume that like, No, my child was pure, but now they're infected. It's like, Well, maybe there are other ideas out there that are better than your idea. And maybe that's all it is.

But, but yeah, so I think in all of these cases, yes, I think that there's this idea of a contagion or corruption often involving children. And it is, yeah, a lot of the moral panic, [00:53:00] a lot of the literature, like the social sciences literature on moral panics, they often describe them as fleeting. The anti-trans one isn't fleeting enough right now, from my perspective. But people will tend to kind of move on. Like the satanic panic of the 80s, you know, like that was a really big deal and then all of a sudden it was just gone. And no one ever talked about it again. I think the difference here is that a lot of these moral panics are really

tied together with what's happening in the country, more generally with anti-democratic and authoritative views coming from, particularly the right wing of the country, like one of the two major political parties. It's really pushing a lot of, just generally across the board, you know, they're against feminism, they're against people of color, against LGBTQ+ people, and I think it's all wrapped up [00:54:00] into the same thing.

I think that while individual parts of the moral panic may go away, they may talk about critical race theory for a bit, and then shift to trans people being groomers, then shift to DEI, but I think a lot of this is they're all intertwined, and actually I think that's, like... the last couple paragraphs of the 'Afterword', I talk about that as a potentially good thing, because even though it's been a harrowing time to be a trans person, with all the anti-trans legislation, and all the anti-trans news stories, all the pushes back on gender affirming care, despite all that, I think, the good thing is that there are clear sides here. And I think, while this wasn't true early on in the anti-trans backlash, in the 2010s, I think most people realize now that all these things are tied together from the right wing perspective in this country. It's just against all these things. They want [00:55:00] a White, Christian, straight minority of people running everything about this country. And so I think the rest of us really need to recognize that and work together to defeat that.

Final comments on a new reframing of the right to the freedom of sex

JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT: We've just heard clips today, starting with *It Could Happen Here* debunking some of the pseudoscience around gender. Thom Hartmann discussed the states attacking trans people. The Upfront Summit featured a discussion between Jamie Lee Curtis and ALOK that looked at the financial incentives to subjugate trans people. *Medium* looked at the media role in trans panic. *It Could Happen Here* discussed trans stigma and how it's communicated. *The Majority Report* looked at the conservative organizations pushing trans subjugation. Continuing the discussion, ALOK connected the persecution of trans people to the pain of others. And *Variety* also spoke with ALOK, who pointed out that it's difficult to hate people up close.

That's what everybody heard, but members also heard a bonus clips from *Medium*, tackling [00:56:00] some misconceptions about detransitioning, and *It Could Happen Here* looked at how moral panic language has morphed over time.

To hear that and have all of our bonus content delivered seamlessly to the new members-only podcast feeds you'll receive, sign up to support the show at bestoftheleft.com/support, or shoot me an email requesting a financial hardship membership, because we don't let a lack of funds stand in the way of hearing more information,

Now to wrap up, I wanted to tell you a bit about this article from *New York Magazine*. The headline is "Freedom of Sex: The moral case for letting trans kids change their bodies". And it's long and in depth and very interesting. I recommend you check out the whole thing, but at its absolute core, it is a fundamental reframing of the debate over the right to gender affirming care. And up to this point, the argument for supporting access to needed healthcare for trans people has been based [00:57:00] on a medical diagnosis, right?, the diagnosis of gender dysphoria. And the article argues that "by insisting on the medical validity of the diagnosis, progressives have reduced the question of justice to a question of who has the appropriate disease. In so doing, they have given the anti-trans movement a powerful tool for systematically pathologizing trans kids".

And the risk here fundamentally is that if you base rights on something medical, then, if the medical evidence is at all debatable, which is basically what the whole trans debate is about right now, then so are the rights. So, if the medical evidence can be debated, refuted, called into question, then all of a sudden people's rights are also being called into question. So the fundamental reframing of this debate goes something like [00:58:00] this: " We will never be able to defend the rights of transgender kids until we understand them purely on their own terms as full members of society who would like to change their sex. It does not matter where this desire comes from. We must be prepared to defend the idea that, in principle, everyone should have access to sex changing medical care, regardless of age, gender identity, social environment, or psychiatric history".

So, the article goes on to give examples of instances when people are given access to medical care to help maintain aspects of their sex, which society currently deems to be an unquestioned right, including menopausal hormone therapy and genital reconstruction surgery, "the result of Pentagon-funded research aimed at [00:59:00] restoring the dignity of soldiers whose genitals were damaged or destroyed by improvised explosives". And so in a sweeping statement about fundamental rights, referring to trans people who are being targeted to halt access to medical treatment, the article draws this contrast. "The right to change sex that has been enjoyed for decades by their parents, friends, teachers, coaches, doctors, and representatives, especially if those people are White and affluent, this right belongs to them, too", trans kids, it's referring to.

"We should understand this right as flowing not from a revanchist allegiance to an existing social order on the perpetual verge of collapse, but from a broader ideal of biological justice, from which there also flows the right to abortion, the right to nutritious foods and [01:00:00] clean water, and crucially the right to health care. I am speaking here of a universal birthright: the freedom of sex. This freedom consists of two principle rights: the right to change one's biological sex without appealing to gender, and the right to assume a gender that is not determined by one's sexual biology. One might exercise both of these rights towards a common goal, transitioned, for instance, but neither can be collapsed into the other".

In essence, this boils down to giving everyone healthcare and the freedom to access it as they see fit. And I think the response to that would be like, Oh my God, you're just going to let anybody do whatever they want. And it's not that there aren't safeguards described in this article, but the safeguards are also inverted from barriers to rights. Continuing, [01:01:00] "As for transition-related care itself, the right to change sex includes the right to receive counseling, to understand the risks, or to be treated for co-morbidities. In fact, society has a duty to make these resources freely and widely accessible to trans kids". And the reference to co-morbidities is part of the argument that, Well, what if these kids aren't really trans? What if they're just something else? What if they're just autistic or stressed or confused or whatever? And I think that is what this is referring to. Yeah, people should be treated for everything, given the counseling they need, and then still allowed to choose whatever they want to do with their own bodies. And so to directly address the worry of people still going ahead and making the wrong choices for themselves, the article takes this head-on as well. "The freedom of [01:02:00] sex does not promise happiness, nor should it. It is good and right for advocates to fight back against the fixation on the health risks of sex changing care, or the looming possibility of detransition. But it is also true that where there is freedom, there will always be regret. In fact, there cannot be regret without freedom. Regret is freedom projected into the past. So it is one thing to regret the outcome of a decision, but it is a very different thing to regret the freedom to decide, which most people would not trade for the world. If we are to recognize the rights of trans kids, we will also have to accept that, like us, they have a right to the hazards of their own free will".

So at the very core of this reframing is the simple idea that freedom to choose one's own path should be at the [01:03:00] forefront and should not be contained within existing social structures. And really that's a much better foundation to start from than the medicalization of trans people, when forming a debate. Give people all the information, let them choose for themselves, and acknowledge that regrets are inescapable, but a completely worthwhile trade

off for the benefits of freedom. Put in any other context, who would argue otherwise? And if not, then why not also here?

If you do want to do a deeper dive, definitely check out the full article. Again, it's "Freedom of Sex: The moral case for letting trans kids change their bodies". It's from the *New York Magazine* 'Intelligencer'.

That is going to be it for today. As always keep the comments coming in. I would love to hear your thoughts or questions about this or anything else. You can leave a voicemail or send us a text at [01:04:00] 202-999-3991, or simply email me to jay@bestoftheleft.com. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to our Transcriptionist Quartet, Ken, Brian, Ben, and Andrew, for their volunteer work helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, and bonus show co-hosting. And thanks to those who already support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships. You can join them by signing up today at bestoftheleft.com/support, through our Patreon page, or from right inside the Apple podcast app. Membership is how you get instant access to our incredibly good and often funny bonus episodes, in addition to there being extra content, no ads, and chapter markers in all of our regular episodes, all through your regular podcast player. You'll find the link to sign up in the show notes, along with a link to join our Discord [01:05:00] community, where you can continue the discussion.

So, coming to from far outside the conventional wisdom of Washington DC, my name is Jay, and this has been the *Best of the Left* podcast coming to you twice weekly, thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from bestoftheleft.com.