

Trans Focus

The world from a transgender perspective

January 2025

2025



Welcome to 2025



“Another year over and a new one just begun” (John Lennon 1971)

First of all, thank you all for reading and supporting us throughout 2024.

When we started in April, we knew there was a gap for a transgender magazine that was free, informative and entertaining. We think we have hit the balance but are always working to improve it. As ever, we invite all feedback and contributions to make this the best it can be.

This month:

The best pics from our TGirl New Years Eve Party!

Also...

the newest addition to our trans friends here in Spain is Steph who has kindly allowed us to use an interview she did for the BBC about her transition back in 2019. It's a wonderful and uplifting read.

As well as a review of last year and our hopes for 2025, there's our take on selfies (what girl doesn't like to take a selfie?)

The serious section this month looks at the continuing moral panic about trans people criminally, being associated with danger to cis women.

Abril Zamora is featured as a transgender icon, and we have a review of 'The Danish Girl' that Carla only watched for the first time over Christmas.

And much more...

Here's to a happy and successful 2025!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Love

Carla & Penny



BACK AND FORTH WITH PENNY

The Christmas period is always a time for reflection and for looking forward to the New Year. 2024 has been a fantastic year for me personally and for the wider transgender community here on the Costa Blanca.

Personally I have been able to indulge my love of travel with trips to Mexico, Thailand and Mauritius, where I got to walk with lions. Penny has found her second home in Thailand and I met some amazing people from around the world who support our right to exist.



Hotel housekeeping left me these on the bed

We launched our website back in February to highlight our community and for transgender women to find out information about us and what we do. This was not without opposition from people who wanted to profit from the transgender community. Carla and myself were even threatened with being sued, my wife received abuse via social media and I have been the victim of lies and rumours but this has only strengthened our resolve.

In April we launched the Trans Focus Magazine, originally called TG Focus, which has been a great success with over 15,000 downloads. We have received emails from trans women all over the world which has been fantastic. This year we hope to make further improvements and provide even more ways for trans women to access information and resources.

Looking forward into 2025 we have plans for the Big T Weekender, a celebration of trans pride and gender diversity. A chance for trans women to descend on our little area of Spain for fun and festivities. Even before releasing any details we have had a lot of interest from women in the UK. Keep an eye on our website to find out how you can register your interest and be kept up to date on the plans.

This year we will also launch a new section of the website called "The Hub" which will give access to resources, not only from us, but from all over the web on practical advice to help you with your transition into the person you always wanted to be.

We will continue to find ways of improving the magazine and we welcome all the feedback we receive. We produce the magazine for you the reader.

We made a lot of new friends in 2024 and hopefully even more in 2025, as our community here on the Costa Blanca continues to expand.



Wishing you, our readers, a prosperous 2025 and you know where to find us, so come and join us.

Where did last year go?

...and hopes for 2025

New Years Resolutions and all that...

Do any of you make new years resolutions? I do, but rarely do I ever complete them successfully. The smarter amongst us will say that we must make them SMART to at least give them a chance of making them work. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). You can even make them smartER by adding Evaluate and Review, but enough of that fancy stuff. I go by the hit and miss method that most of the rest of us do.



Our pre-Christmas get together

In 2024 we opened up our TGirl nights to more people. We have attended more venues with more people and now regularly

plan and have nights out with our local and fabulous Costa Colida/Costa Blanca LGBT group. In November we had our first Quiz night which was a great success. Our next one will be in March, which we were specifically asked to run – a privilege.

It's easy to make a list of the bad people who attempted to make our lives a misery (but failing in most cases). No doubt the likes of Morgan (big M small organ, sorry for being childish) JKR (also sometimes known as Robert) and Davies once a swimmer, now (very) amateur biologist. Also, Graham Linehan, Caitlyn Jenner, Paula Radcliffe, Ricky Gervais, Martina Navratilova, Richard Dawkins. Disappointingly Stephen Fry seems to have turned on us, and UK Health Secretary Wes Streeting has upheld the vicious ban on testosterone blockers for transgender children but kept it for other conditions, in a clear case of transphobia. Inexplicably the USA voted in Trump and the nearest thing to a real-life Handmaids Tale. My heart goes out to trans people in the USA and hope that you can stay strong for the next 4 years.

Still, we also have decent people in our corner...

Trans Allies include David Tennant, Sandi Toksvig, The Kaiser Chiefs Ricky Wilson, Miley Cyrus, Pink, Emma Watson, Harry Styles, Katherine Ryan, Sir Patrick Stewart, Daniel Radcliffe, Jamie Lee Curtis, Paloma Faith, Richard Osman, Sade, Sheryl Crow, Sylvester McCoy, Madonna, Lorraine Kelly, Kathy Burke, Dolly Parton, Emma Bunton, Catherine Tait, Charlie XCX, Billy Bragg,

Beyonce, Charlotte Church, Josh Widdicombe etc...



Penny's Christmas gift to Carla. A framed set of photos of our first 9 issues

My motivation these days is to raise awareness for transgender rights and try to encourage and support transgender people on their journey. In the last year we have released nine editions of our magazine and hope that they are both entertaining and informative.

My resolutions for last year centred around raising awareness for trans issues, which with the help of others, I have managed. Not very measurable obviously, but the magazine has helped, and we have made new trans friends along the way. We aim for bigger things in the new year, so watch this space.



Compering our inaugural Quiz Night in November.

It's a saying that I've picked up on relatively recently "***Out of all the unimportant things in my life, Everton is the most important***". After years of waiting, my football team got a new owner Roundhouse Capital Holding Limited, Part of the Friedkin Group who own Gulf States Toyota amongst other things. I'm hopeful that after many years of mediocrity and failure, there will be something positive to look forward to. I was born less than a mile from Everton's ground and the club has always been part of my family. A new ground also awaits on the banks of the river Mersey.



I'd love to publish or at least release a poetry book. I've been working on one for the last year but have not got round to putting it together.



Christmas Party with our wives

Penny follows West Ham United and twice a year we have the TGirl Derby when our clubs play each other. Long may that continue. The last match was a 0-0 draw, so honour and pride were even.

The continued support of my wife has helped me, and I know that a TGirls wife finding out is one of the biggest things that stops many trans women from coming out. I am extremely fortunate that we have 'girl time' together as well as other trans friends who also have support from their wives.

My wish for 2025 is that transgender people get to have a say in our own lives. Whenever there's a discussion on trans rights, we are rarely asked and have precious little representation in the media.



Three TGirls with their supportive wives

Christmas Party Fun

I attended my first fashion show, together with a group of cis women including my

wife. Something I couldn't have dreamed about in the past.



Pre Fashion Show

My friend Lina does Lazer therapy and also attends to my eyebrows when they get a bit unruly. She has been a great support to the transgender community this year.



Emma and Carla with Lina and her friend in a bar on La Zenia Beach.



At the Fashion Show

I will close by adding that the transgender community here on the Costa Blanca is positive and inclusive. Costa Blanca TGGirls are a safe haven for transgender people and cross dressers who want to go out for the first time. Come and see us in 2024 – You won't regret it!



In Praise Of the Selfie, I Bring you... The Toilet Selfie!

Selfie Nation: Our Obsession with Snapping Ourselves

Once upon a time, taking a selfie meant a tripod, a timer, and a sprint worthy of an Olympic gold medal. Enter Apple's front-facing iPhone camera in 2010, and *bam!* the selfie became a worldwide sensation. Samsung estimates we'll each snap 25,000 selfies in our lifetime, which means that if I live until I'm 80, that's about 781 a year or more than 2 a day, every day!



Millennials dedicate a staggering hour a week to capturing and editing their "good side," while Baby Boomers save their selfies for monumental occasions like a grandchild's wedding or a particularly exciting casserole. Meanwhile, in China and India, the selfie scene is next-level, with young people redefining the art form daily.

Hang on! Not all selfies are created equal. That innocent term hides a spectrum of situations: the modern duck face, is one thing but the experts in our social group are able to capture a whole table of 50 people using one hand and a click. Me? I prefer the shameless bathroom mirror pic.



Penny struggled with the concept of the toilet selfie, but she's a quick learner...

A Brief History of Self-Indulgence

Selfies aren't new—just ask Robert Cornelius, who in 1839 spent what felt like a century snapping the first photographic selfie. In taking the selfie, he had to stand in front of the camera for between 10-15 minutes, I imagine quite still.

Andy Warhol jazzed things up in the '50s, but it wasn't until social media, MySpace, and the almighty Facebook that selfies became a full-blown movement. Once front-facing cameras hit smartphones, all bets were off. Add a sprinkling of Instagram filters, and suddenly everyone's face was

the Mona Lisa—perfectly lit and filtered to oblivion.

Love 'em or hate 'em, selfies are here to stay. So pick your toilet, strike a pose, pick your filter, and remember: somewhere out there, Robert Cornelius is applauding your effort from selfie heaven.



Emma likes to undress for the bathroom...

It's against the law to assault someone in a bathroom or elsewhere, whether you are dressed as a woman or not.

Why the Toilet?

Excluding trans women from bathrooms protects nobody. We want to be comfortable using the bathroom as much as anyone else does. There are lockers just for that purpose. Opponents of equal rights have invented a 'right to privacy' without discussing what that privacy is as a way to target and harm transgende people. Attacks on women by a person they know account for around 90% of all attacks, sexual assaults and murders, and of the other 10%, how many are in bathrooms?



Private bathrooms are not the answer as segregation helps no one. Neutral bathrooms are becomong more popular but

outlawed in many countries and a third neutral bathroom is unworkable in most places and smacks of segregation. Many access bathrooms are often female bathrooms in smaller venues and numerous times in my lifetime I can remember women using mens facilities when the queue for the ladies was too long.



Since I came out as trans, I've visited many bathrooms on my travels. I've taken it upon myself to take the odd selfie when I enter a new bathroom. The bathroom has become the battle ground for transphobia as it was for racism back in history. It's a small gesture in defiance of the hate we still get from a small but significant band of haters. Together with Penny and Emma, we share some of our toilet selfies. It's our small stance against hate...



The link between our own Emma and the selfie

Robert Cornelius was born in Philadelphia to Sarah Cornelius (nee Soder) and Christian Cornelius. His father immigrated from Amsterdam (As Emma was) in 1783 and worked as a silversmith before opening a lamp-manufacturing company. He attended private school as a youth and took a particular interest in chemistry in 1831, he began working for his father and specialised in silver plating and metal polishing.



Of course, sometimes girls go to the bathroom in pairs...



Did Emma actually pee on the beach?
Answers on a postcard...



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Transgender Icon

Abril Zamora



Getty Images

Abril Zamora, a multi-talented Spanish actress, writer, and director, is a trailblazer for transgender representation in entertainment. Best known for her roles in *Vis a Vis (Locked Up)* and as the creator of the acclaimed HBO Max series *Todo lo Otro (Dafne and the Rest)*, Zamora has used her work to showcase the complexities of life, love, and identity. Her groundbreaking series explores imperfect characters navigating relationships and societal expectations, highlighting humanity in all its messiness.

Beyond her screenwriting and acting, Zamora is vocal about living authentically as a trans woman. She emphasizes that her identity, while significant, is only one aspect of who she is—alongside being creative, ambitious, and humorous. By centering trans and queer experiences in her narratives, she challenges stereotypes and

opens doors for broader acceptance in mainstream media.

In addition to her on-screen success, Zamora has ventured into literature with her novel *Ana ha besado a otro*, which delves into societal pressures on women. As a rising star, she balances her prolific career with the desire to discover personal passions beyond work, such as crafting or cooking, symbolizing her quest for fulfillment both professionally and personally



El Periódico

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<https://spotify.link/FhWLMtEyFJb>

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[@carlamoss80](https://www.tiktok.com/@carlamoss80)

Ex Royal Marine and builder from Cornwall changed gender when wife got dementia

The latest addition to Costa Blanca Tgirls is Steph Gilbert, who is hoping to visit Spain a lot more often in the future. In 2019 she was featured in an interview for the BBC and subsequently appeared in Cornwall Live and she has kindly allowed us to share her interview in Trans Focus. Thank you Steph.

Judo champ Stephanie Gilbert has been named Adult Student of the Year, runs a beauty salon from her living room - and still works on building sites where she loves 'educating the guys, winding them up something rotten'

Steve Gilbert met his wife, Jill, shortly after he left the Marines. But now, 40 years later, Jill has dementia and lives in a care home - and Steve has had gender reassignment surgery, changed her name to Stephanie and opened a beauty salon in her front room.

In 2018, Stephanie was named the National Association of Colleges (AOC) Adult Student of the Year - after she excelled on a beauty therapy course at Cornwall College. She was hailed as an ambassador for adult education and the impact she has had on her peers.

The AOC said: "Despite being an accomplished roofer, she decided to change career and took up a beauty therapy course at Cornwall College. Her progress has been praised despite caring for her wife who has dementia. "

Collecting the award for Adult Student of the Year, Stephanie said: "It feels amazing, there were so many other good candidates out there. Colleges help to give you the skills needed to progress in life. I love



A former Royal Marine and Judo champion from Cornwall has revealed how she changed gender when her wife got dementia - and how she still works on building sites where she loves "educating the guys, winding them up something rotten".

helping other people and that helped make me a winner."



With her Adult Student of the year award.

Stephanie now has a salon in her home and does treatments for friends, including other trans women - but she still makes her living as a carpenter and joiner on building sites. However, she told the BBC she finds the work tough, as the hormone therapy means she has lost a lot of strength.

"I'm back on the building site, educating the guys, winding them up something rotten," she says.

"It's like, oh, they just really cringe and I say, 'Haallo!'

"I've got to be careful I don't get done for sexual harassment. It's so funny. We have a good laugh."

Telling her remarkable and inspirational journey to the BBC, Stephanie said: "I always felt female. But you learn to hide everything when growing up - to fit in to society."

And so, 40 years ago, when she was still a he called Steve, he put aside his doubts - and a growing attraction to "hunky guys" -

and married Jill, who was 18 years his senior.

They met at their local sports centre - Carn Brea at Redruth - where Steve would regularly compete in judo competitions - he came third in his weight category in the national judo championships three years running.

Steve had told Jill that he felt he should be female - but when Jill told him marriage would change this, Steve put his misgivings to one side to concentrate on being a good husband. However, rather than going away, the feeling that he should be female grew - and in his late 40s, he decided he wanted to live as a woman.

"And, of course, that's when the difficulties started in the marriage - arguments," says Stephanie.

Steve was referred to a gender identity clinic in Newton Abbot, Devon, and was accepted for hormone treatment - but, Jill, then in her late 60s, opposed the idea. Steve decided to put his transition on hold. They after Jill suffered a series of family bereavements - and was then diagnosed with breast cancer and arthritis.

"I couldn't put her through it," says Stephanie

Then Jill began to show the early signs of dementia and Steve - whose work took him all over Cornwall - became increasingly concerned about her safety while she was at home on her own.

"In the end, I had to take the knobs off the cooker," Stephanie says. "It got too much and I gave up work completely to look after her full time."

Doing so also gave Steve the opportunity to live as Stephanie full time.

"At home, I would just be who I wanted to be and try to look after Jill - but it wasn't brilliant," she says.



Stephanie, a skilled carpenter and roofer, gained beauty therapy qualifications at Cornwall College since her transition.

"I had to sort of almost be gender neutral so it was indistinguishable. She still had some of her faculties about her."

"As the illness developed, I ended up getting fine-tuned to her. So as soon as I heard her get up, I'd be awake instantly," Stephanie says.

Eventually, Stephanie became so stressed and depressed that she was admitted to hospital for five days - and Jill's children took over as carers,

"It sort of got took out of my hands. I knew she was going to have to go into care but it ended up being sooner rather than later.

"I couldn't cope any longer," Stephanie says.

With Jill now in a care home, Stephanie went back to the gender clinic and was prescribed hormones - and decided to pursue her dream of becoming a beauty therapist.



"I'd looked at it previously when I was Steve," said Stephanie - who was accepted at Cornwall College, which has "a really good diversity policy".

"I think it just helped educate them a bit more," she says, "because, as a trans person, I've always tried to let people know we're just human beings who want to live our lives."

In November 2017, aged 59, Stephanie finally underwent surgery and returned to the college early in 2018 to complete a course in Swedish massage.

Her course tutor, Paula Riley, says Stephanie is an "an inspiration in her open approach to transitioning".

And, in 2018, she was named Student of the Year by the Association of Colleges. In September of this year, Stephine will return to college once more to begin a higher level course in sports massage.

However, Jill's dementia has now progressed to the extent that she no longer recognises her husband of 30 years at all - even if Stephanie wears a short wig and gender neutral clothes.

<https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/ex-royal-marine-builder-cornwall-2792795>

Roberta Elizabeth Marshall Cowell

Roberta Elizabeth Marshall Cowell was the first known British trans woman to undergo gender-affirming surgery.

Born Croydon, London in 1918 one of three children. She attended Whitgift Public Boys School where she was a member of the school's Motor Club.

She left school at 16 and joined General Aircraft Ltd as an apprentice aircraft engineer. She left to join the Royal Air Force but was soon discharged because of airsickness.

In 1936 she began studying engineering at University College London as well as beginning her motor-racing career, winning her class in the Lands End Speed trials held in Riley. By 1939 she owned three cars and competed in the Antwerp Grand Prix.



In December 1940 she was commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps as a second lieutenant before transferring to the RAF at the beginning of 1942.

In June 1944 she was flying with No. 4 Squadron RAF carrying out aerial reconnaissance. Shortly before the D-Day landings, she had a lucky escape when the oxygen system of her Spitfire malfunctioned at 31,000 feet over Fruges, France. She passed out but the aircraft continued flying on its own for an hour over German-occupied France while being subjected to German anti-aircraft fire. She regained semi-consciousness at low altitude and was able to fly back to the squadron's base at RAF Gatwick.

In 1944, 4 Squadron was based in Deurne, Belgium, near Antwerp. On 18 November Cowell was piloting one of a pair of Typhoons on a low-level sortie South East of Kessel in Germany. While attacking targets on the ground her aircraft's engine was knocked out and its wing holed by anti-aircraft fire. Flying too low to bail out, she successfully crash-landed the plane and was captured by German troops. Cowell made two attempts to escape before being taken to a prisoner of war camp, Stalag Luft 1, deeper in Germany.



The camp was liberated by the Red Army in 1945 and Cowell was flown back to the United Kingdom.

After demobilisation Cowell founded a motor-racing team and competed in events across Europe. In her autobiography Cowell describes this as a time of great distress and clinical depression.

Cowell had married in 1941 and they had two daughters, but the marriage was not a happy one. Cowell later wrote: "there had been an underlying air of falseness about it. It is difficult and painful to say much about this marriage. By 1948, we had separated, although the divorce decree was not made absolute until 1952".

After the separation, Cowell continued to suffer from depression. Seeking help from a Freudian psychiatrist he revealed that, in her own words, that her "unconscious mind was predominantly female" and "feminine side of my nature, which all my life I had known of and severely repressed, was very much more fundamental and deep rooted than I had supposed".

By 1950, Cowell was taking large doses of oestrogen, but still living as a man. She went to see a private Harley Street gynaecologist and was able to obtain a document stating she was intersex. This allowed her to have a new birth certificate issued, with her recorded sex changed to female. She had a vaginoplasty on 15 May 1951. The operation was carried out by Sir Harold Gillies, considered the father of plastic surgery. He developed the viganoplasty procedure using his experience of reconstructing penises of soldiers injured in explosive blasts.

You may wonder why Cowell is not held up as an icon of the transgender community. Maybe the answer to this can be found in the interview she gave to Michael Bateman of the Sunday Times which appeared in 1972. In the interview, she stated she was an intersex individual with the chromosomal abnormality XX male syndrome, and that the condition justified her transition. She also spoke in derogatory terms of those individuals with XY chromosomes who also underwent male to female gender reassignment, saying "The people who have followed me have often been those with male chromosomes, XY. So they've been normal people who've turned themselves into freaks by means of the operation."

However, Cowell had two daughters from her marriage. In all known cases of XX male syndrome the subjects have been infertile, making it highly unlikely that Cowell did have XX Male Syndrome. It demonstrates that it is possible to be both transgender and transphobic if you somehow feel that you are different or somehow superior to everyone else.



Trans Women Are Not a Threat to Cis Women—Predatory Cis Men Are

I suppose a lot of it depends on where you were born and grew up. Despite growing up in a major city in the UK I was rarely exposed to LGBTQ+ communities from an early age. Most of them were on TV where I marvelled at so called 'gender bending' pop stars, who fascinated me. People like David Bowie, Marc Bolan, Steve Priest were my idols, but in real life, hard to find.



Steve Priest (Pic from Pinterest)

As I grew up, I became more and more aware that I differed from other boys my

age. In short, I liked girl things more than any boy I knew. I remember one boy in my year who used to spend playtime with the girls, it looked grteat fun. He was bullied mercilessly, so I didn't even try. Nowadays I realise that my feelings, that have lasted a lifetime are more complex than I cared to imagine.

As we enter a new year, the lies and exaggerations about us from transphobes and the political right continue.

Trans women are often unfairly portrayed as a danger to cisgender women, perpetuating myths that distract from the real source of violence: cisgender men and patriarchal systems. This article challenges these misconceptions, drawing on personal experience and broader societal insights.



Annual Trans March, San Francisco

Sfgate.com

Taking one of the most diverse cities in the world a an example, San Francisco, a city renowned for its inclusivity, teaches a valuable lesson—trans women do not pose a threat. Decades of those living in a gender-diverse community affirm this reality. The narrative that trans women are men

disguising themselves to harm women is baseless. Such fears either stem from a misunderstanding of trans identities or reflect broader fears of cis men, who are statistically responsible for the majority of violence against women worldwide.

Patriarchy and its rigid definitions of gender fuel this misdirected hostility. Historically, gender nonconformity has been met with punishment, targeting women, men, and anyone challenging the status quo. Feminism, rooted in the fight for human rights, advocates for all women, cis and trans alike. The real work of feminism lies in dismantling the systems that perpetuate violence and inequality, not in excluding trans women. If you claim to be a feminist, you can't be a feminist if you're not for everyone's human rights, notably other women's rights.



Pic from New Statesman

The bathroom issue, a favourite topic of transphobic rhetoric, exemplifies the disconnect between myth and reality. Decades of using public restrooms in gender-diverse spaces around the world show no evidence of trans women posing a danger. Instead, forcing trans women to use

men's restrooms endangers them, highlighting the violence they face simply for existing.



Pic from Socialistworker.org

One of the peculiar and unfounded fears about trans women is the idea that they are men masquerading as women to harm others. However, this reflects either a mistrust of cisgender men, who statistically commit most of the violence against women globally, or a fundamental misunderstanding of what it means to be a trans woman. If a man intends harm, he could just as easily pose as a repairman or emergency worker to gain access to women's spaces—something that has occurred—and yet society hasn't called for banning repairmen or emergency workers. This misplaced fear only distracts from addressing the real sources of violence: cisgender men and patriarchal structures.

Concerns about young people transitioning are often exaggerated. Decisions around transitioning are made with care, involving families and medical professionals. For many, transitioning earlier leads to better mental health outcomes, while fears about "regret" are unfounded in most cases.

Politicians who either don't know what they are talking about or have an agenda seek to deny medical care for young trans children. The focus should be on creating a supportive society rather than policing identities.

The diversity of women defies simplistic definitions. Some women are born intersex, have hormonal variations, or lack conventional reproductive capabilities. Feminism must embrace this complexity, advocating for every woman's right to define herself. Ignorance of the complexity of what a woman is, is no excuse these days with the information available. Basing it on genitals only, does women a massive disservice and reduces them akin to child bearing machines.

It's also noted that most Gender Critical activists, focus rarely on violence against women. Instead focusing their anger at trans women only. That tells its own story.

Finally, trans women are not a new phenomenon. They have been integral to movements for LGBTQ+ rights, including historic uprisings like the 1966 Compton's Cafeteria Riot, predating Stonewall. Recognising their role in these struggles underscores the interconnectedness of all fights for equality.



Compton's Cafeteria Riot

Vogue.com

In a world grappling with real violence against women, focusing on imagined threats from trans women is not only a waste of time but actively harmful.

Feminism must focus on the true sources of violence—predatory cis men and patriarchal systems—while embracing trans women as allies and sisters in the fight for equality.

We are all connected in this struggle, and acknowledging this interconnectedness is the first step toward meaningful progress.

Thank you for reading

Carla X

***Don't know about Comptons Cafeteria Riot? Please read on...**

The 1966 Compton's Cafeteria Riot: A Milestone for Transgender Rights



Localnewsmatters.org

In the vibrant but often hostile Tenderloin district of San Francisco, a little-known event unfolded in 1966 that would echo through history as a pivotal moment in the fight for transgender rights. Long before the Stonewall Riots in 1969, the Compton's Cafeteria Riot was one of the first recorded acts of collective resistance by transgender individuals against systemic oppression.

Compton's Cafeteria, a 24 hour diner, was a haven for the city's marginalised communities, including transgender women, drag queens, and gay individuals. However, it was also a hotspot for police harassment. In the summer of 1966, tensions boiled over when a police officer attempted to arrest a transgender patron. The response was swift and defiant: coffee cups flew, tables



Klw.org

overturned, and windows shattered as patrons fought back against years of discrimination and mistreatment.



PBS.org

This act of rebellion was not an isolated incident but a reflection of the growing frustration within the transgender community. The riot sparked greater visibility and laid the groundwork for future activism. It also inspired the creation of organisations dedicated to transgender advocacy, including the National Transsexual Counseling Unit, the first peer-run support organisation for transgender people.

The legacy of the Compton's Cafeteria Riot reminds us that transgender individuals have always been at the forefront of the fight for LGBTQ+ rights. It serves as a powerful testament to the resilience and determination of a community that has long refused to be silenced. Today, as we continue to combat prejudice and fight for equality, the riot remains a beacon of courage and a reminder of how far we've come—and how much further we have to go.



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Echoes of Compton's Cafeteria

In the heart of Tenderloin's shadowed streets,

Where dreams collided with concrete beats,

A diner stood as a fragile shore,
For those cast out, yearning for more.

Under the glare of flickering lights,
Souls found solace through endless nights.

A place of safety, a fleeting grace,
Amid a world that denied their space.
But peace gave way to fists and cries,
When oppression knocked, they did not comply.

A coffee cup flew, a spark took flame,
Trans voices rose, defying shame.
Tables turned, windows shattered wide,
Years of silence left nowhere to hide.
They fought for lives that had been denied,

For dignity bruised but never untied.
The echoes rang through time and stone,

A battle for rights, a fight to atone.
They claimed their space, they staked their ground,

In history's pages, their names resound.

From shattered glass, a movement
grew,
A beacon for those who'd been broken
too.
Their courage kindled a brighter dawn,
A legacy fierce, forever drawn.
Compton's stood for more than the
night—
It stood for justice, for truth, for light.
And as we march for what's still to be,
We carry their strength, their memory
free.

The Danish Girl



It's taken me a while, but I've eventually sat down and watched this fabulous film (released in January 2016). Set around 100 years ago in Denmark, it tells the story of Lili Elbe, a trans gender woman who is struggling to come to terms with her gender. Why she is struggling to terms with her gender is something most transgender people can identify with. Aligning your body it one thing but it's not purely gender that's the issue; it's society and all those that immediately surround her that intensify the struggle.

Set against the beautiful backdrop of 1920's Denmark it was inspired by the true story of

early 20th Century married Danish painters Einar and Gerda Wegener.

From her assigned birth gender as Einar, she begins to socially transition as Lily once out, quite quickly after agreeing to pose as a woman for a painting. The most identifiable feeling for me was when she began dressing regularly, first at home, then outside. Once you open Pandoras box, it won't let you back in.



Lili & Lili played by Eddie Redmayne
(The Telegraph) Dailyartmagazine.com

“God made me a woman, but the Doctor corrected the mistake that nature made”

Is the most memorable line from the film. Despite it being set 100 years ago, trans people were telling everyone, with few willing to listen, all the old-fashioned stereotypes are covered here without overly box ticking.

Eddie Redmayne is very believable as Lili, who in the beginning struggles to return to her old 'male' self before succumbing to Lili full time. Alicia Vikander is superb as the wife who is supportive of her husband to the point of losing her.



(Lili) Medium.com

It's sensitive and emotionally powerful and I felt the internal struggle that Lili was going through. At times over simplified, in a film just under two hours, it's virtually impossible to do justice to the true internal struggles we go through, but this was a good attempt.



Queen of heart (Lili) By Gerda Wegener

Theinkquisition.wordpress.com

I saw parallels with the story of Quentin Crisp, the Naked Civil Servant, when all kinds of 'sexual deviances' and mental

problems were suggested as the cause. As we know now, internal biology is complicated and a lot more than solely genital based.

Interestingly, in 2021, Eddie Redmayne said in an interview that he regretted playing the part. The star admitting that there have been "years of cisgender success on the back of trans stories". He added that he felt "honoured" to be part of the discussion and an "ally of the trans community".

If you haven't seen it, give it a watch. Have a look at how far we have come in 100 years, while at the same time, how very much further we still need to go.



Lili y Gerda by Gerda Wegener

Sartle.com