Trans Focus

The World from a Transgender Perspective

November 2026



Carla on purging

Pride of Britain

The Costa Blanca welcomes Trans woman

Welcome to November

Welcome to the November edition of *Trans Focus*.

We have plenty for you to read and enjoy this month. I saw an account of a trans woman who wasn't out and was struggling with purging, which she had done throughout her life. I messaged her and asked her could I use her story and she was happy to share. Some of the details have been changed as has her name, but I'm happy to share Sophie's story in this month's magazine.

As ever, we've tried to give you a variety of content that I hope will interest you. We are also looking for contributions from you. We do have a photo shoot and autobiography coming from one of our British readers soon, so hopefully it will be ready for you next month. If you wish to contribute, contact Carla or Penny through the magazine and we will be happy to accommodate you.

Last month I mentioned we are on the lookout for new bars for the winter. We have tried three new bars in the last month but I'm not sure any of them are long term venues. Two in La Zenia, near to us were nice enough but one was more a restaurant and the other, we aren't too sure about. It was fine, but quite expensive for the area. Another on was in the outskirts of Torrevieja in one of the urbanisations. Again, a restaurant, but also fine for a drink. It was very quiet, though worth revisiting at some stage.

Our hunt goes on and if we find anywhere ideal we will be sure to let you know.

Joelle

Last week the clocks went back one hour. Unfortunately for trans people in the UK and USA the clocks went back 90 years.

In the last month NHS England has defined their gender rules and has once again reverted to the outdated and discriminatory definition of ‘biological sex’ when treating patients.

This week I heard about something shocking that had it been about someone who wasn’t transgender, I am sure would have been headline news across the main news channels. It was in 2023, but with the latest guidance, could likely happen again.

Taken from translegalclinic.com

Joelle was 27. She was a gifted musician, a self-taught coder, funny, generous and deeply loved.

She had an aggressive lymphoma that almost always curable when treated as a medical emergency. A bed was available on the cancer ward when she arrived at Wolverhampton NHS Trust. After staff saw that she was a trans woman, she was removed from the ward and placed in a side ward on the other side of the hospital.

She suffered 16 days in this room, deteriorating in agony, without cancer pain management. Joelle and her mum Jane were told emergency chemo could not start until she was in the right ward and there was not a bed. She explicitly pleaded for a bed on either the male or female ward. Because she was trans they made her wait for a rare single room.

It is unsurvivable to delay treatment for 16 days with this rare but very well understood lymphoma. By the time she received emergency chemotherapy, it was already too late.

Theres a campaign for justice going on and I have shared the link blelow.

Please open the link and read the message from Joelle's mother. It's heartbreaking and particularly damning of the then health minister Steve Barclay who declared the day before *"As Conservatives we know what a woman is."* A comment that hasn't travelled well in the wake of Joelle's death.

https://www.translegalclinic.com/justice-for-joelle

Where were the headlines?
Where was the outrage?

We are fighting to secure justice for Joelle and help ensure that no other trans person is denied urgent care because of who they are.

On a more positive note

November sees Carla and Penny host a quiz night for our local LGBTQ group. It's a new venue and is open that night to locals to join in so we are very excited.

This will be the third quiz we have hosted, so I suppose we should be getting better at it. Lets see.

The poster for the evening is below.

Finally, thank you for your support

Lot's of love

Carla & Penny xx

LGBTQ QUIZ NIGHT

Let's get quizzical!

Friday
6 November

De Barras Bar
El Galán
Pre-book table for food: 711 066 651

Quiz starts
20:00 hrs
Arrive eariier to order food

€5
per person entry fee

Half the pot goes to the winning team

The other half supports your LGBTQ group funds

Hosted by the quiz queens
Carla & Penny



Fish & Chip Supper
€15 for 2 people
(venue special deal)

Open to everyone
Bring your friends, partners, neighbours... the more the merrier!

Flying solo?
No problem! You can join a team on the night – no need to pre-book.

Like & comment if you are coming, your support will make this a success

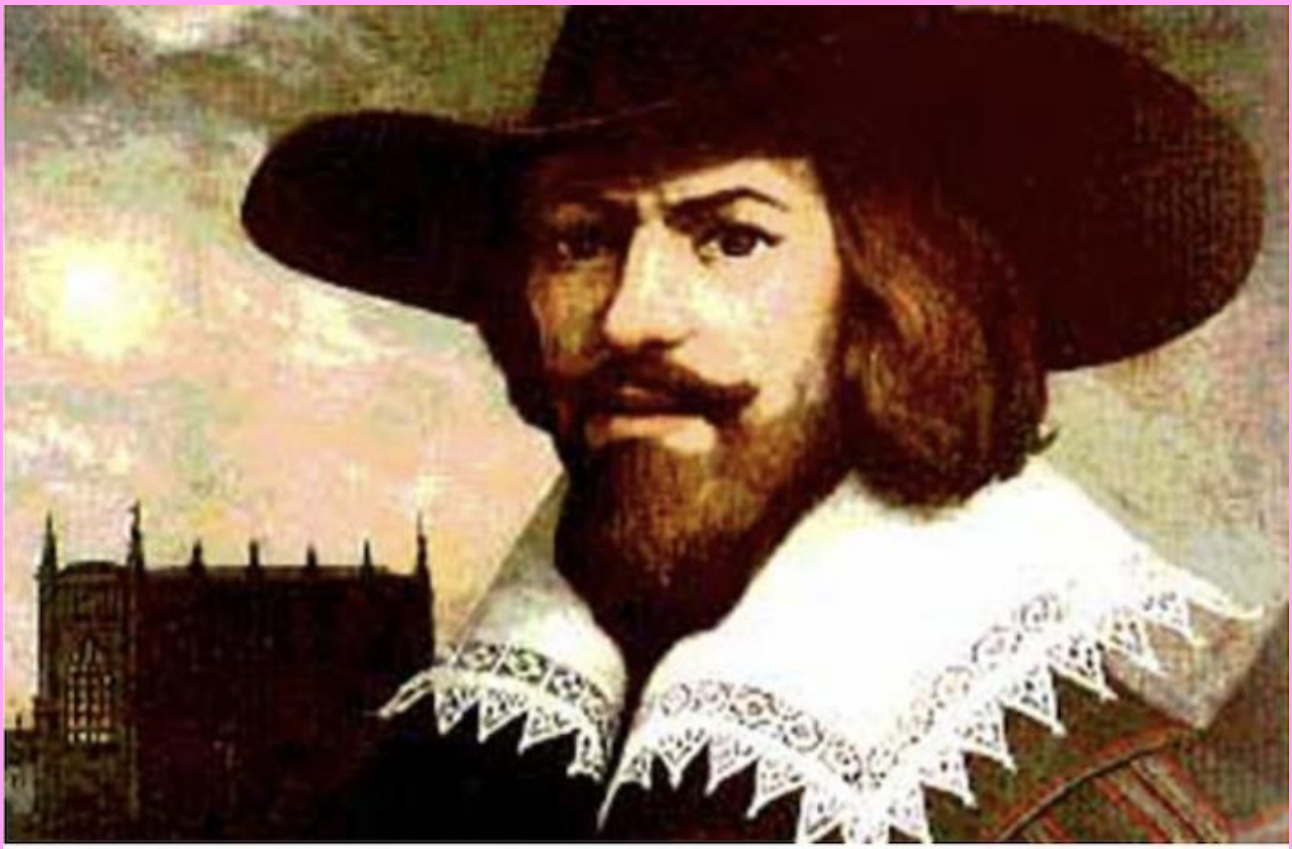
Teams can include up to 6 people

Pre-book table for food: 711 066 651

Remember, Remember… Burn the Prejudice, Not the Person!

An American-friendly guide to a very British tradition, with a little trans mischief thrown in.

Every November, Britain sets fire to things. Not the economy, although there are days when you might think about it. Not the government, although some people might be tempted. No, we gather around bonfires, set off fireworks and burn an effigy of a man called Guy Fawkes.



Welcome to Bonfire Night!

For our non British readers who may be wondering what on earth we're talking about, Guy Fawkes was involved in a plot in 1605 to blow up the Houses of Parliament. The plot failed, Guy was caught, and Britain has spent more than four centuries remembering the occasion with fireworks, bonfires and, traditionally, a rather unfortunate-looking dummy known as a Guy.

Children would make their Guys from old clothes stuffed with newspaper or straw and sometimes ask passers-by for “a penny for the Guy”. Think Halloween, but with fewer pumpkins and considerably more opportunities to set fire to something.

Naturally, this got us thinking.

If Britain is going to devote an evening to burning an effigy of somebody who challenged the establishment, perhaps we should consider what else might qualify for the bonfire.

Prejudice, for starters.

Burn the Guy, Not the Trans Woman!

Imagine creating a Guy to represent all the things that seem to frighten some people about trans women. What would you put on it?

A blonde wig? A skirt? A pair of tights? Perhaps a newspaper full of alarming headlines, a stack of internet comments and a placard reading, “I just want to live my life, thank you very much.”

You could even add a little sign saying, “Warning: may use the wrong public toilet, according to somebody on Facebook.”

There would be no shortage of material.

The strange thing is that trans women don't need to plot to blow up Parliament or overthrow the establishment to become controversial. Sometimes, simply existing,

buying a dress, going shopping or asking to be treated with ordinary courtesy seems to be enough.



Guy Fawkes had to be caught with explosives before he became a national talking point. Trans women can apparently achieve the same level of attention by going to the supermarket.

We really must try harder.

Or perhaps everyone else could try worrying less.

Why Should Guy Fawkes Have All the Fun?

Of course, not every trans woman wants to be a campaigner. We don't all want to stand on a stage, wave a flag or spend our evenings arguing with strangers on social media.

Some of us want to fall in love. Some want to meet friends for coffee. Some want to watch a film, enjoy a meal, wear something that makes us feel good or simply get through the day without being scrutinised.

Some of us want to change the world. Others just want to change our hairstyle.



And there's nothing wrong with either.

Being trans doesn't mean you have to become an activist, have surgery, take hormones, dress a particular way or live up to somebody else's idea of what a trans woman should look like. Our lives and experiences are different, and that diversity is part of being human.

Yet somehow, there are people who seem determined to tell us what we should wear, how we should behave, what we should call ourselves and even whether we should be allowed to live comfortably in the world around us.

Imagine if we applied the same scrutiny to everybody.

Would we inspect every cisgender woman's wardrobe before allowing her into a café? Would we demand to know everybody's medical history before deciding whether they deserved courtesy? Would we expect every person we met to provide a detailed explanation of their existence?

Of course not. That would be ridiculous.

And yet, when it comes to trans people, some seem to think ordinary kindness requires a parliamentary debate.

This November, Let's Light Up the Sky

Perhaps that's the real lesson we can take from Bonfire Night.

Guy Fawkes challenged the establishment in a rather explosive fashion. Most trans women aren't trying to blow anything up. We're simply trying to live honestly, find happiness and be accepted as the people we know ourselves to be.

We shouldn't have to be brave every day. We shouldn't have to explain ourselves every day. And we certainly shouldn't have to become extraordinary simply to deserve an ordinary life.

But if our existence challenges somebody else's assumptions, perhaps that's not necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes, the world becomes a little more welcoming when somebody dares to live differently.

So this Bonfire Night, by all means burn the Guy. Enjoy the fireworks, eat something unhealthy, wrap up warm and try not to set fire to your coat with a stray sparkler.

But let's leave the people alone.

Let's burn the prejudice, not the person. Let's put an end to the idea that everyone must fit the same mould. And let's remember that a person's worth isn't determined by whether they conform to somebody else's expectations.

After all, life is short. The nights are getting colder, the fireworks won't last forever, and there are far more interesting things to do than spend our precious time justifying our existence.

We've got friends to meet, people to love, hairstyles to experiment with and lives to enjoy.

And if that means being a little different?

Light the fireworks. Be yourself. And let the world get used to it.

Sun, Sea and Sisterhood

Why Costa Blanca Has Become a Haven for Trans Women

The first thing many people notice about the Costa Blanca is the sunshine. The second is the sense of freedom.

Along Spain's famous Mediterranean coastline, from Benidorm and Alicante to Torrevieja and the smaller inland communities that dot the region, a growing number of transgender women have found something many spent years searching for: a place where they can simply be themselves.



For some, it begins as a holiday. A week in the Spanish sun. A chance to escape the expectations, pressures and sometimes judgement they experience at home. But for many, that first visit sparks something far more significant. They discover a lifestyle, a community and a confidence they had never imagined possible.

A Different Kind of Welcome

The Costa Blanca has long attracted people seeking a fresh start. Retirees, digital nomads, entrepreneurs and families from across Europe have settled here, creating one of Spain's most diverse expatriate communities.

That diversity has helped foster an atmosphere where differences are often met with curiosity rather than hostility. In cafés, restaurants, shopping centres and beach promenades, people quickly become accustomed to seeing every kind of person living their life in their own way.

For transgender women, that can be incredibly powerful.

Many describe arriving with anxiety, worried about how they will be perceived, only to find that most people are far more interested in enjoying their coffee, walking their dog or heading to the beach than scrutinising strangers.



Confidence Under the Mediterranean Sun

There is something transformative about spending time in a place where outdoor living is part of everyday life.

The Costa Blanca's beaches, terraces and bustling plazas encourage people to step out from behind closed doors. For many trans women, that means embracing a more visible version of themselves.

Whether it's wearing a summer dress for the first time, enjoying an evening stroll along the seafront, or simply sitting with friends at a beachside café, seemingly small moments become milestones.

The sunshine doesn't magically solve life's challenges, but it does create opportunities to live more openly. For women who spent years hiding their true selves, that can feel revolutionary.

Finding Your People

One of the strongest attractions of the region is its social network.



Across the Costa Blanca, informal groups, online communities and friendship circles have emerged, connecting transgender women from different countries and backgrounds.

Some are newly transitioning. Others have been living openly for decades.

What unites them is a shared understanding.

Conversations that might require lengthy explanations elsewhere often need no explanation at all. Advice about fashion, beauty, healthcare, paperwork or relationships is exchanged naturally over coffee or lunch.

Many newcomers are surprised by how quickly they find genuine friendships.

The community may be diverse, but there is a strong sense of mutual support. Women celebrate one another's successes, offer guidance during difficult moments and create spaces where authenticity is not just accepted but encouraged.

Beyond the Stereotypes

Popular culture often portrays transgender women through narrow lenses. The reality on the Costa Blanca is far richer.

Here you'll find retirees enjoying retirement by the sea, business owners running successful companies, artists, healthcare workers, volunteers, writers and travellers building new lives.

Some live full-time in Spain. Others split their year between countries. Many are married or in long-term relationships. Some are single and enjoying their independence.

Their stories are different, but they share a common desire: to live honestly.

The Costa Blanca doesn't define them. It simply provides a backdrop against which they can write the next chapter of their lives.

Challenges Still Exist

No destination is perfect.

Navigating healthcare systems, residency requirements and local bureaucracy can be daunting, particularly for those who do not speak Spanish fluently.

Transition-related healthcare may require research and planning. Cultural misunderstandings occasionally occur. Loneliness can still affect newcomers before they establish friendships.

Yet many women report that these practical challenges feel manageable when balanced against the lifestyle benefits and sense of acceptance they experience.

A Place to Breathe

Perhaps the Costa Blanca's greatest gift is not its beaches or climate.

It is the opportunity to exhale.

To spend a day without worrying what strangers think.

To walk along a promenade feeling comfortable in your own skin.

To meet friends who understand your journey without needing an explanation.

To discover that authenticity can be ordinary rather than extraordinary.

For countless transgender women, that is the real magic of Spain's sunny coast.

The Costa Blanca may not be paradise. But for many, it comes remarkably close.

Sidebar: Five Reasons Trans Women Love the Costa Blanca

1. More than 300 days of sunshine each year.
2. Relaxed Mediterranean lifestyle.
3. Large international community.
4. Affordable living compared with many Northern European locations.
5. Growing social networks and friendships within the trans community.

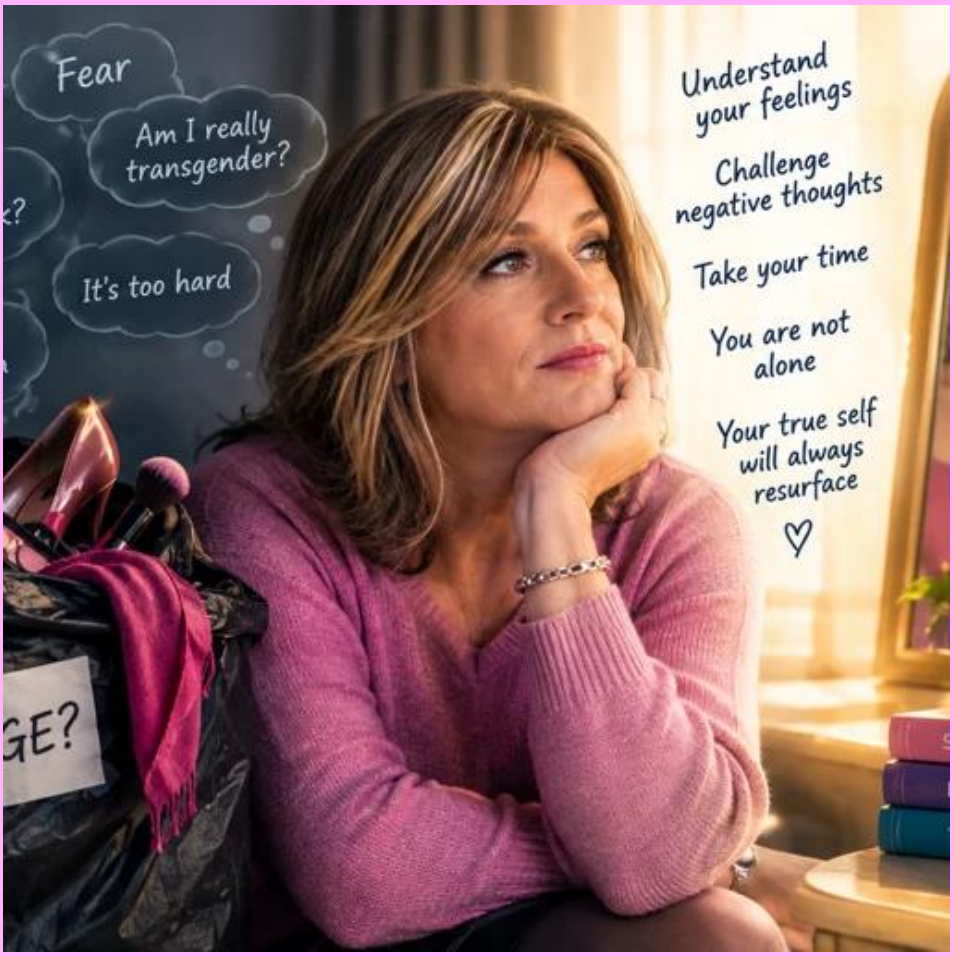


"You come for the sunshine," one resident laughs, "but you stay because you finally feel comfortable being yourself."

TO PURGE
OR NOT TO PURGE?

Sophies story.

Not too long ago, not long after my 60th birthday, I went through a terrible argument with my wife about my wanting to crossdress. You see, my passion for feeling like a woman, or urge as some may see it, was only growing over time. It was hard to think of anything else.



I love my wife and she's been very supportive towards my feminine side, but now and again my doubts all resurfaced. Those doubts I get when I lose confidence. You see I've always felt very feminine but at the same time feel that transitioning is way too hard. The constantly dressing rather than just doing myself up to go out. The hormones, surgery, hair removal, wearing wigs all the time. Maybe I'm not really transgender?

I often feel guilty about what I've done to my marriage. She didn't marry a woman, she married a man. Sometimes I feel I've let her down. I go out regularly as a woman and always enjoy it but always worry that I can never go the whole way and transition fully.

I decided once and for all that I would ditch my clothes, wigs, makeup etc once and for all. Purge!

I had done it twice before, but that was when I was younger. When no one knew about me and I had much less stuff. Even then it hit hard and I felt a big loss. It didn't last long though and I recovered soon started to build up a new supply.

This time though, I went into a deep depression. I felt like I lost part of myself. Many people I know have gone through something similar. It was horrible.

One thing though, my wife noticed. It was abvious to her that I couldn't live that way. After much deliberation and tears, she agreed with me that Sophie could come back.

It's not all plain sailing though. The male and female parts of our marriage are difficult. Theres never enough Sophie for me and my wife would like less, but we are in a better place.

There will be many reading this who are stifling the female part of themselves. Playing their lives safe and hiding the truth out of fear of what might happen. Maybe you lack the confidence to make that step. There may be others who are and have purged due to circumstances in your life. Most of you will probably purge then begin to build again. In my experience, purging never works as the female you will always be there.

A lot of the turmoil will come from the socalisation we all suffer. The norms forced on us from the very second we are born, and may I say before then. To me, this is what I see as the purge feeling.

It lasted with me for most of my life. I buried it deep inside and it affected me, subdued by society expectations and norms. Being comfortable maybe.

I realised that when growing up, I didn't realise how strong that socualisation was. It was so ingrained in me. So much so, that

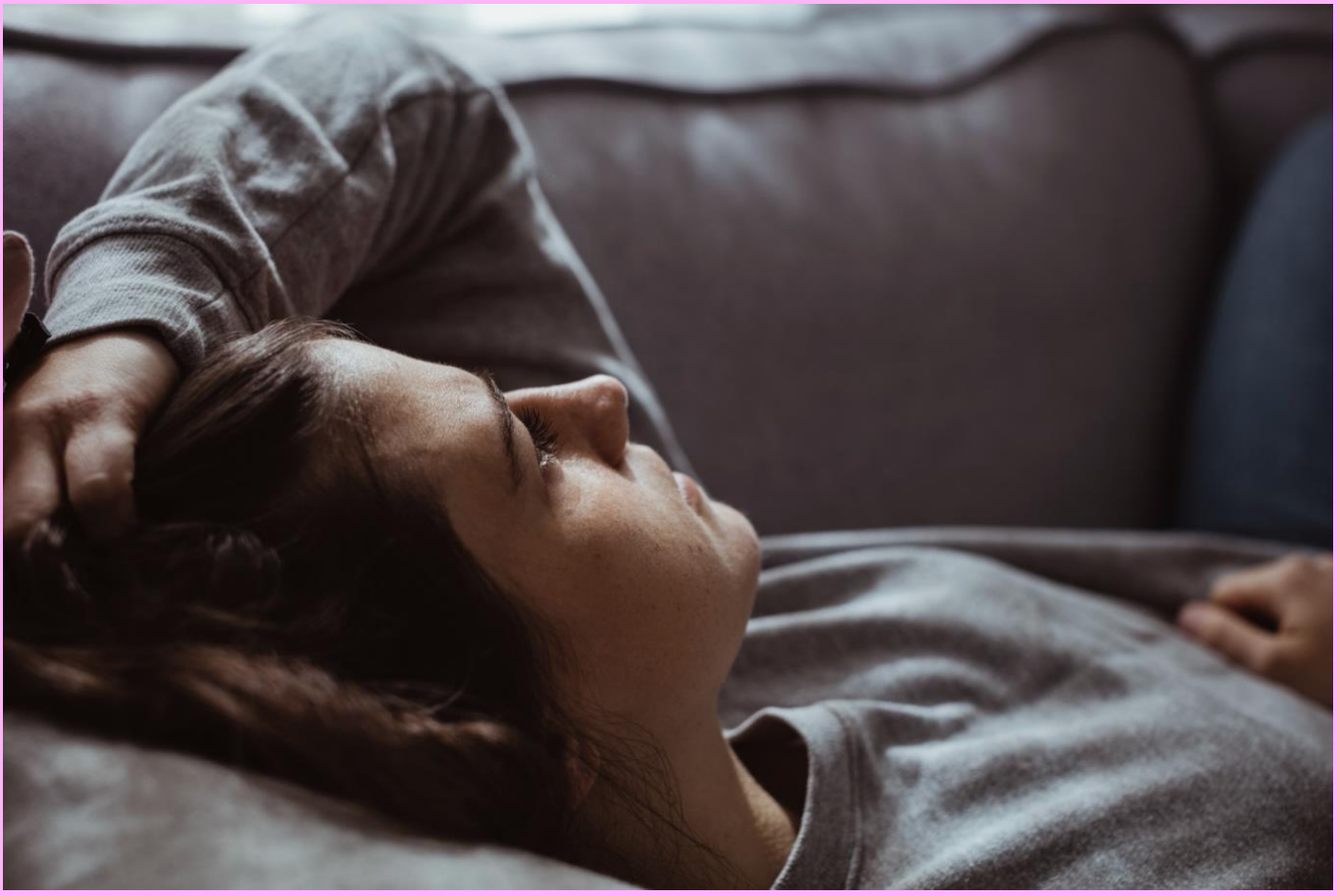
stepping out of it caused massive propblems for both me and others. Its this that is the pressure on you.

I would like to say that if you have or are tempted to purge, I hope that you understand it more so you can get through it. Knowing why you do it was a great help to me. If youre in a poor mental state, I would suggest that you don't make such big decisions, Wait until you are feeling better and more able to cope with the consequences.
If you are considereing a purge, realise who you are and try and allow the feeling to pass. Your true self will always resurface, which is why ourging rarely works.

Sophie x

Has anyone else had a purge, or two or three? If you have and would like to tell our readers, contact us and we will share your story, anonymously if you wish.

Editorial Note:
Some people do return to expressing their femininity after purging; others find different ways to understand their feelings. They deserve time, understanding and freedom from shame, whatever their eventual path may be.



UNDERSTANDING THE URGE TO PURGE

Purging, in the context of crossdressing and gender identity, means getting rid of clothes, wigs, make-up and other items associated with expressing your feminine side, often in the hope of putting those feelings behind you once and for all.

But why does it happen?

Often, the real battle is not with our clothes, but with what we have learned to believe about ourselves.

From childhood, we absorb society's expectations about how men and women should behave. When our feelings conflict with those expectations, we can experience guilt, shame, fear and anxiety. We may worry about losing our relationships, disappointing loved ones or facing rejection. Getting rid of everything can temporarily feel like regaining control and making the problem disappear.

Psychologically, this can become a cycle. Anxiety builds, we purge to relieve it, and the immediate sense of relief reinforces the belief that purging was the right decision. But if the underlying feelings and fears remain unresolved, the desire to express ourselves may return, bringing the same conflict all over again.

So how can we break the cycle?

Start by challenging the thoughts behind the urge. Ask yourself: *Am I doing this because it is what I genuinely want, or because I am frightened of what might happen if I don't?* Recognise that feeling guilty does not necessarily mean you have done something wrong. Nor must you make an all-or-nothing choice between suppressing your feminine side and completely changing your life.

Give yourself time. Avoid making irreversible decisions when you are overwhelmed or distressed. Allowing yourself to pause, rather than immediately acting on the urge to purge, can help you understand what you are feeling and what you actually need.

If the conflict is affecting your mental health or relationships, talking to a supportive, gender-aware counsellor may help you work through the fear and guilt without being pushed towards any particular outcome.

There is no single right way to explore or express your gender. You do not have to transition, nor do you have to suppress your feelings to satisfy other people's expectations.

The aim is not to force yourself to be someone different. It is to reach a place where you can make decisions from understanding and self-acceptance, rather than fear.



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PRIDE OF BRITAIN

Esther Ghey, mother of murdered teenager Brianna Ghey, received a Special Recognition award at the 2026 Daily Mirror Pride of Britain Awards for her campaigning on children's mental health and online safety.



The awards, organised with P&O Cruises and hosted by Carol Vorderman and Ashley Banjo, honour ordinary people for extraordinary bravery, selflessness or public spirit. The ceremony took place in mid-October 2026 and was broadcast on ITV1 and ITVX. Esther shared the Special Recognition honour with fellow bereaved parents Ellen Roome MBE and Ian Russell MBE, who have also campaigned against online harms after losing their children.

Brianna Ghey was 16 when she was murdered in Culcheth Linear Park, Warrington, in February 2023. She was stabbed multiple times in a premeditated attack by two teenagers who had been exposed to extreme online violence; the killing was described as involving a transphobic element.

Since her daughter's death, Esther has channelled her grief into advocacy. Through the Brianna Ghey Legacy Project (linked to her earlier Peace in Mind / Peace and Mind UK work), she has focused on improving young people's mental health, promoting digital safety, supporting smartphone restrictions in schools, and calling for a ban on social media for under-16s along with a "smartphone-free childhood." She has spoken about feeling she "lost Brianna twice"—once through the phone's influence and again through the murder—and has expressed hope that change is possible.

The judges highlighted the determination of the three parents: "What unites them is not just their loss, but their determination to save other families suffering similar tragedies. And they've taken on the world's most powerful companies to do it." Ofcom chief executive Dame Melanie Dawes has also noted that the courage of such families has helped put online safety issues at the forefront.

Esther has described the recognition as surreal, noting she grew up watching the Pride of Britain Awards. She has dedicated the award to Brianna and to everyone who has supported the family's efforts, saying the work is "all because of Brianna" and that she believes her daughter would be proud. At the event, celebrity Ella Morgan attended with Esther and wore a custom cherry-blossom dress (incorporating pink, Brianna's favourite colour, and transgender Pride flag elements) as a tribute.

The award recognises Esther's transformation of personal tragedy into sustained public campaigning aimed at protecting other young people from online risks and supporting healthier digital habits and mental wellbeing.

Charlize Theron

and her transgender daughter, Jackson

Charlize Theron is an award-winning South African-born actress and producer who has become one of Hollywood's most respected stars. Born on 7 August 1975, she rose to international fame through films including *The Devil's Advocate*, *Mad Max: Fury Road* and *Monster*, for which she won the Academy Award for Best Actress in 2004. Away from the screen, Theron is also known for her humanitarian work and support for LGBTQ+ rights.



Theron became a mother through adoption, welcoming Jackson into her family in 2012 and adopting her younger daughter, August, in 2015.

In 2019, Theron publicly confirmed that Jackson was transgender. She explained that when Jackson was just three years old, she looked at her mother and said, "I am not a boy!" Theron had initially believed Jackson was a boy, but she listened to her child and accepted her daughter's understanding of herself.

Theron has spoken movingly about her responsibility as a mother, saying that her job is to love her children, protect them and ensure they have the freedom to become who they are. She has also asked the media and the public to use the correct pronouns when referring to Jackson.

Importantly, Theron has been careful to protect her daughter's privacy, emphasising that Jackson's story belongs to Jackson and that she should decide for herself how much of it she wishes to share.

Her approach offers a powerful example of parental acceptance. Rather than expecting her child to fit other people's expectations, Theron has chosen to listen, respect her daughter's identity and stand beside her. Her message is simple but meaningful: children deserve to be loved for who they are, not for who others expect them to be.

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The Global Queer November Trivia Quiz

A trivia game celebrating transgender and LGBTQ+ history, culture, and global milestones tied to the month of November.



Question 1: Pioneering Legislation (Spain/Europe)

In November 2014, which autonomous community became a global trailblazer by passing Spain's first comprehensive law explicitly protecting the rights of transgender people, serving as a blueprint for future national legislation?

[ ] A) Catalonia
[ ] B) Madrid
[ ] C) Andalusia
[ ] D) Galicia

Question 2: Legal Milestones (Latin America)

On November 24, 2011, which country's Chamber of Deputies overwhelmingly passed a. historic Gender Identity Law, making it the first nation in the world to allow people to change their official gender marker purely based on self-determination, without requiring surgery or psychological diagnoses?

[ ] A) Argentina
[ ] B) Spain
[ ] C) Brazil
[ ] D) Uruguay

Question 3: Community Resistance (United Kingdom)

In November 1987, the UK government introduced the infamous "Section 28" clause, sparking over a decade of fierce LGBTQ+ protests. What did this legislation strictly prohibit local authorities from doing?

[ ] A) Hosting public Pride marches
[ ] B) "Promoting" homosexuality or publishing material that accepted it as a pretended family relationship
[ ] C) Accessing gender-affirming healthcare

[ ] D) Criminalizing same-sex relationships between women

Question 4: International Visibility (Asia/Global)

In November 2018, Angela Ponce made global headlines and shattered barriers for transgender representation in media. Which major international event did she participate in as the first-ever openly trans contestant?

[ ] A) The Eurovision Song Contest
[ ] B) The Cannes Film Festival Main Jury
[ ] C) The Olympic Opening Ceremony
[ ] D) The Miss Universe Pageant

Question 5: Commemoration (Global)

Observed internationally every November 20th, Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was founded in 1999 to honor Rita Hester, a Black trans woman whose unsolved murder catalysed the community. In which global city did the very first TDOR candlelit vigil take place?

[ ] A) Madrid (Spain)
[ ] B) London (UK)
[ ] C) Boston (USA)
[ ] D) Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Answers at the end of the magazine…

We Were Never the Issue: A Trans Woman's View of Trump's Political Obsession

As a trans woman, I have watched Donald Trump build political campaigns around people like me for years. Listening to his speeches, advertisements, and policy announcements, you might think trans Americans represent one of the greatest challenges facing the United States. In reality, we are a tiny minority whose lives have little bearing on the economic and social pressures facing most Americans.

That disconnect is precisely why so many of us see Trump's focus on trans people, particularly trans women, as a political strategy rather than a response to a genuine national crisis.

Trump understands the power of creating an "enemy" that can unite a political movement. Throughout his career, he has repeatedly identified groups that can be portrayed as threats to ordinary Americans. At different times, immigrants, the media, political opponents, academics, and LGBTQ+ people have filled that role. Trans women, however, have become an especially convenient target because most Americans have limited direct experience with transgender people. That makes it easier to define us through political rhetoric rather than reality.

The pattern is difficult to ignore. When discussions about inflation, healthcare costs, housing affordability, corporate power, wages, or government dysfunction become politically uncomfortable, attention shifts toward culture-war issues. Suddenly, campaign advertisements warn about trans athletes. Politicians talk about bathrooms. Television panels debate our existence. News cycles become consumed by questions affecting a tiny fraction of the population while millions of Americans continue struggling with problems that have a far greater impact on their daily lives.



From my perspective, Trump has not merely participated in these conversations. He has amplified them.

His political messaging often presents trans women not as individuals but as symbols. We are used as examples of societal decline, evidence that something has supposedly gone wrong with the country. Rather than discussing our actual experiences, our healthcare needs, our families, or the discrimination we face, we become props in a broader narrative about

restoring traditional values and fighting cultural change.

The result is that people who have never met a trans woman frequently feel as though they know exactly who we are and what we represent.

What they often know, however, is a political caricature.

The genius of this strategy, from a purely political standpoint, is that it simplifies complex anxieties. Economic inequality is difficult to solve. Healthcare reform is difficult to solve. The housing crisis is difficult to solve. But identifying a visible minority and presenting that minority as evidence of cultural decline is politically straightforward. It provides voters with a clear story, a villain, and a sense that someone is fighting on their behalf.

The problem is that real people pay the price for that story.

Every time a campaign advertisement portrays trans women as dangerous, deceptive, or threatening, a message is sent beyond the ballot box. It reaches classrooms, workplaces, families, and communities. It tells people that trans lives are controversial by nature. It encourages strangers to view us through a political lens rather than a human one.

For many trans women, this is not an abstract debate about public policy. It is about being discussed constantly without being listened to. It is about watching some of the most powerful people in the country describe you as a problem while knowing that your actual life looks remarkably ordinary. We go to work. We pay taxes. We worry about our futures. We care for our friends and families. We are not the source of the nation's economic struggles, housing shortages, healthcare costs, or political dysfunction.

Yet the spotlight remains fixed on us.

The most frustrating part is that the attention often feels profoundly disproportionate. If the amount of time spent discussing trans women reflected our impact on the country's challenges, we would be one of America's largest and most influential constituencies. We are not. The intensity of the focus reveals that the conversation is less about trans people themselves and more about what trans people represent politically.

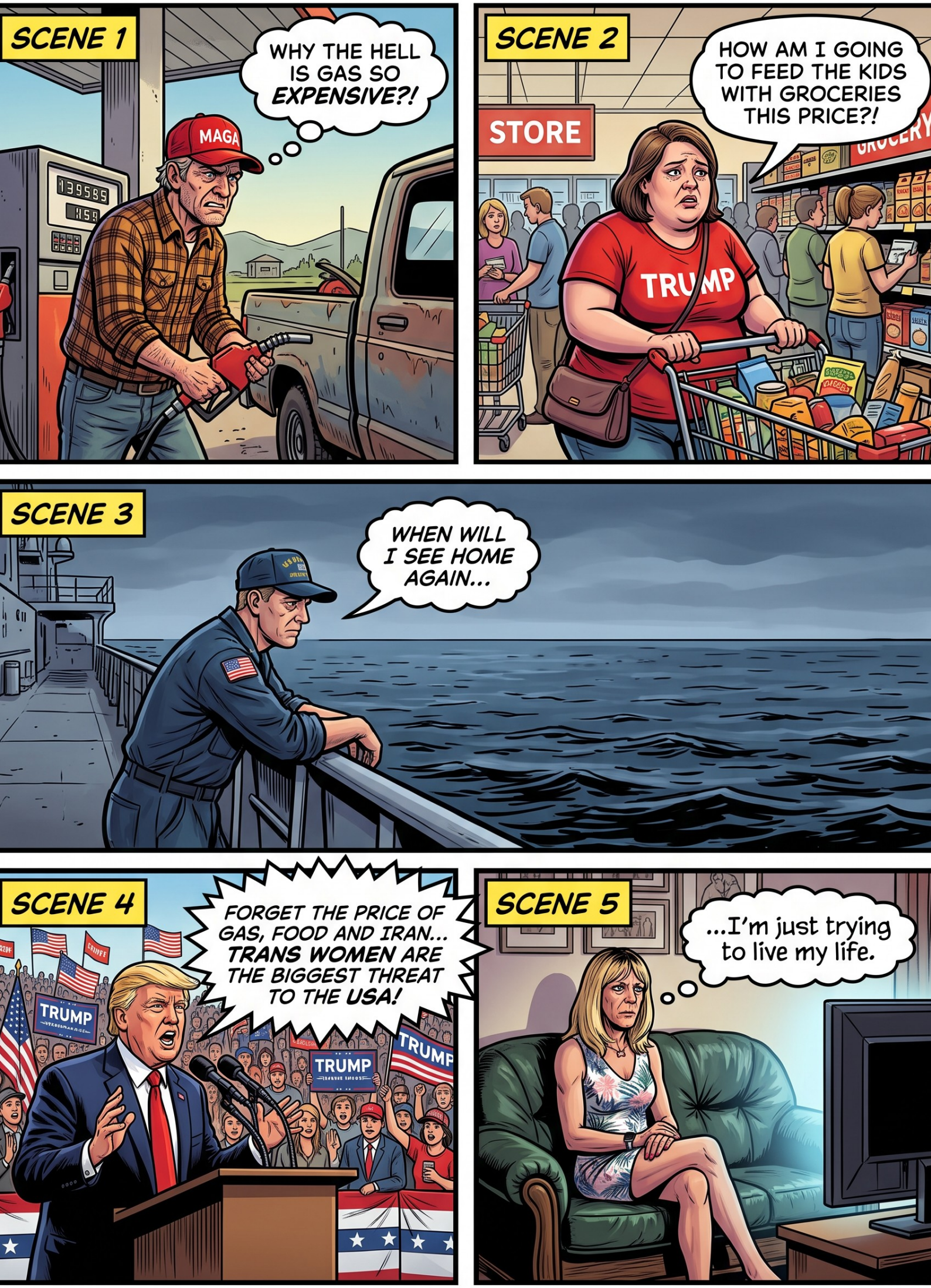
Trump's use of trans women as a campaign issue illustrates a broader feature of modern populist politics: when governing problems are complicated, cultural enemies are simpler. A speech about inflation requires solutions. A speech about trans people requires only outrage.

From where I stand, that is why the obsession persists.

It is not because trans women are central to America's problems. It is because we are useful in a political narrative that transforms fear, uncertainty, and frustration into electoral energy. We have become a symbol onto which broader anxieties can be projected.

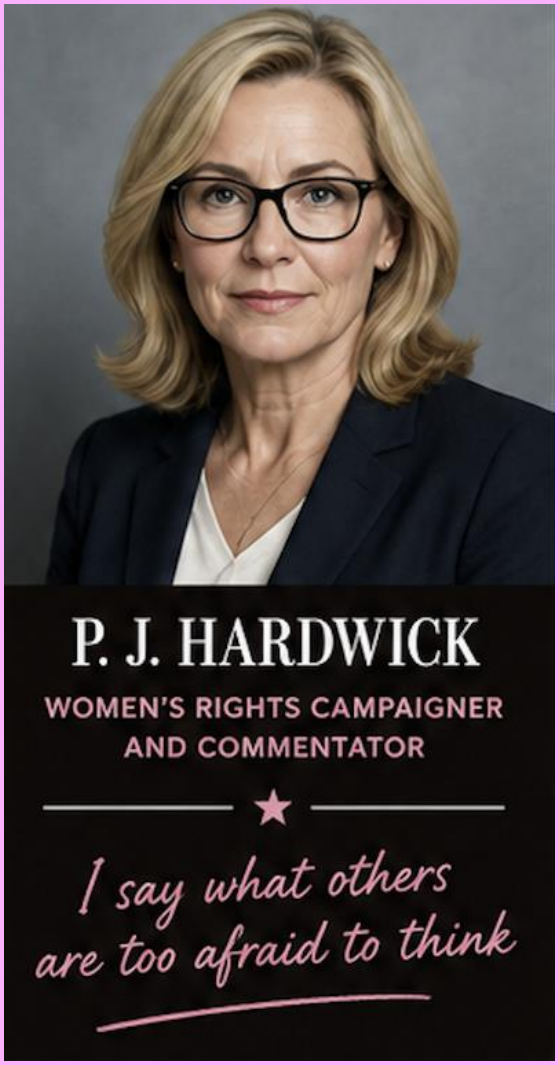
And that may be effective politics.

But it comes at the cost of treating an already vulnerable group of people as a distraction from the issues that truly shape the lives of most Americans.


SCENE 1
WHY THE HELL IS GAS SO EXPENSIVE?!
MAGA
SCENE 2
HOW AM I GOING TO FEED THE KIDS WITH GROCERIES THIS PRICE?!
STORE
TRUMP
SCENE 3
WHEN WILL I SEE HOME AGAIN...
SCENE 4
FORGET THE PRICE OF GAS, FOOD AND IRAN... TRANS WOMEN ARE THE BIGGEST THREAT TO THE USA!
TRUMP
TRUMP
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SCENE 5
...I'm just trying to live my life.

The Monthly Trans Panic

BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS TO SPEAK FOR WOMEN (LIKE ME)



I Have Seen a Woman Wearing Trousers. This Cannot Continue

By P. J. Hardwick

I was out shopping last week in Waitrose, just breezing through the champagne aisle when I saw it. Once seen, you can't unsee it.

I mean, **Waitrose**. Where decent people shop.

There she was. I think it was *she*, as you never know these days, but I saw it with my own eyes. A woman wearing **trousers**. Not only trousers, she was wearing flat shoes, no makeup, a jacket and what I can only describe as a baseball cap. She was also carrying a bag.
Not a handbag.
A **bag**.

I could forgive the short hair because I have a lesbian friend, but I began to wonder where I was. This is Waitrose,

for heavens' sake. As I got closer I realised the trousers were **jeans**.

I wondered if I should call the police. I mean, she may want to use the toilets. Then came the awful realisation that civilisation may actually be collapsing.

Maybe she's a lefty? **I thought. Surely not in Waitrose.**

It is clearly time for action. I propose the creation of a **National Femininity Enforcement Agency**. Every woman should undergo an annual **Femininity MOT**.

THE FEMININITY MOT
Skirt or dress: YES / NO
High heels: YES / NO
Make-up: YES / NO
Long hair: YES / NO
Handbag: YES / NO
Jewellery: YES / NO
Owns a power drill: YES / NO
Has ever watched football voluntarily: YES / NO
Can reverse a car without swearing: YES / NO

Femininity rating:
☐ Excellent
☐ Acceptable
☐ Needs improvement
☐ Frankly suspicious

The Waitrose woman would obviously have failed. No skirt. No heels. No makeup. Jeans. Trainers. Baseball cap. And not a handbag in sight. Just a perfectly ordinary bag. We need to know what's inside these bags.

Lipstick? Acceptable.
Emergency chocolate? Encouraging.
Allen key set?
Immediate investigation.

And before anyone accuses me of being anti-woman, let me make one thing absolutely clear. I am extremely pro-woman. None of these pretend women. I just think women should behave more like I think women should behave. There is a difference. I have therefore written to the Government with several recommendations.

Every woman should be issued with an official femininity card.
Trousers should carry a warning: **PROLONGED EXPOSURE MAY CAUSE INDEPENDENCE.**
And every Waitrose should have a Femininity Compliance Officer stationed discreetly between the champagne and free-range eggs.
Their job would be simple.
Observe. Assess. Report.
There is, however, one slight problem.
While writing this column I suddenly realised something rather troubling.
I am wearing trousers.
Flat shoes.
No makeup.

And I haven't carried a handbag all day.
I also bought a power drill last Tuesday.
I have decided not to panic.
Yet.

P.J.'S MONTHLY SAFETY TIP

If you see a woman wearing trousers, remain calm.
Do not stare.
Do not question her.
And whatever you do, don't ask what she's carrying in that bag.
It may contain an Allen key.









A UK television programme caused a stink last month, with a trans related incident.

Last month, the BBC found itself at the centre of a controversy involving a T-shirt slogan on *Strictly Come Dancing*. I have to confess that I'm not a fan of the programme, although my other half watches it!

The controversy concerned dancer Bethany Antonia wearing a T-shirt bearing the words **"Protect the Dolls"**, a message of solidarity with transgender women and transfeminine people.

The term "dolls" has roots in LGBTQ+ ballroom culture, particularly among Black and Latina communities. Today, "Protect the Dolls" is a rallying cry reminding us that trans women deserve safety, dignity and respect.

So what was the problem?

The slogan was edited out of the programme. The BBC explained that its entertainment shows routinely restrict overt branding and slogans, regardless of their wording. Fair enough, perhaps. Broadcasters have editorial rules, and I cannot claim to know the motives behind this particular decision.

But it raises an important question: why should a message supporting the safety of trans women become controversial in the first place?

A question of representation

The incident also made me think about LGBTQ+ representation on British television. Several programmes featuring LGBTQ+ people have ended or faced changes in recent years, although financial pressures and other editorial decisions can have many explanations.

It would be unfair to suggest that every decision is motivated by prejudice. The BBC has also commissioned *What It Feels Like for a Girl*, based on Paris Lees's memoir of growing up as a trans girl, with Ellis Howard playing the lead.

That is an important example of a trans story reaching a mainstream audience, with a trans actor playing a trans character.

The problem, then, isn't that the BBC never represents us. It's whether we are being given enough opportunities to tell our stories and simply be part of everyday life.

Compare this with ITV's *Coronation Street*, where LGBTQ+ characters, relationships and references to Manchester's LGBTQ+ community are woven into the world of the programme. Sometimes they are central to the story; sometimes they are simply part of the background.

That is what normal representation looks like. We don't always need a special programme about being trans. Sometimes we just need to exist on screen without our presence becoming a debate.



Everyone has an opinion

The *Strictly* controversy quickly spilled into wider discussion, with commentators offering competing interpretations of the slogan. One comparison likened “Protect the Dolls” to “White Lives Matter”.

But slogans cannot be judged simply by the fact that they appear on T-shirts. Their meaning, origins and context matter.

Supporting trans women does not automatically mean taking rights or safety away from cisgender women. We should be able to discuss difficult questions without treating the rights and dignity of one group as a threat to another.

Why must it always be one or the other?

I am also concerned about how trans people are represented in news and current-affairs programmes. Too often, discussions about our rights and our place in society involve presenters, politicians and commentators debating our lives, while trans people themselves receive little opportunity to contribute meaningfully.

There is a difference between examining an issue fairly and discussing a community without properly listening to its members.

Being invited on television is not the same as being listened to, and being discussed is not the same as being represented.

We are not an abstract political issue. We are ordinary people with families, jobs, relationships, worries and hopes. We have different experiences and opinions, which is precisely why our voices matter.

We belong on television, too

There have been other reported examples of supportive slogans being obscured on BBC programmes, including a T-shirt reading “Trans Rights Are Human Rights” worn by Kaiser Chiefs singer Ricky Wilson on *Michael McIntyre's Big Show*.

These incidents raise reasonable questions about how editorial rules are applied. We would need reliable comparisons before concluding that messages supporting trans people are being treated differently, but the question deserves to be asked.

I am not demanding special treatment. I am asking for fairness, visibility and the opportunity to be heard.

We should be able to celebrate allies who stand up for us without their support being portrayed as an attack on other women. We should be able to appear on television without our existence automatically becoming a political battleground. And we should be able to tell our own stories, rather than constantly watching other people tell them for us.

Perhaps the BBC's decisions have perfectly reasonable explanations. But public concern about representation should not simply be dismissed.

We don't just want to be discussed on television. We want to belong on television, too.

THE QUEEROSCOPE

Your LGBTQ+ Horoscope for November

The stars have aligned. Unfortunately, several of them have been reported to the Equalities Committee.

♈ ARIES (21 March – 19 April)

November finds you full of confidence and ready to fight for what you believe in. Unfortunately, you may find yourself arguing with a stranger on Facebook who thinks watching one YouTube video makes them an expert in transgender healthcare. Walk away. They haven't read the article you sent them, and they certainly aren't going to start now.

Lucky item: A rainbow-coloured boxing glove.

♉ TAURUS (20 April – 20 May)

Your love of comfort and routine will be tested when somebody suggests a gender-neutral toilet. You will cope admirably, provided nobody moves your favourite cushion. Romantically, a mysterious stranger may enter your life. Check their profile carefully. If their hobbies include fishing, conspiracy theories and describing themselves as an alpha male, the universe is advising caution.

Lucky item: A comfortable bra. Correctly fitted, naturally.

♊ GEMINI (21 May – 20 June)

Your dual nature is particularly strong this month. You may find yourself explaining to someone that being bisexual does not mean fancying absolutely everybody, while simultaneously fancying the barista who just spelt your name wrong. A former partner may return, claiming they've changed. Mercury is in retrograde. So, apparently, is your taste in people.

Lucky item: Two phones, three personalities and a very understanding friend.

♋ CANCER (21 June – 22 July)

You're feeling emotional, and quite right too. The world is exhausting, your group chat is in crisis, and somebody has just announced that Pride has become too political. Take a deep breath. Remember that you don't have to educate every bigot you encounter. Sometimes the healthiest response is a cup of tea, a biscuit and blocking them.

Lucky item: A box of tissues. For tears, laughter or reading the comments section.

♌ LEO (23 July – 22 August)

November is your month to shine. Your outfit is fabulous, your eyeliner is symmetrical, and your entrance at the local LGBTQ+ social gathering will be discussed for weeks. However, beware of becoming the person who insists that every Pride event must revolve around them. There is a fine line between being a community icon and being the reason the group chat has gone quiet.

Lucky item: A mirror. Preferably a full-length one.

♍ VIRGO (23 August – 22 September)

Your attention to detail is legendary. Unfortunately, you have spent three hours researching whether your new haircut is sufficiently gender-affirming and another two wondering whether your pronouns look better in italics. The stars have a message: you are allowed to exist without submitting a supporting document. At work, someone will call you brave for simply ordering a sandwich. Smile politely. You know they mean well.

Lucky item: A clipboard labelled “Things That Are Absolutely None of My Business”.

♎ LIBRA (23 September – 22 October)

Romance is in the air, but so is indecision. Should you message that attractive woman? Should you change your dating profile? Should you finally admit that your type is “emotionally unavailable but excellent at choosing wine”? The universe recommends honesty. Your friends recommend therapy. Your ex recommends getting back together. Listen to your friends.

Lucky item: A dating app with a very good block function.

♏ SCORPIO (23 October – 21 November)

Your powers of observation are exceptional this month. You can spot a red flag at fifty paces, particularly if it comes wearing a podcast microphone and explaining why women should return to traditional values. Passion is high, but don't confuse chemistry with somebody who has simply remembered to charge their phone.

Lucky item: A black outfit, dark sunglasses and absolutely no obligation to explain yourself.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (22 November – 21 December)

Adventure calls! You may be tempted to attend a new LGBTQ+ event, explore a different style or finally tell someone exactly what you think of their opinions on gender. By all means, embrace your freedom. Just remember that not every family dinner needs to become a two-hour seminar on gender identity. Your aunt has come for the potatoes, not a lecture on social constructionism.

Lucky item: A passport, a rainbow flag and an exit strategy.

♑ CAPRICORN (22 December – 19 January)

You are practical, ambitious and determined to get things done. This month, you may attempt to organise your local LGBTQ+ group, create a spreadsheet for Pride and establish a committee to discuss the spreadsheet. Beware of burnout. You cannot single-handedly dismantle prejudice, run the magazine, organise every event and remember everybody's birthday. Although, knowing you, you'll try.

Lucky item: A diary with at least one blank page.

♒ AQUARIUS (20 January – 18 February)

You are the zodiac's natural rebel, which is convenient because somebody has just told you that your existence is controversial.

You may feel compelled to explain that gender diversity has existed throughout human history. You will have evidence, references and possibly a PowerPoint presentation. Unfortunately, your opponent has a Facebook meme. Save your

energy. The stars suggest putting the presentation to better use at a friendly gathering.

Lucky item: A well-researched article and a very large glass of something refreshing.

♓ PISCES (19 February – 20 March)

Your empathy is overflowing. You will spend November supporting a friend through a breakup, reassuring a newly out trans person and helping someone choose a Pride outfit. Remember to look after yourself, too. Being LGBTQ+ does not mean you must become everyone's unpaid therapist. Someone will tell you that you're too sensitive. The stars say you are sensitive enough to notice when people are being unkind. That's not a defect.

Lucky item: A cosy blanket, a supportive friend and the ability to say, “Not today, thank you.”

🌜 THE COSMIC DISCLAIMER

These predictions have been prepared using advanced astrological techniques, a suspiciously colourful set of tarot cards and absolutely no scientific evidence whatsoever.

Any resemblance to actual LGBTQ+ people, local community organisers, online arguments or that one person who always starts trouble in the group chat is entirely intentional. The stars may be wrong. The transphobes, unfortunately, are still out there.

Quiz Answer Key & Context

1. C) Andalusia (Spain/Europe)
In November 2014, Andalusia approved its pioneering *Ley de Transexualidad*, establishing the right toself-determined gender identity in healthcare and education long before the national *Ley Trans*.

2. A) Argentina (Latin America)
Argentina's *Ley de Identidad de Género* set a revolutionary international standard for trans human rights by removing all medicalized requirements or pathologizing diagnoses.

3. B) "Promoting" homosexuality or publishing material that accepted it... (United Kingdom)
Introduced under Margaret Thatcher's government, Section 28 banned the 'promotion' of homosexuality in schools and local government, effectively silencing a generation of queer youth until its repeal. *We at Trans Focus believe the UK is allowing a new S28 at the moment focusing on removing trans rights.

4. D) The Miss Universe Pageant (Asia/Global)
Representing Spain at the global pageant held in Bangkok, Angela Ponce broke decades of strict gender policing in international beauty competitions, receiving a global standing ovation.

5. C) Boston, USA (Global)
Advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith launched the first vigil in the Boston area to honor Rita Hester, sparking a global movement that is now observed internationally in hundreds of cities.