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There is a 15 YEAR OLD BLACK GIRL in prison for NOT DOING HOMEWORK. This 19 YEAR OLD WHITE MAN, who is deemed a threat to society, is getting 24 months of PROBATION for PLOTTING A MASS SHOOTING [source news](#)

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telegra.ph/Adree-Edmo-Trans-prisoner-receives-gender-surgery-after-legal-battle-07-29

Telegraph

Adree Edmo: Trans prisoner receives gender surgery after legal battle

A transgender woman serving a prison sentence for sexual abuse in Idaho has undergone gender affirmation surgery, after a years-long legal battle and two attempts to castrate herself behind bars. Adree Edmo had pursued a successful legal challenge against...

telegra.ph/Propaganda-for-profit-targets-the-Baltic-states-on-YouTube-07-29

Telegraph

Propaganda for profit targets the Baltic states on YouTube

Fringe YouTube channels monetize pro-Kremlin narratives about the Baltic states

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-is-the-us-constitution-so-hard-to-amend-peter-paccone>

TED-Ed

Why is the US Constitution so hard to amend? - Peter Paccone

When it was ratified in 1789, the US Constitution didn't just institute a government by the people – it provided a way for the people to alter the Constitution itself. And yet, of the nearly 11,000 amendments proposed in the centuries since, only 27 have...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-happened-when-the-united-states-tried-to-ban>

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TED-Ed

What happened when the United States tried to ban alcohol - Rod Phillips
On January 17, 1920, less than one hour after spirits had become illegal throughout the United States, armed men robbed a Chicago freight train and made off with thousands of dollars worth of whiskey. It was a first taste of the unintended consequences of...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-should-you-read-the-master-and-margarita-alex-gendler>

TED-Ed

Why should you read “The Master and Margarita”? - Alex Gendler
The Devil has come to town. But don’t worry— all he wants to do is stage a magic show. This absurd premise forms the central plot of Mikhail Bulgakov’s masterpiece, “The Master and Margarita.” Its blend of political satire, historical fiction and occult mysticism...

You Don’t Have to Be Pretty.

You don’t owe prettiness to anyone.

Not to your boyfriend/spouse/partner, not to your co-workers, especially not to random men on the street.

You don’t owe it to your mother, you don’t owe it to your children, you don’t owe it to civilization in general.

Prettiness is not a rent you pay for occupying a space marked “female”.

[telegra.ph/You-Dont-Have-to-Be-Pretty-07-30](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/you-dont-have-to-be-pretty-07-30)

Telegraph

You Don't Have to Be Pretty

So the other day, folks in the comments were talking about leggings. I’m pretty agnostic about leggings, but the whole discussion (which centered on the fact that it can be *really* hard to look good in leggings) got me thinking about the pervasive idea that...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/the-life-legacy-assassination-of-an-african-revolutionary-lisa-janae-bacon>

TED-Ed

The life, legacy & assassination of an African revolutionary - Lisa Janae Bacon
In 1972, Thomas Sankara was swept into the revolution seeking to wrest control of Madagascar from France's lingering colonial rule. The protests inspired the West African native to read works by socialist leaders and seek wisdom from military strategy. Leaving...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/social-animal-david-brooks>

TED-Ed

Social animal - David Brooks

Tapping into the findings of his latest book, NYTimes columnist David Brooks unpacks new insights into human nature from the cognitive sciences -- insights with massive implications for economics and politics as well as our own self-knowledge. In a talk full...

a 16 year old was murdered for throwing a sandwich in a cafeteria. when the school staff heard that he threw a sandwich one of them sat on his neck for 12 minutes. he kept saying that he couldn't breathe and died of cardiac arrest. his name is cornelius fredericks. SAY HIS NAME. [source](#)

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/nadia-al-sakkaf-see-yemen-through-my-eyes>

TED-Ed

See Yemen through my eyes - Nadia Al-Sakkaf

As political turmoil in Yemen continues, the editor-in-chief of the Yemen Times, Nadia Al-Sakkaf, talks at TEDGlobal with host Pat Mitchell. Al-Sakkaf's independent, English-language paper is vital for sharing news -- and for sharing a new vision of Yemen...

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/madeleine-albright-on-being-a-woman-and-a-diplomat>

TED-Ed

On being a woman and a diplomat - Madeleine Albright

In a frank and funny Q&A with Pat Mitchell from the Paley Center, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright talks bluntly about politics and diplomacy, making the case that women's issues deserve a place at the center of foreign policy. Far from being...

telegra.ph/The-Umbrella-Academy-season-2-Klaus-actor-Robert-Sheehan-teases-plot-07-30

Telegraph

The Umbrella Academy season 2: Klaus actor Robert Sheehan teases plot
As The Umbrella Academy gears up to return for season two, Robert Sheehan (Klaus Hargreeves) has teased how the new episodes tackle homophobia and racism in the 1960s. The pansexual Klaus' relationship with Dave struck a chord with queer fans in season one...

telegra.ph/Sam-Smith-Burna-Boy-collab-sparks-debate-about-Nigerian-homophobia-07-30

Telegraph

Sam Smith Burna Boy collab sparks debate about Nigerian homophobia
Sam Smith is dropping a new single, "My Oasis", with Nigerian superstar Burna Boy, which has prompted a mixed reaction from queer citizens of the west African nation. The British singer released a teaser for the track, the first to be released since they...

telegra.ph/Inverness-or-Bust-Britains-forgotten-trans-history-told-in-new-documentary-07-30

Telegraph

Inverness or Bust: Britain's forgotten trans history told in new documentary
An untold story from Britain's transgender history will form the basis for Inverness Or Bust, a new documentary by the trans-led, award-winning non-

profit film project My Genderation. Inverness Or Bust is a story about friendship, allyship and trans Pride...

telegra.ph/Eclipsed-Race-and-Class-Calling-AOC-a-Btch-Is-Not-Just-About-07-30

Telegraph

Eclipsed Race and Class? Calling AOC a 'B*tch' Is Not Just About Sexism
What Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez experienced last week is a continuation of the trend of using sexist and racist slurs against powerful women of color. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) wears a face mask to protect herself from the coronavirus during...

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BBC accused of 'bowing to hate' for removing trans charities from helpline
The BBC has been accused of bowing down to "deliberate and orchestrated hate campaigns" after dropping trans charities covering England, Scotland and Wales from its Action Line website. The BBC's Pride network told members this week that the trans charities...

telegra.ph/Womens-Equality-Party-officer-booted-out-for-views-on-race-and-disability-07-30

Telegraph

Women's Equality Party officer booted out for views on race and disability
A Women's Equality Party (WEP) officer who declared her support for JK Rowling and tried to stop trans women playing sports has been "kicked out" over comments on race and disability. Hilary Baxter was the co-leader of the Oxford branch of the WEP until last...

[telegra.ph/Labour-Trans-member-spearheads-efforts-to-end-anti-trans-rhetoric-07-30](#)

Telegraph

Labour: Trans member spearheads efforts to end 'anti-trans rhetoric'
Local efforts to tackle anti-trans rhetoric in the Labour Party are being spearheaded by a transgender man. Dylan Tippetts, the LGBT+ officer for the Bridgwater and West Somerset Constituency Labour Party (CLP), wants "an educative approach to tackle anti...

[telegra.ph/Louie-Gohmert-Anti-gay-republican-who-refused-mask-has-COVID-19-07-31](#)

Telegraph

Louie Gohmert: Anti-gay republican who refused mask has COVID-19
Anti-mask and anti-gay Texan lawmaker Louie Gohmert sent shudders through the Republican Party Wednesday (July 29) after announcing that he has tested positive for coronavirus. The 66-year-old, who once said gay men should be thrown onto a deserted island...

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Adree Edmo: Trans prisoner receives gender surgery after legal battle

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Governor Brad Little has repeatedly denied transgender inmate Adree Edmo's request for surgery

A transgender woman serving a prison sentence for sexual abuse in Idaho has undergone gender affirmation surgery, after a years-long legal battle and two attempts to castrate herself behind bars.

Adree Edmo had pursued a successful legal challenge against Idaho and Corizon Health Inc, the provider of healthcare for the state prison system, over the refusal to permit her surgery.

She underwent surgery on July 10, according to the Idaho Press, after successfully arguing that depriving her of treatment violates the constitution's ban on "cruel and unusual punishment".

The surgery is estimated to cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000 — far less than the state is believed to have poured into legal battles to prevent it from taking place.

Edmo was sentenced to ten years behind bars in 2011 for sexual abuse of a minor after performing a sex act on a male 15-year-old. She was 22 at the time.



The inmate was diagnosed with gender dysphoria by prison doctors in 2012, but was denied access to gender affirmation surgery, leading her to attempt self-castration while in prison on two occasions.

She sued for the right to undergo surgery in 2017, and was ultimately victorious in federal district and appellate courts.

Idaho's Republican governor Brad Little had sought to appeal the ruling even further, to the US Supreme Court, but it declined to take up the case and permitted the lower court ruling to stand.

Despite burning through taxpayer dollars fighting the legal action, Little had argued: “The hardworking taxpayers of Idaho should not be forced to pay for a convicted sex offender’s gender reassignment surgery when it is contrary to the medical opinions of the treating physician and multiple mental health professionals.”

Appeals court found that denying treatment causes ‘ongoing harm’.

The ninth circuit court of appeals found that prison doctors “knew of and disregarded an excessive risk to Edmo’s health by rejecting her request”, causing “ongoing harm” to her.

The ruling doesn’t mean that all trans inmates in Idaho will be eligible for state-

funded gender-confirmation surgery, but it could set a standard for providing surgery to certain inmates with severe gender dysphoria like Edmo.

Edmo is scheduled for release in 2021.

A trans woman serving a sentence for murder in California became the first inmate to be permitted gender affirmation surgery in 2017. As of 2019, a total of seven inmates in California have undergone gender affirmation surgery, according to public records.

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BBC accused of 'bowing to hate' for removing trans charities from helpline

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The BBC has been accused of bowing down to “deliberate and orchestrated hate campaigns” after dropping trans charities covering England, Scotland and Wales from its Action Line website.

The BBC’s Pride network told members this week that the trans charities have been dropped due to “audience complaints” relating to the “increasingly contested issues relating to trans issues and children”.

“It is a complex area and the BBC needs to remain impartial,” BBC Pride said in an email.

Leading charities Mermaids, The Gender Trust, and The Gender Identity Research and Education Society (GIRES) provide vital support and advice for trans, non-binary and gender-questioning people.

On 7 July, the three trans charities – alongside the LGBT+ Foundation – were quietly dropped from the BBC’s “Gender identity: information and support” page. This came soon after senior MPs and LGBT+ activists branded the BBC “institutionally transphobic“.

Days later, the LGBT+ Foundation was reinstated to the BBC Action Line “LGBT Issues” page – but the three trans-specific charities have apparently been permanently removed without explanation.

Lui Asquith, head of legal and policy for the trans-support charity Mermaids, condemned the BBC for removing the trans charities “at a time of growing transphobia in wider society”.

They continued: “The real victims in this are the trans and gender diverse people who need support and help and this decision further isolates and ostracises those vulnerable individuals.

“We are clear: trans people are here and we are not going anywhere, even if the BBC want to bow down to deliberate and orchestrated hate campaigns. It is a disgrace that the British public service broadcaster has used a false representation of ‘balance’ to validate transphobic claims.

“To date, the BBC have dealt with this opaquely and we call for transparency urgently and as a matter of public importance.”

Mermaids has sent a Freedom of Information request to the BBC, demanding to know who was responsible for the decision to remove the trans charities, and for copies of relevant correspondence between the Women at the BBC staff network and BBC Pride staff network.

BBC Pride, which on 15 July said it had spent a week trying to find out the “rationale” for removing the information about the charities from the BBC Action Line website but admitted it still did not know, emailed members on 27 July about the removal of the trans charities.

“As you know we’ve been finding out about the decision to change the links to

gender identity resources on the BBC Action Line website since the previous ones were taken down on 7 July,” the email reads.

“Updated links are now on the LGBT Issues Action Line page. We have spoken to Action Line and Editorial Policy, who advise Action Line, about the rationale behind this and they are happy to share their thinking.

“A decision to look at the gender identity information line was taken following audience complaints about the action line. This was against a backdrop of increasingly contested issues relating to trans issues and children. It is a complex area and the BBC needs to remain impartial when signposting audiences to organisations that can offer appropriate advice.”

A BBC spokesperson said: “We understand this issue is hugely important for some audiences so our Action Line LBGT Issues page links to gender identity information on the NHS website, which also links through to additional relevant resources.”

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Eclipsed Race and Class? Calling AOC a 'B*tch' Is Not Just About Sexism

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What Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez experienced last week is a continuation of the trend of using sexist and racist slurs against powerful women of color.



Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) wears a face mask to protect herself from the coronavirus during a press conference in the Corona neighborhood of Queens on April 14, 2020 in New York City. (Photo: Johannes Eisele/AFP via Getty Images)

In response to Congressman Ted Yoho's horrible sexist abuse, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) offered a powerful critique of the culture of misogyny, impunity, and dehumanization of women in a passionate speech on the House floor last Thursday.

Using the same brush to paint experiences of all women and an assumption of

shared and equal vulnerability ignore the disproportionate amount of struggle women of color and working-class women must go through as they resist intersecting systems of oppression.

What is interesting in the whole discourse is the dominant tendency of framing this incident exclusively in terms of sexism while ignoring its intersection with race as well as class. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) expressed solidarity with Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) and indicated she had been called offensive names for the past 18 years. Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) tweeted, "Imagine what we could get done if women didn't have to deal with things like this on top of doing their job." The overwhelming support for AOC and critiques of Yoho (R-Fla.) came from liberal white women and other progressive circles who consciously or inadvertently upheld the language of "sisterhood." This sisterhood promoted solidarity that is based on the shared identity and struggles of being women. On the one hand, this solidarity based on sex is essential at a time when the sitting president has been accused of a series of sexual misconducts and violence against women and when there have been concerted efforts by the government to overturn Roe v. Wade and abortion rights, cut international funding for women's rights and reproductive health, and dismantle reproductive health services for women in the United States. On the other hand, using the same brush to paint experiences of all women and an assumption of shared and equal vulnerability ignore the disproportionate amount of struggle women of color and working-class women must go through as they resist intersecting systems of oppression.

Lisa Lerer rightly points out in a *New York Times* article that Hilary Clinton, for example, has been called a "bitch" numerous times (and she never condemned these abuses publicly). Still, she was never called that word in the nation's capital in front of reporters by a sitting congressman, which very likely indicates her white and class privileges. In contrast, what AOC experienced last week is a continuation of the trend of using sexist and racist slurs against powerful women of color. In 2017, for example, the Florida Republican Sen. Frank Artiles referred to Audrey Gibson—a Black woman and Democratic member of the Florida Senate—as "fucking asshole," "bitch," "girl," and also used the n-word at a members-only Governors Club steps away from the state capital.

Dissident and non-conforming women like AOC are not necessarily strangers to the word "bitch." However, the mundanity of calling rebel women a "bitch" in private and public spaces takes a spectacular turn as the abuse becomes so

normalized that powerful, privileged white men do not hesitate to use the language within the space of the nation's capital. Does it become normalized for ALL women, though? It didn't get normalized for Hilary Clinton, but this happened to women of color like AOC and Audrey Gibson.

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AOC's belongingness to the United States was questioned by President Trump, who asked AOC, along with three other women of color of the squad, to "go back and help fix the totally broken and crime-infested places from which they came." Focusing only on AOC's sex and ignoring the intersection of sex and race will disregard white privilege as well as class privilege many women enjoy as they express solidarity with AOC and engage in sisterhood resisting abhorrent sexism. Overlooking the intersectional intricacies will also reinforce the problematic tendency of addressing the "women problem" by merely adding on women without challenging intersecting systems of oppression. For example, after the AOC incident, in response to the reporters' question about whether the Republican party has a "women problem," House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R.-Calif)—who argued Yoho's "apology" was enough—suggested that the Republican Party now have more women than ever running for Congress.

Also, let's not forget that the dispute between AOC and Yoho started over the past comments of AOC as she suggested that the rising crime in New York City did not necessarily stem from the lack of policing but was fueled by unprecedented economic disparities, unemployment, and poverty during the global Covid-19 pandemic. To establish that he is equally mindful of a class analysis like AOC, Yoho sought resort to his personal experience of doing what he called "odd jobs" at a young age and being on food stamps and claimed his familiarity with the face of poverty. His white privileged linear personal progress narrative of a hardworking, law-abiding American citizen totally ignored how intersecting structures of racism, classism, capitalism, and other systems of oppression do not create a level-playing field for everyone, thereby making some communities more vulnerable than others.

In her speech, AOC referred to her working-class background and experience of being racially targeted by President Trump. I wish she directly used the word "race" in her speech and more explicitly highlighted the intersectional struggles of women of color. The language of sisterhood and solidarity with white women

and white liberal circles are critical in the Trump era, but we need to make sure this inadvertent or strategic move should not eclipse unique racialized and classed struggles of women of color as they fight against heteropatriarchy on a day-to-day basis.

Nafisa Tanjeem



Nafisa Tanjeem is an Assistant Professor of Global Studies and Gender, Race, and Sexuality Studies at Lesley University.

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Inverness or Bust: Britain's forgotten trans history told in new documentary

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Fox Fisher with 'Nemo', the trans man who was one of the group of friends who went on the trailblazing road trip in 1975. (Instagram/My Genderation)

An untold story from Britain's transgender history will form the basis for *Inverness Or Bust*, a new documentary by the trans-led, award-winning non-profit film project My Genderation.

Inverness Or Bust is a story about friendship, allyship and trans Pride in 1970s Britain, focusing on a roadtrip in 1975 that saw 12 friends travel to Scotland to visit a sympathetic doctor.

The group, who came from across the UK and travelled to Scotland in two cars,

had been told that Dr Martin Whittet, then-head of the Craig Dunain Mental Hospital, was willing to try to provide healthcare for transgender people.

This was at a time in Britain's history when stigma and discrimination against transgender people was at severe levels – and Whittet faced heavy opposition from within his own hospital for being open to treating trans patients.

Stephen Whittle, one of the group and later part of Press For Change, the trans activist group that helped bring in the 2004 Gender Recognition Act, said that Whittet was remarkable because he “treated us like ordinary people“.

Fox Fisher and Owl, the filmmakers who lead My Genderation, are crowdfunding to make the documentary and hope to also turn the story into a feature-length film, as Fox told *PinkNews*.

How did you come across the story of *Inverness Or Bust*, and this group of people who went on a road trip to meet a doctor in Scotland in the 70s?

Fox Fisher: After I took part in a 2011 documentary called *My Transsexual Summer*, it opened a dialogue with the nation about transgender people. Millions of people watched the series and many reached out, and one of those people was Nemo, an older trans man (his name has been changed for privacy reasons).



After meeting him for the first time, it was clear that Nemo was incredibly isolated; he was living as stealth and his best friend Alice (aged 83), a trans woman, had just passed away, in his living room. We began meeting on a regular basis for lunch, and he would tell me the most incredible stories of coming out as trans aged 14.

Nemo told me about a horrible doctor that still haunts him today, and he also told me about a very kind medical professional, Dr Whittet, who was the head of an asylum in Inverness. His best friend Alice was who Dr Whittet originally made contact with, and she was one of the drivers on a special road trip to meet the doctor. A core group went from Manchester to Inverness.

It was a story that I felt was so powerful and really needed to be told, so I got in touch with the others, and from there we've been able to piece together the story.



Why do you think their story has never been told before?

They simply haven't had the platform or ability to tell it. Back in the day there was such stigma and discrimination against transgender people, and the media was incredibly negative.

Even today the UK media is notoriously bad and most stories about transgender people are told by people who aren't trans. The conversations are always focused on the alleged problems transgender people cause, as opposed to the actual stories of how transgender people have been treated or are being treated in UK society.

Many of them haven't until recently felt able to tell this story, and we are so happy we get to be a part of this and help elevate their voices to give us some insight into trans history in the UK.

Why is it so important to tell this story now?

Trans people's stories are so rarely told, especially in a historical context. Trans people have been around since forever, but we rarely hear their stories as often they have not been recorded or even destroyed and hidden.

The UK barely has any recorded trans history and we feel that this story is an important part of preserving that history before it's too late to tell it, or it gets forgotten. Most of the people who went on this trip have either passed away or are in their late 70s and we feel such an obligation to give them the platform to tell this story, as we believe it's a powerful way of showing people how trans people have been treated in UK society, and the challenges they faced.

A post shared by My Generation (@mygeneration) on Jul 30, 2020 at
3:01am PDT

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Louie Gohmert: Anti-gay republican who refused mask has COVID-19

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Anti-mask and anti-gay Texan lawmaker Louie Gohmert sent shudders through the Republican Party Wednesday (July 29) after announcing that he has tested positive for coronavirus.

The 66-year-old, who once said gay men should be thrown onto a deserted island so they could “die-off”, may himself have to get used to isolation.

He declared his positive result for COVID-19 only moments before a planned trip on Air Force One with US president Donald Trump to Midland.

He was tested during a pre-flight screening at the White House, an insider told CNN.

In a video recorded from his Capitol Hill office, a smiling Gohmert casually declared he had acquired the “Wuhan virus”. How? Because he’s been wearing a face mask for the last two weeks, he said.

My statement about today's diagnosis: pic.twitter.com/qvf7zIcgdN
— Louie Gohmert (@replouiegohmert) July 29, 2020

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Propaganda for profit targets the Baltic states on YouTube

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Fringe YouTube channels monetize pro-Kremlin narratives about the Baltic states



(Source: Военный Арсенал/archive)

Seven of the 10 most viewed Russian-language YouTube channels that post news stories about the Baltic states are from fringe outlets or individual YouTubers rather than established Kremlin-supported media, according to a DFLab analysis conducted using social media listening tool BuzzSumo. These channels use content from Kremlin media and repeat the same hostile narratives pushed by the Russian state, but they appear to be doing so for profit rather than ideological reasons.

These anti-Baltic narratives can be seen as part of the ongoing effort by pro-Kremlin actors to convince Russian-speaking audiences that countries in the region that embrace a pro-European course end up in decline. And while conventional wisdom suggests that Kremlin-aligned media dominate the publishing of hostile narratives about the Baltic states, this new evidence suggests that these types of stories are by no means exclusive to well-known actors with ties to the Kremlin.

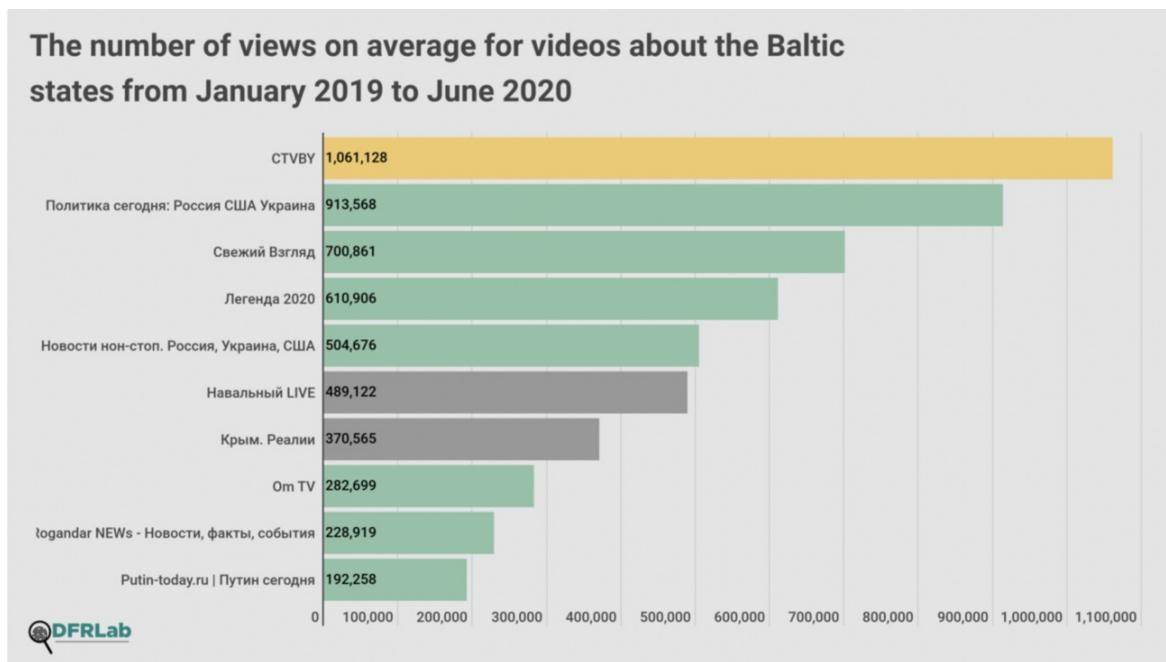
Fringe outlets that propagated anti-Baltic narratives monetized their efforts by

promoting ad placement, donation opportunities, and even branded merchandise. In addition, they cross-promoted via each other's channels as a means of manipulating the YouTube algorithm to amplify their videos to a broader audience.

Fringe outlets dominate

The DFRLab used the social media monitoring tool BuzzSumo to look for YouTube videos that mentioned "the Baltic states," "Estonia," "Latvia," or "Lithuania," in their varying Russian-language noun forms over an 18-month period, from January 2019 through June 2020. The research analyzed videos tagged by authors under the categories "Politics," "Society," and "Military," but did not include other categories such as "Travel," "Entertainment," "Sports," and "Lifestyle," to avoid stories that were not political.

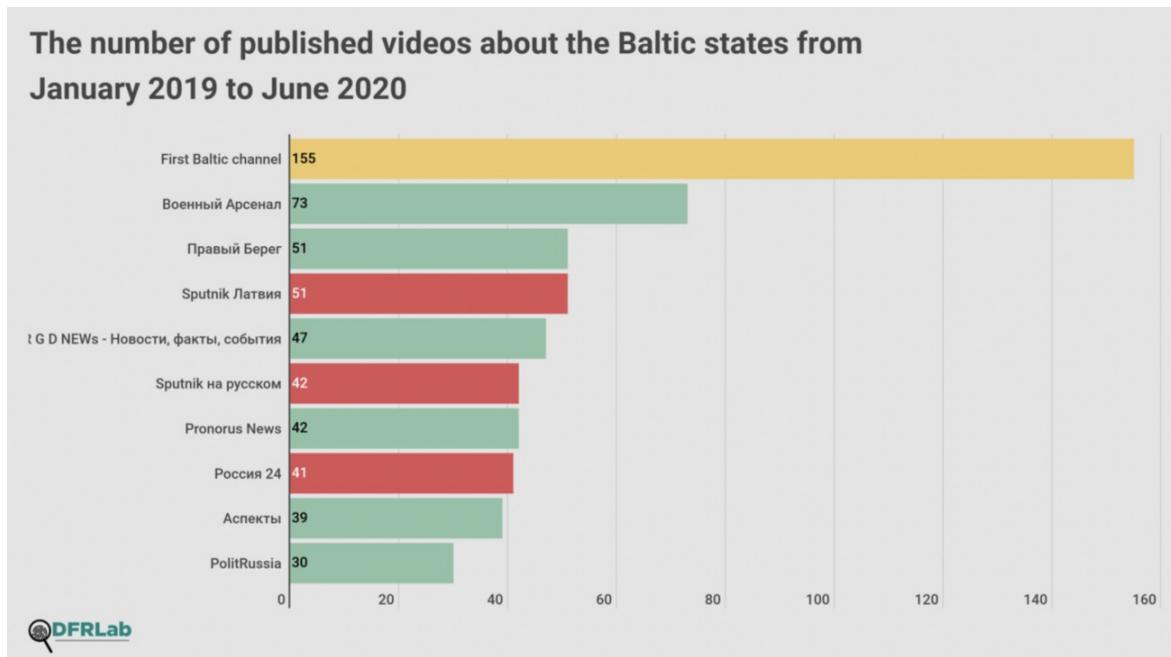
Below is the list of the top 10 channels that garnered the most views per video on average about the Baltic states.



Top 10 most-viewed channels according to average video viewership, based on data from January 2019 through June 2020. The yellow bar represents a pro-Kremlin account, while the grey bars show anti-Kremlin accounts. The other seven accounts are fringe accounts and individual YouTubers. (Source: @nikaaleksejeva/DFRLab via BuzzSumo)

Seven of the 10 channels listed above can be characterized as fringe news outlets or individual YouTubers. Among the others are STV BY (CTVBY) YouTube channel, which is a mainstream pro-Kremlin TV channel in Belarus, as well as the anti-Kremlin channels Navalny LIVE (Навальный LIVE), associated with Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny, and Krim.Realii (Крым. Реалии), a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty channel about Crimea.

The DFRLab also investigated which channels were the most active in publishing videos about the Baltic states in Russian. Two Kremlin-owned outlets (Sputnik and Rossiya 24) and one pro-Kremlin outlet (First Baltic) appeared on the list of the top 10 most active content producers.

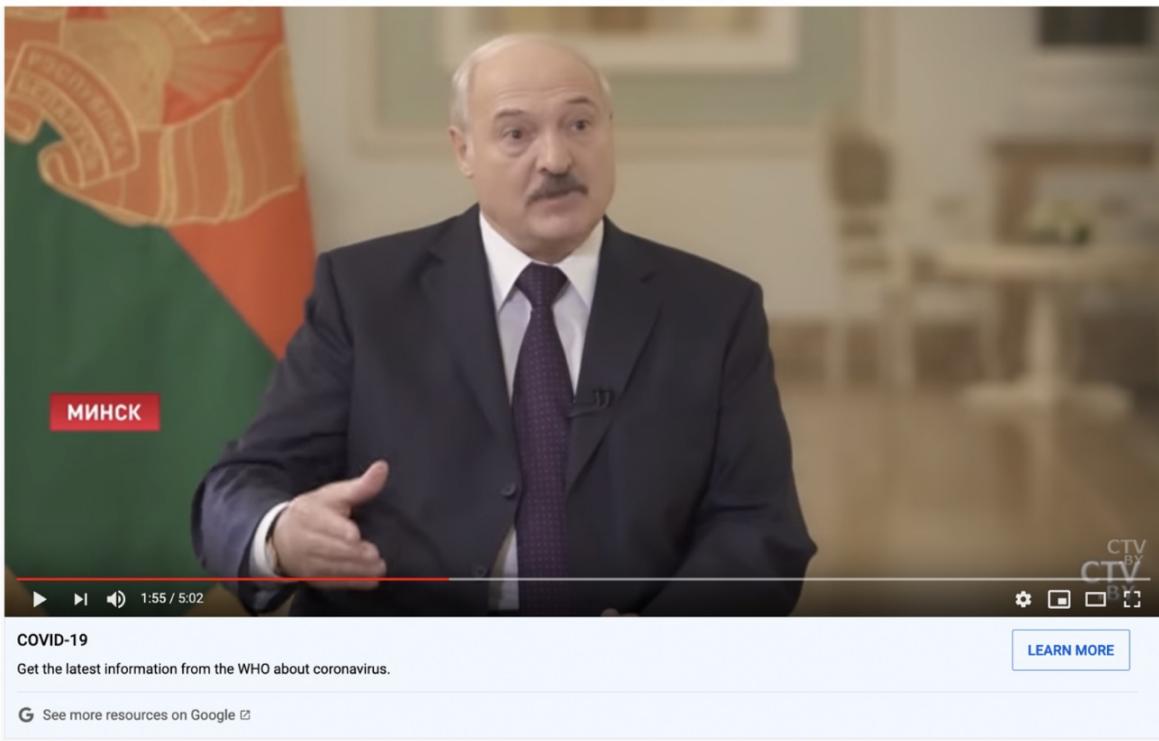


Top 10 most active content producers based on the data on the number of videos per channel that were about the Baltic states from January 2019 through June 2020. (Source: @nikaaleksejeva/DFRLab via BuzzSumo)

Hostile content

The most popular fringe channels did not cover the Baltic states exclusively. Most of the channels described themselves in their “About” section as generic news channels covering Russia and abroad. Many channels also covered Ukraine, Belarus, the European Union and its member states. The content of the videos was predominantly hostile toward Russia’s Western neighbors.

For example, the most viewed video in the set, which garnered over 3 million views, was published by the STV Belarus channel and showed Aleksander Lukashenko, the President of Belarus, explaining how Belarus is tackling COVID-19. It also published a verbal attack by Lukashenko on Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda titled “Lukashenko was harsh in response to Lithuanian President: You better deal with your own virus, you have many issues!”



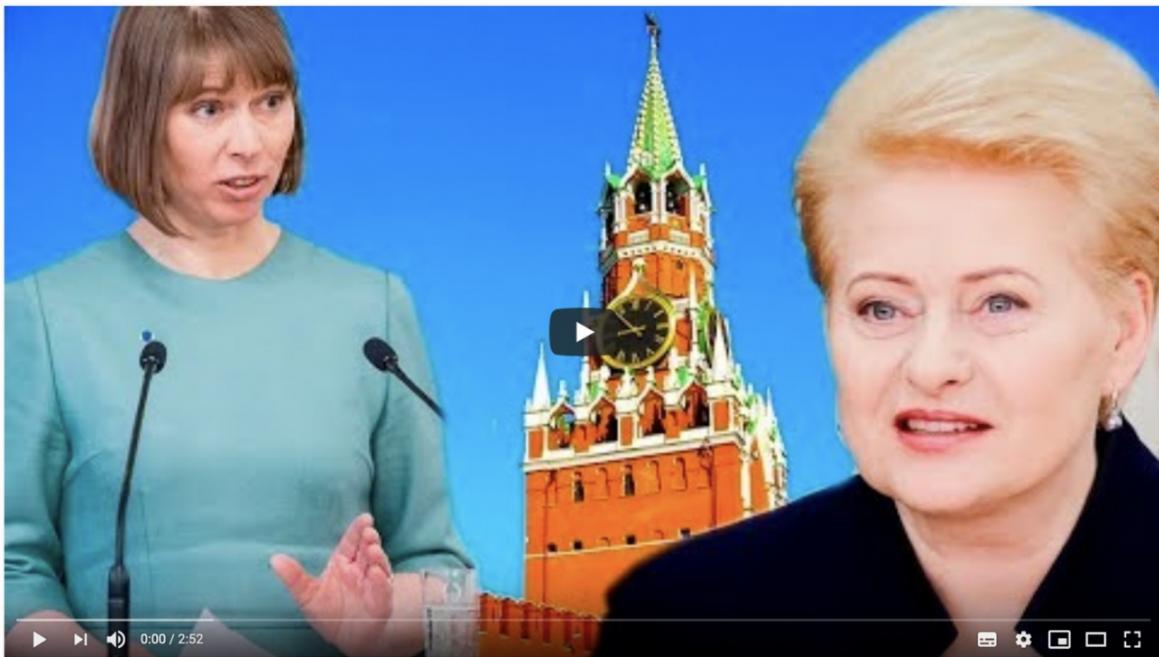
Лукашенко жёстко ответил Президенту Литвы: Ты своим вирусом займись, у тебя там куча вопросов!

3,136,838 views • 2 Apr 2020

71K 9.5K SHARE SAVE ...

Video of President Lukashenko attacking the Lithuanian president.
(Source: STVBY/archive)

Many videos in the set discussed real news events that concerned the Baltic states and Russia. For example, the fringe channel “Aspekty” published a video mocking Estonian President Kersti Kaljuland’s meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in April 2019. In the video, which included photos from the meeting between Putin and Kaljuland, the narrator read a blog entry by Sergey Filatov, a pro-Kremlin commentator. The blog entry mocked a statement made by Kaljuland and later reported by the Kremlin-owned news outlet *RIA Novosti*. According to the publication, Kaljuland said that after her meeting with Putin, Estonia could be on the same level as other NATO member states. The commentator implied that Estonia was a small and irrelevant country that had now become “braver.”



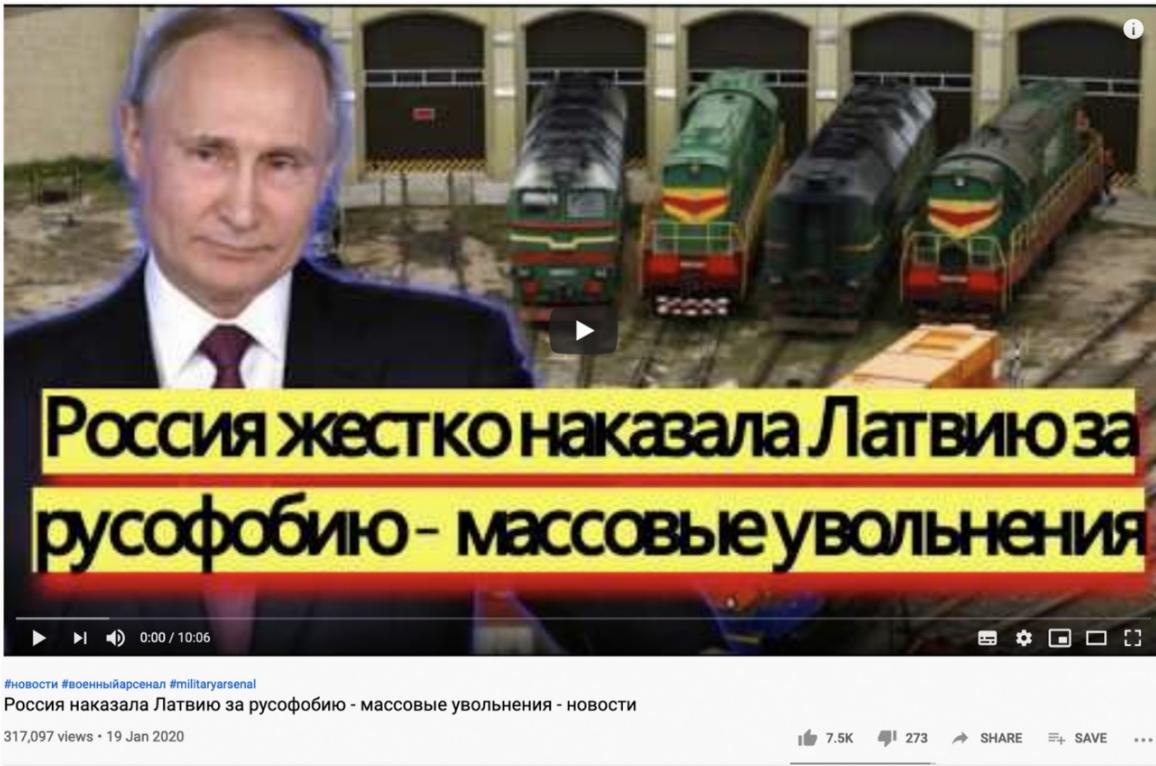
После визита к Путину Эстония не на шутку осмелела и спровоцировала борьбу за встречу с Путиным...

613,686 views • 23 Apr 2019

1K 4K 287 SHARE SAVE ...

Example of a video about a real news event involving Russia and the Baltic states. Translated from Russian: “After meeting with Putin, Estonia became very brave and provoked a fight to meet Putin.”
(Source: Аспекты/archive)

Many other videos suggested that the pro-European and anti-Russian positions held by the Baltic states hurt their economies. For example, the fringe channel “Voennyi Arsenal” published a video suggesting that Latvia was forced to lay off 1,500 railway workers because Russia had stopped exporting its cargo through Latvia. While Latvia had laid off the workers, the Latvian government never clarified the rationale for doing so beyond highlighting a need to stabilize the company and reduce operating costs. The video description mentioned that the source of the news story was *RuBaltic.ru*, a pro-Kremlin outlet that focuses on the Baltic states.



Screencap of a video alleging that the Baltic states suffered economically after turning away from their partnership with Russia. Translated from Russian, both the title and the yellow text reads: “Russia punished Latvia for Russophobia hard — mass lay-offs.” (Source: Военный Арсенал/archive)

The fringe YouTube channels analyzed for this article do not appear to be affiliated with pro-Kremlin or Kremlin-funded outlets. Rather, they repackage content from such outlets in order to make their videos, thus amplifying Kremlin narratives to a broader audience.

Monetizing propaganda

Profit appeared to be an important incentive driving the fringe channels to publish hostile content targeting the Baltic states. Four out of the seven most viewed fringe channels on YouTube contained links for donations or an email address for business inquiries.

For instance, one of the 10 most-viewed channels was “Rogandar NEWS — News, facts, events,” which was linked to two other channels with similar names and email addresses for business inquiries. It offered businesses space in its

videos to advertise, information on how to donate money (to three different bank accounts), and details on how to buy a generic, unbranded t-shirt.

The image displays three YouTube channel pages side-by-side:

- Rogandar NEWSs - Новости, факты, события**: Shows a green box highlighting a call to support the channel financially with a link to a VK page and a WebMoney address. It also shows a pink box around the email address andrwarrior@mail.ru.
- R G D NEWSs - Новости, факты, события**: Shows a pink box around the email address andrwarrior@yandex.ru.
- RG NEWSs**: Shows a pink box around the email address andrwarriorres@gmail.com.

Youtube channels linked to Rogandar NEWSs. The green box highlights a call to support the channels financially. The pink boxes highlight the similar email addresses for business inquiries. (Source: Rogandar NEWSs — Новости, факты, события/archive, left; R G D NEWSs — Новости, факты, события/archive, top right; RG NEWSs/archive, bottom right)

Cross-promotion as “featured channels” was another strategy that the fringe channels used to reach viewers. The channel Voenyi Arsenal (Военный Арсенал), for example, featured another channel, Novostnoy Efir (Новостной Эфир), which returned the favor by cross-promoting Voenyi Arsenal. When a channel lists another channel as “featured,” it increases the likelihood that YouTube’s algorithm will suggest the listed channel to viewers of the original channel.



Военный Арсенал

245K subscribers

HOME
VIDEOS
PLAYLISTS
COMMUNITY
CHANNELS
ABOUT
SUBSCRIBE

Uploads > PLAY ALL



Срочно - В Киеве рассказали о тайном говоре России ... 11:42

Срочно - В Киеве рассказали о тайном говоре России ... 29K views • 4 hours ago



Срочно - Конец всем переговорам - Эрдоган не выдержал ... 10:06

Срочно - Конец всем переговорам - Эрдоган не выдержал ... 356K views • 8 hours ago



Такого позорища мир еще не видел - Коронавирусный майдан ... 10:07

Такого позорища мир еще не видел - Коронавирусный майдан ... 57K views • 8 hours ago



Срочно - Дончане поймали Зеленского в больнице ... 10:09

Срочно - Дончане поймали Зеленского в больнице ... 94K views • 21 hours ago

ИНТЕРЕСНЫЕ КАНАЛЫ



Новостной Эфир

SUBSCRIBE

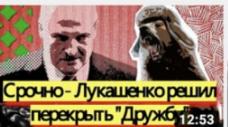
HOME
VIDEOS
PLAYLISTS
COMMUNITY
CHANNELS
ABOUT
SUBSCRIBE

Uploads > PLAY ALL



Героическая небесная сотня - посыпалась как карточные ... 12:43

Сказка о Майдане посыпалась как карточные ... 13K views • 9 hours ago



Срочно - Лукашенко решил перекрыть "Дружбу" ... 12:53

Срочно - Лукашенко решил перекрыть "Дружбу" ... 44K views • 1 day ago



Украина обращает трущобами, лучше бежать в Европу ... 11:45

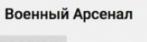
Украина обращает трущобами, лучше бежать в Европу ... 25K views • 2 days ago



Такого в США не было более 60 лет - Boeing рушит ... 11:23

Такого в Штатах не было более 60-ти лет - Крутые ... 30K views • 3 days ago

ИНТЕРЕСНЫЕ КАНАЛЫ



Военный Арсенал

SUBSCRIBE

Fringe channels Voennyy Arsenal and Novostnoy Efir cross-promoted each other. Pink boxes mark their featured channel section. (Source: Военный Арсенал/archive, top; Новостной Эфир/archive, bottom)

The Rogandar NEWS channel also ran a larger scale cross-promotion network, as can be seen in the following screenshot.

The screenshot shows the YouTube channel page for "Rogandar NEWS - Новости, факты, события". The channel has 355K subscribers. A video thumbnail for "Кто проспал начало Путинской революции" is displayed, with 121,021 views and posted 11 months ago. The video's description includes links to various channels and social media.

Popular uploads

- 1:17 (Thumbnail: A destroyed military aircraft)
- 6:57 (Thumbnail: F-15 and Su-27 fighter jets)
- 6:23 (Thumbnail: Military personnel in uniform)
- 5:49 (Thumbnail: Two military personnel)

Featured channels (Promoted by Rogandar NEWS):

- Good Family House (green box)
- RT (green box)
- Дмитрий Завьялов (green box)
- Roman Sanych (middle left)
- Captain Crimea (middle right)
- RGD NEWS (pink box)
- 24 NEWS plus (bottom right)

Interests (Promoted by other channels):

- RGD NEWS (green box)
- Factorium Room (green box)
- Captain Crimea (green box)
- К.Э.П. (green box)
- Дмитрий Завьялов (pink box)
- Rogandar NEWS (green box)
- Россия 24 (green box)
- GrenFi NEWS (green box)

The cross-promotion network of “Rogandar NEWS — News, facts, events.” The channels they promoted and promoted them in return are in green boxes. The channels that promoted Rogandar NEWS without reciprocation are in pink boxes. (Source: Rogandar NEWS — Новости, факты, события/archive, top; Роман Саныч/archive, middle left; Captain Crimea/archive, middle right; Дмитрий Завьялов/archive, bottom left; 24 NEWS plus/archive, bottom right)

Disinformation and propaganda that employ political narratives are not always

politically motivated; sometimes, the primary motivation is financial. While established Kremlin-owned outlets publish anti-Baltic narratives regularly as a means of furthering the Kremlin's geopolitical interests, this analysis revealed a constellation of fringe YouTube channels that push similar stories, often compiled directly from Kremlin sources, but likely for their own financial profit.

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Follow along on Twitter for more in-depth analysis from our #DigitalSherlocks.

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Sam Smith Burna Boy collab sparks debate about Nigerian homophobia

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Sam Smith is dropping a new single, “My Oasis”, with Nigerian superstar Burna Boy, which has prompted a mixed reaction from queer citizens of the west African nation.

The British singer released a teaser for the track, the first to be released since they postponed their third studio album, originally named *To Die For*, and announced it would be retitled.

“My Oasis” will be released Thursday evening (July 30) and is set to feature Burna Boy, who became the first Afrobeats singer to sell out Wembley Arena after the release of his acclaimed fourth album last year, and has previously collaborated with Beyoncé and Stormzy.

But the announcement prompted passionate debate among queer Nigerians, who

had conflicting feelings about the team-up.

Uhm Sam I think I speak for the Nigerian queers when I say we don't know
how to feel about this <https://t.co/gvhzJgUzOP>
— TOMIDE † (@heli0si) July 29, 2020

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The Umbrella Academy season 2: Klaus actor Robert Sheehan teases plot

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As *The Umbrella Academy* gears up to return for season two, Robert Sheehan (Klaus Hargreeves) has teased how the new episodes tackle homophobia and racism in the 1960s.

The pansexual Klaus' relationship with Dave struck a chord with queer fans in season one – until he was shot dead in battle during the Vietnam War.

The Netflix original returns with a new run of episodes Friday (31 July), and this time the Hargreeves siblings have travelled back in time to the early 1960s – before Dave's death.

Though details of *The Umbrella Academy*'s season two plot are being kept tightly under wraps, fans are hopeful that the new setting will pave the way for a reunion.

But of course, the '60s wasn't exactly a welcoming time for queer folk.

Without giving much away, Sheehan alluded that the season two will tackle the various forms of discrimination – such as homophobia, racism and xenophobia – that were present in the decade, while taking a sly swipe at shows that wear their politics on their sleeves.

"It's tricky because there are shows out there that are performatively virtue signalling an agenda," he told Metro.

"The intelligence of *The Umbrella Academy* is to deal with those issues from sort of a character perspective, that doesn't feel like the show was making a political statement.

"It's about the characters who are experiencing this stuff, which retrospectively is quite interesting because the actual execution of it cannot be through a political prism because I think that sort of broadcasts itself very much as virtue signalling.

"That's the stuff that I would want to avoid like plague."

Sheehan identifies as straight, but said that he "had a couple of experiences when I was younger with dudes, where I tried it, experimented, to see if it did anything for me".

Sadly for gay fans, "it didn't".

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Women's Equality Party officer booted out for views on race and disability

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A Women's Equality Party (WEP) officer who declared her support for JK Rowling and tried to stop trans women playing sports has been “kicked out” over comments on race and disability.

Hilary Baxter was the co-leader of the Oxford brand of the WEP until last week. She wrote on Twitter on Tuesday, 28 July: “I was a founding member of the Women’s Equality Party and chair of the Oxford branch until last week.

“I posted #IStandWithJKRowling and IOC [International Olympic Committee]

petition on WEP Oxford FB.

“WEP called these ‘offensive’ and kicked me out. WEP don’t support sex based rights.”

The petition Baxter shared was against International Olympic Committee, demanding that they ban trans women from competing against cis women.

I was a Founding Member of the Women’s Equality Party and Chair of the Oxford Branch until last week. I posted #IStandWithJKRowling and IOC petition on WEP Oxford Fb. WEP called these “offensive” & kicked me out. WEP don’t support sex based rights.

— hilarybaxter (@rtwhilary) July 28, 2020

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You Don't Have to Be Pretty

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So the other day, folks in the comments were talking about leggings. I'm pretty agnostic about leggings, but the whole discussion (which centered on the fact that it can be **really** hard to look good in leggings) got me thinking about the pervasive idea that women owe it to onlookers to maintain a certain standard of decorativeness.

Now, this may seem strange from someone who writes about pretty dresses (mostly) every day, but: You Don't Have to Be Pretty. You don't owe prettiness to anyone. Not to your boyfriend/spouse/partner, not to your co-workers, especially not to random men on the street. You don't owe it to your mother, you don't owe it to your children, you don't owe it to civilization in general.

Prettiness is not a rent you pay for occupying a space marked “female”.

I’m not saying that you SHOULDN’T be pretty if you want to. (You don’t owe UN-prettiness to feminism, in other words.) Pretty is pleasant, and fun, and satisfying, and makes people smile, often even at you. But in the hierarchy of importance, *pretty* stands several rungs down from *happy*, is way below *healthy*, and if done as a penance, or an obligation, can be so far away from *independent* that you may have to squint really hard to see it in the haze.

But what does you-don’t-have-to-be-pretty mean in practical, everyday terms? It means that you don’t have to apologize for wearing things that are held to be “unflattering” or “unfashionable” — especially if, in fact, they make you happy on some level deeper than just being pretty does. So what if your favorite color isn’t a “good” color on you? So what if you are “too fat” (by some arbitrary measure) for a sleeveless top? If you are clean, are covered enough to avoid a citation for public indecency, and have bandaged any open wounds, you can wear any color or style you please, if it makes you happy.

I was going to make a handy prettiness decision tree, but pretty much the end of every branch was a bubble that said “tell complainers to go to hell” so it wasn’t much of a tool.

Pretty, it’s sad to say, can have a shelf life. It’s so tied up with youth that, at some point (if you’re lucky), you’re going to have to graduate from pretty. Sometimes (as in the case with Diana Vreeland, above, you can go so far past pretty that you end up in *stylish*, or even *striking* (or the fashion-y term *jolie laide*) before you know it. But you won’t get there if you think you have to follow all the signs that say “this way to *Pretty*. ” You get there by traveling the route you find most interesting. (And to hell with the naysayers who say “But that’s not PRETTY”!)

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