the first pride was a riot

my pride
by Tommi Avicolli Mecca
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my pride is defiant and raw
it’s not polite
it isn’t marketable
it won’t show up
in the Dow Jones averages
it’s not running for office
or joining the police force
the military
the church
it won’t cooperate with the FBI
CIA or Homeland Security
it doesn’t put kids in cages
tear gas asylum seekers
or criminalize the homeless
it knows that changing laws
and electing politicians
isn’t enough
it’s not a ribbon
a flag
a beer
or a hashtag
it isn’t trending or being tweeted
it’s not a Russian bot
or a meme
it’s not going shopping
or something I ordered online
it doesn’t stay in an AirBnB
or call a Lyft
it doesn’t have a buffed body
a designer wardrobe
or a supply of party drugs
it doesn’t let me forget
all the murdered gay men
and trans women of color
the years that gay sex
and drag were illegal
or how this nation stood by
and let my friends die
it understands that no matter how
much things seem to change
I’m still not safe
my pride
is ever on guard
and always in your face

Mary Ramsey, LGBTQ author/artist, based in San Francisco.
Instagram: mspaintdourdan

SHELTER WAITLIST UPDATE: As of June 11th there are 1,167 people on the waitlist for shelter in SF.
HUD Rule Would Target Trans People in Shelters

On May 22, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, led by Secretary Ben Carson, formally proposed a rule that would allow all federally funded homeless shelters in the United States to discriminate based on religious philosophy. This proposal would negate the 2016 and 2012 Equal Access laws that protect shelters from discriminating against transgender clients.

I talked to Ben Baczkowski, the Shelter Client Advocate for the Eviction Defense Collaborative about HUD’s rule proposal, and what this means to trans clients:

“There’s a section under the Equal Access law about gender identity. And it has a pretty robust understanding of gender identity, as opposed to ‘sex-based determinations’ when it comes to putting people in shelters.” (The explanation given by HUD’s website reads “HUD ensures equal access to individuals in accordance with their gender identity in programs and shelter funded under programs administered by HUD’s Office of Community Planning and Development.”)

What HUD had proposed was basically allowing religious philosophy to be a part of that determination now. It seems innocuous, but under the proposal, all of the homeless shelters (except maybe four) are run by Catholic or other Christian organisations, particularly St. Vincent De Paul and Salvation Army, who have really bad track records of discriminating against trans people. In fact, the state of New York threatened down all of Salvation Army’s shelters because they found that there was widespread discrimination going on.

In addition to this, the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey revealed that in a single year, 70% of trans clients reported being discriminated in shelters. The HUD itself presented a report that said that between 2017 and 2018, transgender homelessness rates increased by 22% due to homeless trans people being denied entry to shelters. The HUD’s website also reports that 20% to 40% of homeless youth are LGBTQ. Transgender women, particularly trans women of color, are over-represented in the statistic.

American Progress and the Equal Rights Center found that in 2016 shelters in Tennessee, Virginia, Connecticut and Washington, only 30% of shelters would house a transgender woman with cisgender women. This study also said that out of these four states, the two that have gender identity nondiscrimination protections—Connecticut and Washington—were two times as probable to have a transgender caller gain entry to another shelter.

Baczkowski says, “It’s very worrisome as someone who works in the shelters because from my perspective, the people who work in the shelters put off this kind of attitude, they purport to have this kind of culture ‘We’re never looking to put somebody out if they break the rule, we want to work with people. We only throw people out when we absolutely have to’.” They like to see progressive and charitable, and that’s how to caution themselves. But the way they really operate when it comes to the day in and day out is, they moralize over people’s behavior all the time. Basically, right now they have to kind of ‘soft-discriminate’ against people, so it’s sort of like they make it known if they don’t like you. You use the institution to exert power over people. But now, if this rule goes into effect, I would worry that some of the more religious shelters would start rewriting their policies.”

arguing pragmatists hastily throw out in defense of the continued presence of law enforcement and corporations is that the sheer size of the public gathering demands police. However this logic and the presence of police belies the very storied object of pride’s commemoration, and is a willful disavowal of what that night in 1969 obviously signified. Stonewall is evidence that through militant collective action we can defend ourselves. While not the birthplace of Stonewall, the Compton’s Cafeteria riot took place just three years prior to Stonewall. Much like Stonewall, Compton’s riots broke in response to rampant police harassment of trans women and sex workers in the Tenderloin. The police presence in Pride has violently appropriated this legacy in order to position law enforcement as the protectors of the very revelers to whom they (historically have and currently do) direct much of their harassment and violence.

Inclusion and acceptance of paramilitary haters and bigots is not a proud badge that queer communities need to covert or don, nor do cops warrant an extra stripe to include on the rainbow flag (in any case, the blue stripe, historically, has meant “harmony” — exactly the opposite of what police offer and enact). Fifty years later, not only are police still engaged (in escalating) daily harassment and violence toward the Tenderloin’s most vulnerable residents, but they are now welcomed and permitted to partake in Pride — an event whose very legacy hearkens back to these anti-police violence movements. Communities have not been silent in opposing the police presence, as well as the corporate and assimilationist dominance of Pride, with many campaigns, local, and even national through the years.

But this moment has created a new opportunity. Hitting the 2010s, the open public will be able to abuse this law to define the state criteria because they do not present a harm to themselves or others, or they are not gravely disabled. Under SB 1045, this changes drastically. Now under this new form of conservatorship, harm to self or others will be defined as the police bringing the individual in 8 times. From there the courts will move forward with a huge process of looking at all past documented attempts of said person seeking mental health, and whether the city offered them voluntary services. If, after assessing the person, they find that person is in “need” of conservatorship, they strip them of all their rights and appoint the person a “public conservator” to make psychiatric decisions for them. Those conserved will not have their autonomy restored until a Federal judge says they no longer need to be conserved.

For some it will mean detention, if there is no space in a community facility. Every-day tasks that would involve independence will become a struggle. No more doctor appointments, no more grocery shopping, no more socializing, no more picking up prescriptions without the accomplishment of the public conservator.

No one is safe because the main Co-Author is California Senator Scott Weiner. Over months this bill was up in the air, Weiner and his team continued to broaden the definition of who the city would legally be allowed to steal off the streets and involuntarily throw into “services.” The new definition includes people living with mental health issues and visible disabilities and people using substances, out in the open who have been brought in by police at least 8 times.

On Twitter, Mayor London Breed was not shy about her support of the newly passed legislation. “Strengthening our conservatorship laws is a compassionate approach, helping people who are suffering from mental health and substance issues get the treatment they need. If we don’t act, more people will die on our streets” due to the highly commodified yet still essentially anti-colonial and conspiratorial collaborative labor of Opal Tometti, Patrisse Cullors and Alicia Garza —— rooted deep in the work of Marsha P. Johnson, Angela Davis, Miss Major and many more —— there has been something like a tipping point or groundswell of white mainstream recognition and concern for what’s happening to our bodies. Agency is something this configuration of privileged patronage has been a terribly lacking intersection of how queerness and transtness further jeopardizes black bodies: despite efforts to address this discrepancy, it fails to land on the mainstream the extent to which these intersections augments increased prison industrial endangerment. The police themselves are aware of this, and strategically will abdicate playing the splinter when it suits their purposes: following mass protests and outrage in the wake of Philando Castile’s murder, the police chief of Minneapolis (anticipating more backlash) suggested police not march in Pride. We do not need diverse oppressors, we need no oppressors.

There have been many active organizing efforts over the years to combat Pride’s blue-washing across the globe. Police organizers in Auckland, New Zealand, recently decided that uniformed officers would not be welcome at their upcoming Pride event, as their presence made march participants feel unsafe. Several cities in Canada have asked police to withdraw or banned uniformed officers from marching: Vancouver and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Toronto temporarily held out a two-year ban — hopefully they will reinstate it. The police chief in Minneapolis (in a self-serving, sanitizing move, of course) asked police to refrain from partaking in Pride in the wake of all the public outrage and tension following Philando Castile’s murder and in response to organizers asking them to be banned the prior year. And we can too.

Compassion and conservatorship should not even reside in the same sentence together. Conserving people and taking away their civil liberties is not how anyone shows compassion. Get real, Mayor Breed because your actions do not demonstrate true care for these vulnerable communities, they demonstrate you care about lining your pockets with city investors’ money and you don’t want to see these communities thrive because they can’t make a profit off of them that way.

Conserving people is not the answer to ending homelessness!

The open public will be able to abuse this bill to their advantage being able to call on homeless neighbor’s incarceration will also skyrocket as numbers of 5050’s rise. Throwing people into involuntary servici- es is NOT the humane way to go. We will see a fall in people seeking voluntary assistance, we will see a rise in unnecessary and wrong- ful 5050’s. Time will tell how “effective” this bill will really be.
QUEER + TRANS ICONS

MARCIA "GAYETTE" GODFREY

I’M A======> WAYS TO GET ME THROUGH THIS ROUGH PATCH, I HANDBILLED DOWN INTO MY ART PRACTICE. I SHARED SPACE WITH OTHER QUEER + TRANS PEOPLE, LISTENING DEEPLY TO PEOPLE’S STORIES, AND DREW PORTRAITS.

I HAD THE GOOD FORTUNE TO HOST TWO WORKSHOPS IN MAY, ONE AT COLUMBUS ON HOPELESSNESS WITH STREET ART FOR THIS ISSUE, AND ONE AT SPARKLY, A FINE WEEKLY LGBT GATHERING AT THE MUSEUM CENTER IN THE MISSION. BUNCH OF SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC LIBRARY DURING THE WORKSHOPS, WE SHARED SELFIES AND WROTE THREE SENTENCE STORIES. THESE STORIES DON’T NEED TO BE “REAL,” AND THE STORIES COULD BE ANYTHING.

JORDAN DAVIS

When people see me, they see an individual who doesn’t take shit from anyone, who is not afraid to take chances, who is described as “brave.” If they really know me, they’d know that the term “brave” has some weird abili(otves and has always made me uncomfortable and minimized. One thing I want others to know is that I have nothing to lose, and I think we should kick ass and corporations out of Pride!!

EAGLE TAIL

I was born two spirit into beauty, soul, spirit, in the beautiful hills of the “Paha Sapa”—Black Hills of South Dakota, Lakota, Nokota, Dakota—into hatred, poi-monitoring, extermination, extinction. As the light flickered out, I continued to shine like the state of California, where there is my world, love, freedom, beauty. I am...

Eagle Tail.

“Story” of my grandmother’s people the Sicangu Wiyun, “Bund Thigh Nation”

They are a proud and strong nation—Lakota Ovate.

They carried the children out of the tail burning grass on the plains of South Dakota that was set alight by the U.S. Cavalry to exterminate our people, the “Lakota”.

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KENDRA

I was born in Beaumont, Texas, in Cajun country. I am also Liberian of the Bassa Tribe. I also grew up in Nebraska. I do resonate strongly with my Texas Cajun culture.

JESSE

I was born to immigrant parents, and then became an immigrant myself in a terrible town full of terrible things. There wasn’t much to do, but I drew and drew and kind of sucked at most things. I wrote and took photos too, but all my energy in acting, didn’t learn a lot. I ran away...it didn’t work out...so I tried again and again until I couldn’t turn back. So it came to fruition.

LANE

LANE

I was born all that was given and turned everyone into icons. It’s powerful and healing to see your self and your story reflected. I know it’s helping me not feel so alone, which is so needed in this moment.

JASON
I learned love young being two genders. I learned to
love young, for the outside can’t affect the inside. Life’s a
challenge I accept with grace.

For as long as I can remember I felt my mind dulling—
dulling until just gave rock-bottom a shape and a texture.
I hid from myself for years so that people wouldn’t read
my transition as an attempt to escape accountability.

Last week I changed my name

I moved to the Bay Area from the redwoods in 2006.
I wanted to reach for the stars here and fulfill all my
dreams.

I struggled each day, worked two or three jobs, moved
every year, was in a band, had a scooter, lost my mother,
travelled to Europe and Japan, got engaged, broke it off,
broke many bones, gave up, tried again and again to be
stable. I never got to publish a comic.

My brother took my home. I’m too tired to keep trying
anymore. I miss the love of my life Frankie. Goodbye Bay
Area. Goodbye Frankie. You broke my heart.

I was born to two working class parents in San Fran-
cisco, CA, one crispy cool morning in September at a hos-
pital in the Mission. Born and raised in the City with all its
cultures and color has forever enriched my life. Yes, this
is my home that I have come to love more and more, and
I wouldn’t trade it for anything in the world. My home, my
life. My love. San Francisco.

I started out on my hands + knees, becoming a snail
by pressing scotch tape to the wood floor, my trail of
sticky slime. Later, I stood up + became human again but
I never forgot how it felt to be soft & tender with a frag-
ile outer shell. Now, I walk and crawl my way to grown
up boyhood, leaving a translucent trail of existences and
selves about as permanent as tape on the floor on a hot
summer day.
On June 1, 2019, while many of us were celebrating the beginning of the month of Pride, Johana Medina Leon, a 25-year old transgender asylum seeker, died after six weeks of being held in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center in El Paso, Texas. According to ICE, Medina Leon had been processed for release, qualifying for medical resources but was denied due to fear of persecution for her gender identity in El Salvador. After complaining of severe chest pains, she was brought to the hospital where she died four days later.

“This is yet another unfortunate example of an individual who illegally enters the United States with an untreated, unseen medical condition,” Corey Price, field office director for ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations in El Paso, told the Washington Post. “Many of these aliens attempt to enter the United States with untreated or unknown diseases, which are not diagnosed until they are examined while in detention.”

However, accounts from Medina Leon’s family suggest that ICE may be more responsible for medical negligence than Price’s comment would suggest. The Daily Beast reports that Medina Leon “had made numerous requests for proper medication before complaining of chest pains and being transported to De Sol on May 28, the same day that she tested positive for HIV.” Lack of sufficient medical treatment and support throughout ICE facilities — especially for trans migrants — is a common trend throughout reports from ICE watchdogs and accounts from detainees. Katharina Obser, senior policy adviser at the Women’s Refugee Commission, reported that examined detainees often described medical staff as “unresponsive to requests for medical care.”

Inadequate medical resources is not the only issue in ICE detention centers that disproportionately impacts queer and trans detainees. According to the Center for American Progress, “LGBT people in ICE custody are 97 times more likely to be sexually victimized than non-LGBT people in detention” (2018). Being in ICE custody poses a severe risk to the wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ people, putting them at high risk of persecution, sexual assault and lack of needed medical facilities.

Medina Leon’s case is not an anomaly, and the injustice of ICE detention center runs deeper than failing to provide basic support and address medical needs. Of the 24 people who have died in ICE facilities in the past two years, two have been trans woman. The very concept of ICE detention goes against the tenets of justice that the U.S. prides itself on, like “innocent until proven guilty.” Detaining people who have not been declared guilty in a court for weeks, months or years on end in ICE facilities is undemocratic. The inhumane environment within ICE facilities is costing people their lives, with LGBTIQ+ migrants facing especially severe risks.

As we celebrate Pride this month, we must remember Johana Medina Leon.
JUNE 20
MARCH AND RALLY TO SAVE THE REDSTONE
11:30 AM
Gather at 2940 16th St., San Francisco (corner of Capp St., near 16th St. BART)**
**MARCH TO CITY HALL**
12 NOON Rally, San Francisco City Hall (Civic Center side steps)
Sponsored by the Redstone Labor Temple Association. For more information, contact 415-843-1927 or redstonelabortemple@gmail.org

JUNE 23
ONE BIG FLAG, DIY FLAG PARTY
WHERE: 350 ALABAMA STREET 02:30PM
Have you always wanted to drape yourself in the luscious silk of an 12 foot by 8 foot train pride flag you helped make with your beloved comrades? We’ll provide the fabric, scissors, sewing machine, and skills. Help make the giant flag or make a DIY flag for yourself. Or just hang out.
ACCESS: Food and beverages provided. Location has ramp access. For accessibility requests email mobilizer@dsaf.org

JUNE 24
BUDGET JUSTICE COALITION RALLY + BUDGET HEARING!
WHERE: SAN FRANCISCO CITY HALL 01:30AM-4:30PM
Tell the Board of Supervisors that we deserve a budget that helps San Franciscans stay in their City – affordable housing, living wage jobs, and REAL investment in all our communities! Join working families, immigrants, youth, unhoused people, seniors, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ communities fight for a budget for ALL San Franciscans!
ACCESS: City Hall is ADA accessible

JUNE 26
STANDING ON THEIR SHOULDERS
WHERE: BALYANAN COMMUNITY CENTER 1010 MISSION STREET 05:30PM-PM
Join us as our hella active movement elders share about their work through the years and provide recommendations for next steps along our radical journey.
Food and childcare provided

SEXUAL GENTRIFICATION
Garrick Wilhelm

Gentrification is the reshaping of communities through economic forces generally based in racism. How can gentrification be sexual?

Have you ever thought that you weren’t attracted to a group of people based on their race (ex. I’m not into Asian men)? Have you ever deselected someone as a partner because they weren’t of a particular race (ex. I only date white men)? Have you ever deselected someone based on their race (ex. I’m not into Asian men)?

Are you, for instance, more attracted to people that are from your social circles and even in your business positions of hiring. They do the same thing that straight men have been doing for centuries, hiring based upon some intangible good feeling they had about that person (ie. their attraction to that person).

Now what about all the decisions you make on a daily basis about who to include in your social circles, who you pay attention to and how often that is influenced by your social, physical and sexual attractions to them. How do you think those are influenced if you are deselecting an entire race of people from those you include in those decisions because of a story in your own head?

Now is when you say, “I can’t control who I’m attracted to!” This is true. But if race isn’t real then you can’t tell me that every single person within a perceived racial category would fall outside of your attractions. You also can’t tell me that if you opened up the possibility of being attracted to someone regardless of race you wouldn’t find those people.

I’m not telling you who to have sex with, you have every right to that decision. Attraction can be social or physical or sexual but all are influenced by your attitudes about race. The call to action here is to recognize the stories you are telling yourself, recognize the privilege you have to make that choice and counter that privilege by reaching out to people you normally wouldn’t and include them in your community, your social circles and even in your business decisions.

We change our world by changing our stories. “Change your thinking change your life.”

LEO

It’s hard to say goodbye to the person I once knew. This special person that made me smile, laugh and made me stop feeling blue. Staying up for hours and talking about everything. To drawing and creating our own worlds to escape, to the way we used to sing. I’ll remember all those moments today, when I meet you for our visit. For however long or brief it is, I will cherish every minute. I will feel like I will be meeting you, for the first time in our lives. You and me both know that would not be very true. You are going through so many changes now, I want to understand. I want to be a part of your transition, from woman to a man. We were best friends through circumstances, but now it is all over. AN ALLY, A SUPPORT, A BEST FRIEND SIBLING, through and through. So goodbye to Nikkii, to all those moments that we had. HELLO! WELCOME! HOLLA! To the most courageous and beautiful LEO lad! You have so much strength, you completely blow me away. I will really never be able to grasp the true length, that our love may have strayed. But I want you to know that I LOVE YOU MORE THAN YESTERDAY. These are the true words I want to say.

Love,
Roadkill

Where: Dolores Park (Dolores & 19th St) @11AM-PM
Come to Trans March where you will: see thousands of Trans folk, be able to go to the Resource Fair and get a lot of good information, peruse in the Youth-Elder Brunch, if you are lucky enough to qualify ; see and hear great performers, and inspiring speeches. And last, but not least, march with your Sisters and Brothers and Others who believe in gender freedom, and body autonomy.
ACCESS: ADA restroom facilities will be available at the park during the day. Those with access needs are requested to ride on the trolley for the march.

JUNE 29
DYKE MARCH
WHERE: JOIN US AT DOLORES PARK AT 11:00 AM FOR THE RALLY, AND 5:00 PM FOR THE MARCH!
Calling all dykes! March with us! Dyke stands for trans, black, brown, queer, bi, lesbian, disabled, chronically ill, fat, femme, butch, indigenous, gender expansive love.
ACCESS: The Dyke March has a thorough accessibility plan that can be accessed online at https://www.facebook.com/events/3313292405034435/

There will be an access tent that is wheelchair accessible, scent-free, and sober. There will also be a senior & disabled contingent leading the march and carrying the pace. There will also be an Emotional Security team with trained dyke counselors.

JUNE 28
TRANS MARCH
WHERE: DOLORES PARK (DOLORES & 19TH ST) @11AM-PM

JUNE 28
BUSTIN’ OUT 4!!! PARTY AGAINST THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX
WHERE: EL RIO AND VIRGIL’S SEA ROOM ON MISSION STREET 8PM-2AM
Please join us for our annual fundraiser for TGIG Justice Project (TGIGP) and the official Trans March After Party this June 28 in San Francisco! For 15 years, TGIGP has provided legal services for transgender and gender variant/non-conforming people in California prisons, jails and detention centers. As we continue to fight the abuses TGIGP people face inside and outside of prisons, we invite you to join us for a night of celebration and trans resilience. Can you help us raise $30,000 to support Black trans abolitionist organizing?
ACCESS: El Rio: Our entrance and most of the club is wheelchair accessible, including the back deck, but not the yard. Our bathrooms are NOT wheelchair accessible and do NOT have grab bars (and would not be accessible without assistance). Our back patio is now smoke free, but we are unfortunately not a fragrance free space.
Virgil’s: Virgil’s has no steps into the building, ADA accessible bathrooms, and an accessible patio area.

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Stolen Belonging is a multifaceted arts organizing project which documents the belongings taken from homeless residents during the City’s sweeps, revealing the ways in which such thefts steal a person’s ability to belong in their community and the city. Using narrative-based strategy, art, and action, the project amplifies the call to STOP THE SWEEPS, asserting a RIGHT TO REST, and demanding HOUSING NOW.

Artist/Organizer Leslie Dreyer has been working with Coalition on Homelessness and a team of houseless or precariously housed residents who represent some of our city’s strongest homeless advocates.

Visit the website to watch the powerful videos the team has released and read interviews with people on the frontlines of this crisis.

www.stolenbelonging.org/