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Bloody roses — deconstructing the predatory trans* women myth



Rejserin · [Follow](#)

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TW: discussions of sex crimes



Simple question for you: how many women were convicted of sexual assault or other sex crimes in the UK since 2018? Try to Google the answer and you will find that the UK government's Office of National Statistics has not publicly provided the sex of convicted sex offenders. It has for the victims, along with a range of statistics on other protected characteristics, but there is no readily available hard data on female sex offenders. This matters because while the majority of convictions for sexual offenses are likely legally male in the eyes of the UK courts, there have been significant convictions of female sexual abusers to show that sexual assault is not purely committed by men.

In the UK rape has been legally framed around a penis non-consensually

penetrating either a vagina or an anus. Ireland, Canada, and other parts of the world frame rape as penetration by a penis or a foreign object non-consensually. In the UK's legal framing a woman can only be convicted of rape if she helps a penis owner commit such an act. Other countries legally allow convictions of women if the facts of the crime demonstrate. Of course, this cuts to the heart of how you legally define male/female, especially when women can have penises and men vaginas. If the penis is the weapon of rape, then essentially gender becomes moot, yet it is a significant reason why trans* women are both societally viewed as men and legally treated as such in the UK.

There is no straight forward answer to solving sexual violence, but in shaming trans* women just because one might be a sexual predator falls into the most basic pernicious trope against minorities there is. Jewish men, black men, Arab men, working class men, male refugees, gay men, you name a minority group and at some point men in those groups have been accused of sexual predation. The same tropes, the same language, and the same framing were used against all of them. Those who wield the power over white female bodies have decried anyone who comes close to them, who desires them other than themselves. To be other in this world view is to be a threat to vestal female virtue. And yes, this includes certain feminist groups who project a fear of the other onto these minorities. In this mindset a trans* woman is never a woman purely because she was assigned male at birth, and that vestigial assignment tars everything going forward.

Legally this is a complex issue, as consent is a fluid dynamic when trans*

women enter any relational context: if a trans* woman does not disclose her identity is she lying to her partner? If so, legally, has her partner given consent for any sexual activities the pair undertake? I wish this was rhetorical, but the way sex-based laws are constructed around biology and consent mean that this is a real issue in the current media climate. Trans men have been convicted for not disclosing their gender history to their female partners, while too many trans* women have been murdered by their male partners when they found out. What is written in law is turned into a media narrative that perpetually treats trans* folk as deviant, sexualised, and only worthy of cursory consideration. The predatory trans* woman myth flows from this, seeing trans* women as walking phalluses above all else.

Many of the myths around trans* women revolve around the fears that they only transition so they can commit sexual offenses against women and girls, yet the sad reality is that all genders are capable of sexual abuse. Intimate partner violence in women/women relationships is reportedly as high as 43.8% (Rolle et al 2008), including nearly 24% of women who have been beaten by their female partners. What those who espouse the myth that trans* women are predators fail to tell you is that it is often the power dynamic in intimate relationships that is the root of sexual violence, not simply a stranger sexually assaulting an innocent person.

I am not hand waving away male sexual predation, because statistically men account for 75%+ of the reported sexual violence, yet this clouds the fact that women are not simply virtuous or fragile objects on the receiving

end of abuse. Framing it is solely as a matter of male power and dominance fails both the victims and those who live in fear of sexual abuse and violence. Sexual abuse is rooted in the power imbalance between perpetrator and victim, hence why most countries have statutory rape laws. That women are capable of sexual abuse should not be a shocking fact, yet in the narrative spun about trans* women those who root womanhood in a biological construct fail to account for this type of predation.

This construction of cis womanhood as a flower in need of protection centres on the perceived fragility of a certain type of woman. Often, she is constructed as white, middle class, educated, naive in the ways of the world, and ever in need of a shield. In reality, this trope is highly misleading, as the UK's ONS statistics show that victims cut across all ages, class barriers, and ethnicities, with university students, those living in working class regions, and vulnerable elderly women most likely to report being victims of sexual violence. Male victims of sexual assault are left out of the picture, yet they too deserve a voice. Without perpetrator demographics it is impossible to attribute who is abusing who, yet it is clear that the societal perceptions of victims we have constructed is misleading at best and harmful at worst.

To label and construct trans* women as sexual predators simply for expressing themselves as women plays into the harmful tropes of female fragility. Trans* women are often on the receiving end of sexual violence, and proportionally are more likely to be victims of intimate partner violence. In stripping away their womanhood, seeing it as a facsimile of the “real” thing society proclaims that their victimisation is brought upon

themselves, and that only “real” women are worthy of support and help after the violence has happened.

The sad fact is that women and men are sexually assaulted, raped, and otherwise abused because those who have power wish to do so. Victims of these crimes were not asking for it, were not wearing those clothes to invite the attacker on, did not consume alcohol or drugs just to give others access to their bodies, were not leading the other person on. No, it was the predator’s desire and lack of self-control that led to the crime. That we see this as a phallo-centric male dominated crime is telling, yet in the construction of the narrative we leave out all the victims whose experiences did not fall neatly into this narrative. A man sexually assaulted by a woman is often ridiculed and left to cope on their own; a woman abused by her female partner is left out of the statistics because often there are not the right boxes to tick on the forms. Our narratives about violence stem from a Victorian reluctance to see women as predators, as capable of violence, and it is at the root of the trans* women are predators myth.

My intension in writing this is not to hand wave away male sexual violence, but to demonstrate that the narrative being pushed about trans* women clouds a messier version of womanhood that is often ignored. Predation in all its forms needs to be stopped, but simply pointing to trans* women as the bogey people does nothing to resolve the entrenched power inequalities behind rape. Education of boys is the starter, but also awareness that sexual predation cuts across all demographics, both victims and perpetrators. There is no one idealised victim, and there is no one loathed predator.

Trans* women may commit sexual violence, but this is not a unique phenomena in determining their gender identity. Overcoming this trope requires much the same approach as overcoming the pernicious lies about black, Arab and Jewish men: education, dialogue, media representation, and openly fighting for clear and unambiguous statistics. Trans* women are women, and deserve to be treated as such in equity.

Transgender

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Written by Rejserin

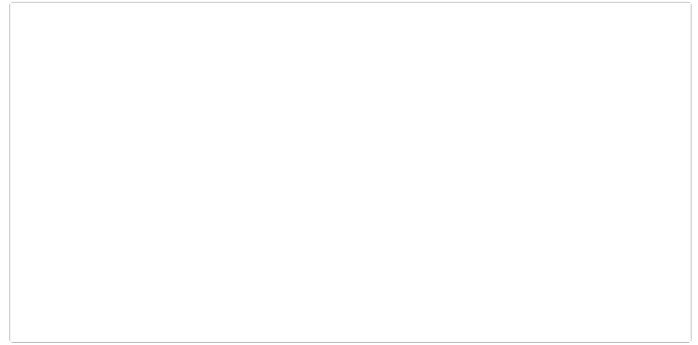
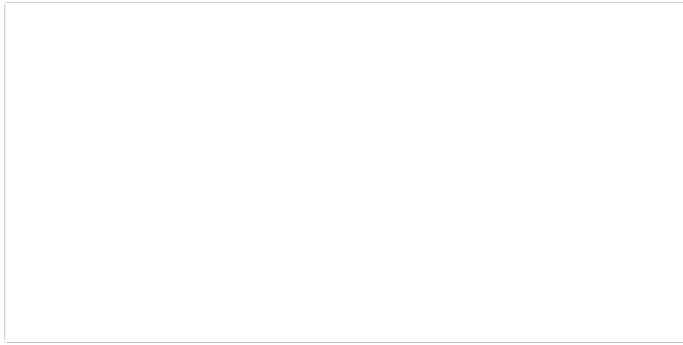
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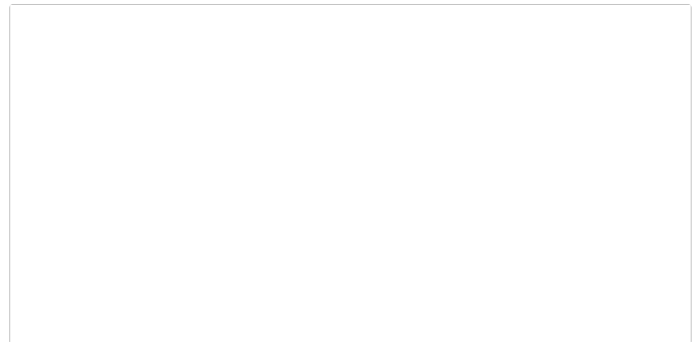
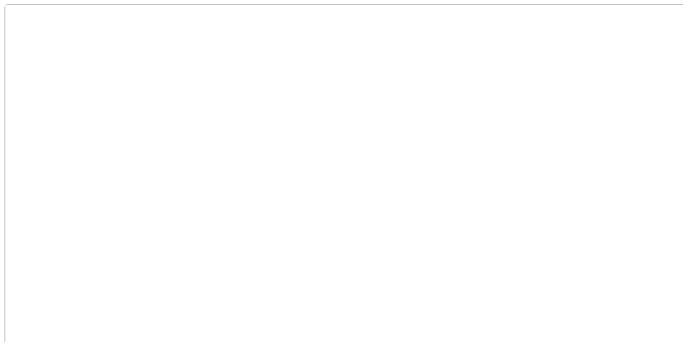
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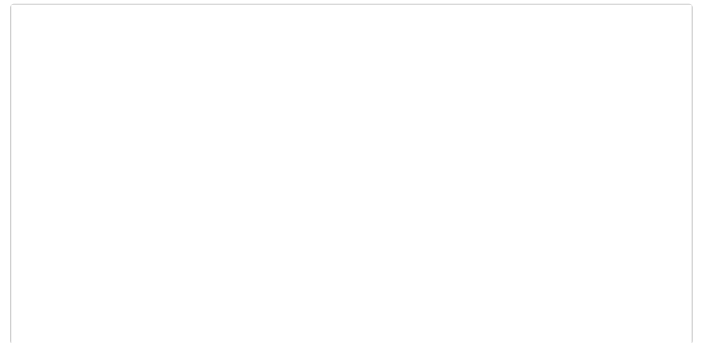
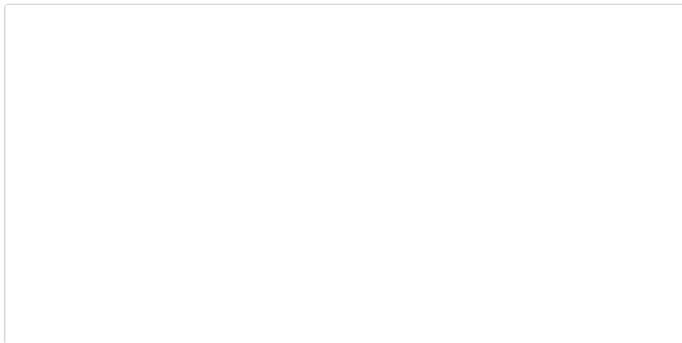
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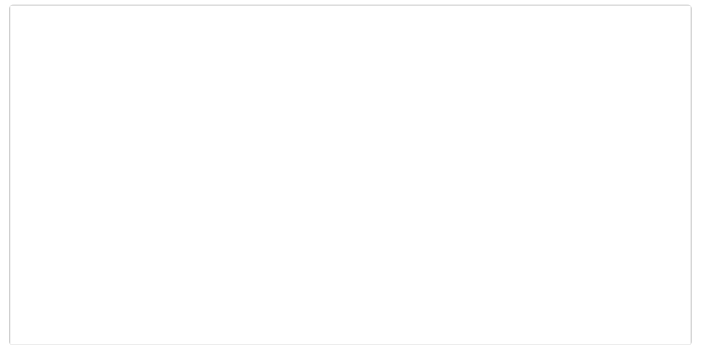
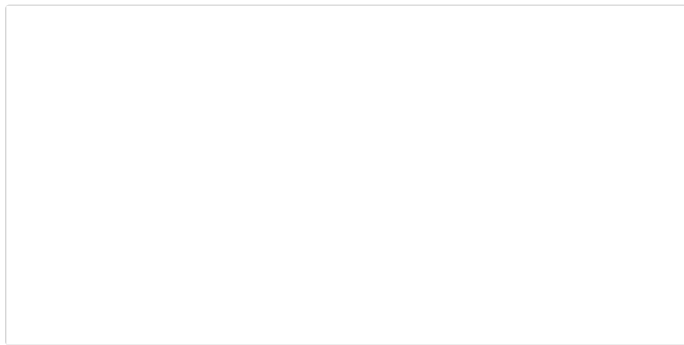
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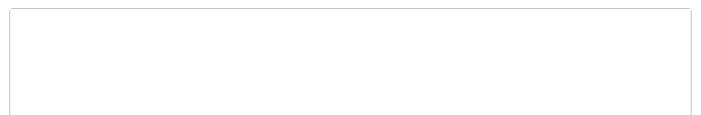
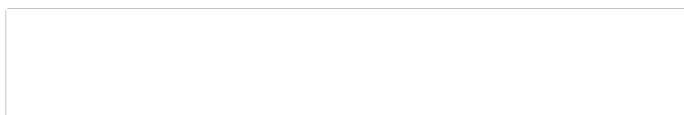
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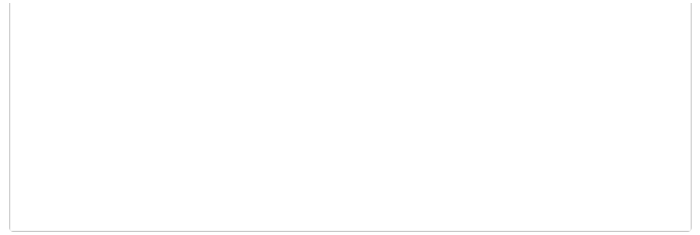
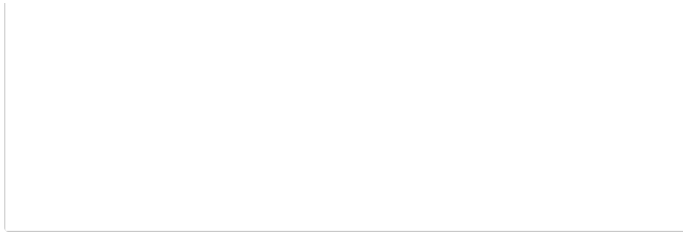
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