

# Social Justice Watch 0724

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**Firing a \$70,000 missile from a \$28,000,000 drone  
flying at a cost of \$3,624 per hour to kill people  
in the Middle East living on less than \$1 per day.**



**We live in a country where if you want to go bomb somebody, there's remarkably little discussion about how much it might cost. But then you have a discussion about whether or not we can assist people who are suffering, then suddenly we become very cost-conscious.**

— Prof. Andrew Bacevich

**HUMAN REFORM POLITICS**  
*a force for positive change*

I say "Black Lives Matter" because "all" didn't cover Black when they said "All men are created equal."

I say "Black Lives Matter" because "all" didn't cover Black when they said "With liberty and justice for all."

I say "Black Lives Matter" because they're still struggling with the definition of "all."

- unknown

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**nappy by nature**  
 @\_inCAndescent



Men: we're providers

Women: ok so provide

Men: no you gold digging bitch!

9:31 pm · 20/7/20 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

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**63.1K** Retweets and comments **282K** Likes

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[telegra.ph/ Angry-mom-shares-photo-of-padded-bra-for-6-year-olds-and-people-are-divided-07-22-2](http://telegra.ph/ Angry-mom-shares-photo-of-padded-bra-for-6-year-olds-and-people-are-divided-07-22-2)

Telegraph

Angry mom shares photo of padded bra for 6-year-olds and people are divided  
A mom's startling discovery in the underwear aisle for young children ended up exploding online. The over-sexualization of children is sadly, nothing new. Forcing children to "grow up" at a young age by throwing them in beauty pageants, changing them into...

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"Portland protestors winning." [source](#)

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N8hsXQapjY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N8hsXQapjY)

YouTube

History vs. Vladimir Lenin - Alex Gendler

View full lesson: <http://ed.ted.com/lessons/history-vs-vladimir-lenin-alex-gendler>

Vladimir Lenin overthrew Russian Czar Nicholas II and founded the Soviet Union, forever changing the course of Russian politics. But was he a hero who toppled an oppressive...

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[www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuT7zWZEwl0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuT7zWZEwl0)

YouTube

A Parkland teacher's homework for us all | Diane Wolk-Rogers

Diane Wolk-Rogers teaches history at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School

in Parkland, Florida, site of a horrific school shooting on Valentine's Day 2018. How can we end this senseless violence? In a stirring talk, Wolk-Rogers offers three ways Americans...

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<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-does-this-symbol-actually-mean-adrian-treharne>  
TED-Ed

What does this symbol actually mean? - Adrian Treharne  
Some of the world's most recognizable symbols exist to sell products. Others, to steer traffic or advance political causes. But there's one whose main purpose is to help people. You may know it as the wheelchair symbol, but its formal title...

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<https://www.businessinsider.com/christopher-david-navy-veteran-beaten-by-feds-speaks-out-2020-7> source

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[telegra.ph/Elton-John-sued-by-ex-wife-for-3-million-after-writing-about-her-in-his-book-07-23](https://telegra.ph/Elton-John-sued-by-ex-wife-for-3-million-after-writing-about-her-in-his-book-07-23)

Telegraph  
Elton John sued by ex-wife for '£3 million' after writing about her in his book  
Elton John is being sued for a reported £3 million by his ex-wife Renate Blauel, who claims he broke the terms of their divorce by writing about her in his book. John, 73, met Blauel, 67, a German-born sound engineer, in 1983 while he was working on his comeback...

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[telegra.ph/Free-Britney-Spears-movement-dealt-a-crushing-blow-in-court-hearing-07-23](https://telegra.ph/Free-Britney-Spears-movement-dealt-a-crushing-blow-in-court-hearing-07-23)

Telegraph  
Free Britney Spears movement dealt a crushing blow in court hearing  
Britney Spears failed to attend a virtual court hearing Wednesday (July 23) over her conservatorship, all the while her father secured the judge's approval to lock

her guardianship up from public view – a crushing blow to the Free Britney Spears movement....

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[telegra.ph/Tory-MP-Danny-Kruger-compares-trans-healthcare-to-Alice-in-Wonderland-07-23](#)

Telegraph

Tory MP Danny Kruger compares trans healthcare to Alice in Wonderland  
The Conservative MP for Devizes, Danny Kruger, has compared the NHS gender clinic for trans youth to “Wonderland” – and that’s not, in his eyes, a favourable comparison. Writing for Conservative Home, Kruger – the son of Great British Bake Off’s Prue Leith...

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[telegra.ph/Ellen-DeGeneres-show-staff-loving-toxic-mean-workplace-allegations-07-23](#)

Telegraph

Ellen DeGeneres show staff 'loving' toxic, mean workplace allegations  
Ellen DeGeneres is not as nice as you think. At least that’s what countless of her former and current employees are claiming amid reports of a “toxic” workplace environment at The Ellen DeGeneres Show. And they’re loving every minute of it, sources claim....

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[telegra.ph/Oxford-student-27-jailed-after-asking-14-year-old-for-sex-on-Grindr-07-23](#)

Telegraph

Oxford student, 27, jailed after asking 14-year-old for sex on Grindr  
A registered Oxford PhD student, 27, has been jailed after asking who he thought was a 14-year-old boy on Grindr to come over to his flat for sex. His defence was lockdown “loneliness”. According to Metro, Shiraaz Kureembokus was caught out in a police sting...

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[telegra.ph/UK-Black-Pride-to-go-ahead-as-virtual-15th-birthday-celebration-07-23](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/black-pride/uk-black-pride-to-go-ahead-as-virtual-15th-birthday-celebration-07-23/)

Telegraph

UK Black Pride to go ahead as virtual 15th birthday celebration

UK Black Pride will go ahead this year as a virtual 15th birthday celebration, organisers have revealed. The event, which is billed as Europe's biggest celebration for LGBT+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent, was...

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[telegra.ph/Amrou-Al-Kadhi-talks-gender-and-fish-in-Life-as-a-Unicorn-extract-07-23](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/life/amrou-al-kadhi-talks-gender-and-fish-in-life-as-a-unicorn-extract-07-23/)

Telegraph

Amrou Al-Kadhi talks gender and fish in Life as a Unicorn extract

Amrou Al-Kadhi, a queer non-binary Iraqi-British drag queen, writer and performer, recalls how a teenage visit to a marine fish store helped them understand their gender. When there were no after-school clubs for me to stay behind for, I would tell my parents...

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[telegra.ph/Emma-Watson-Reni-Eddo-Lodge-launch-women-and-non-binary-Tube-map-07-23](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/life/emma-watson-reni-eddo-lodge-launch-women-and-non-binary-tube-map-07-23/)

Telegraph

Emma Watson, Reni Eddo-Lodge launch women and non-binary Tube map

Emma Watson and Reni Eddo-Lodge are creating a new Tube map for London, with each stop named after a woman or non-binary person who has played a part in shaping the city's history. The celebratory project is inspired by the book Nonstop Metropolis by Rebecca...

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[https://ed.ted.com/best\\_of\\_web/5rhHgDwh](https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/5rhHgDwh)

TED-Ed

If The World Were 100 People

What would society look like if the world's population was only 100 people? In this video, GOOD Magazine uses data to uncover the answer.

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[telegra.ph/Gender-Recognition-Act-The-history-of-the-Tories-and-UK-gender-laws-07-24](https://telegra.ph/Gender-Recognition-Act-The-history-of-the-Tories-and-UK-gender-laws-07-24)

Telegraph

Gender Recognition Act: The history of the Tories and UK gender laws  
Déjà vu: The feeling when, for the second July in a row, the Conservative minister for women and equalities breaks her promise to the transgender community regarding the Gender Recognition Act. This year, it was Liz Truss who promised she would announce the...

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<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-orwellian-really-means-noah-tavlin>

TED-Ed

What "Orwellian" really means - Noah Tavlin

If you've watched the news or followed politics, chances are you've heard the term Orwellian thrown around in one context or another. But have you ever stopped to think about what it really means, or why it's used so often? Noah Tavlin dissects the term.

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# Amrou Al-Kadhi talks gender and fish in Life as a Unicorn extract

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Amrou Al-Kadhi, a queer non-binary Iraqi-British drag queen, writer and performer, recalls how a teenage visit to a marine fish store helped them understand their gender.

When there were no after-school clubs for me to stay behind for, I would tell my parents that there were, so I could wander around Barnes and delay going home.

On one such afternoon, when I was thirteen, I stumbled upon a street in Mortlake

I'd never ventured down before – and it was here that I encountered the Tropical and Marine shop for the first time.

In the shop window sat an enormous marine fish tank, teeming with colourful coral, free-flowing anemones, gloriously ornamented fish, and constantly undulating starfish. As I gazed at it, I felt something entirely new – a distinct sense of belonging.

Have you ever seen or heard something – a film, a painting, something fleeting out of a car window, a song or a sound – and felt a sudden emotional clarity, as if whatever you've just encountered has always been part of you, and in that moment, both parts have finally been reunited? That's what this felt like.

I was deeply stirred by the way that the marine creatures moved so freely; the way the soft corals and sea invertebrates seemed to exist without physical boundaries, like warrior shape-shifters; the way the fish regally flaunted their colourful costumes.

That's how I feel on the inside. In my soul, I'm that colourful; my sexuality, my gender – it's free-moving, like in the tank. Maybe my soul doesn't have any boundaries?

I had grown very accustomed to boundaries. I had spliced myself into different sections that existed in segregated spaces.

But here was a parallel universe where everything was fluid. I inched closer to the tank and was hypnotised by the way all the creatures interacted with each other. Cleaner shrimp politely mowed the scales of a fish that was half purple, half yellow; the corals, each with their own distinct texture and colour scheme, seemed to flow as one formless mass with the current of the water.

They were united by their diversity, not divided, like I had learnt to become. Out from the sand emerged starfish, along with hermit crabs and snails, hoovering the sand-bed like a harmonious social collective.

**I was desperate to dive inside this wormhole with it, for this new world clearly had so much to teach me.**

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# **Angry mom shares photo of padded bra for 6-year-olds and people are divided**

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A mom's startling discovery in the underwear aisle for young children ended up exploding online.

The over-sexualization of children is sadly, nothing new. Forcing children to "grow up" at a young age by throwing them in beauty pageants, changing them into more "adult" clothing, or featuring them as characters who dream about romantic (although thankfully never acted upon) relationships with older men are just a few examples of this creepy phenomenon.

Most recently, Kanye West and Kim Kardashian's daughter, North West, and her 7-year-old boyfriend, Caiden Mills, were highlighted in a "problematic" article that discussed their relationship in very adult terms. Things only got worse when people began delving into the young man's social media account - it was evident that the push to impose a very adult image on the child was very, very real.

A lot of the image has to do with what we're dressing our children in. It's almost always cute when a child tries to literally walk in Mommy or Daddy's shoes, or trying on Mommy and Daddy's clothing. The fact that it's oversized is what makes it adorable.

However, putting on particular articles of clothing, especially ones meant to accentuate certain features in a sexual way, is disgusting. Imagine a pair of 6-inch louboutin spike heels, scaled down to a child's size? It's chilling.



SOURCE: FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

I have a daughter, and when she's at the age where her body's maturing and developing in ways that are scary and she may not be ready for, I want her to feel comfortable to not only broach that topic with her parents, but also comfortable in whatever she's wearing.

So if she needs bras with lining, then I'll buy her as many as she needs, happily. And I may need to get her that sooner than I think because as it turns out, for whatever reason, kids are hitting puberty earlier than they have in recent years.

Lined bras are one thing, but why would any 6-year-old ever need a padded bra for? Especially one that makes them look like they have fully formed breasts? That's what this mom, Angela Fellar, wanted to know when she spotted this Calvin Klein line of underwear that was designed for children who haven't even learned their multiplication tables yet.



SOURCE: FACEBOOK

While shopping at Nordstrom, she noticed a Calvin Klein line of bras in the 6/6x size, which by itself isn't a big deal, but the padding on the bra is what's getting her and a bunch of other parents up in arms. One user wrote: "Insane! Let them be girls. Let them look like girls, talk like girls, dress like girls. Children should not look like mini adults. They are children."

Others thought that Angela might've been jumping to conclusions about the bras:

"People are so dumb. 6 doesn't necessarily mean a child my daughter is 27, has no boobs and is thin as a rail. People once again just looking for something to be offended about."



SOURCE: FACEBOOK

It's worth mentioning that that pads in the bras are removable, but many are

questioning why they're even there in the first place, and are pointing to this as yet another example of reinforcing body standards on women, even when they're 6-year-old children.

While there were a ton of people who argued that their could be a lot of petite, older women, or smaller framed teenagers who would wear these bras, the fact remains that they're sized for 6/6x, meaning that the intended average wearer of this garment is a 6-year-old female child. Like one Facebook commenter wrote:

"My 6 year old wears a 6/6x that's borderline toddler size."



SOURCE: FACEBOOK

There were many who maintained that the padding on the bras weren't there for

aesthetic purposes, but that they served functional ones as well - they're more comfortable than lined bras. As per this comment from FB user Christina Craft:

"I have a 10 year old and I have always bought her the padded ones. They are more comfortable period and if we are teaching them about bras then we also have to teach them how to wear for comfort. Seriously they aren't padded push ups but a lil padding can make it easier. No embarrassing moments and she comfortable during the growing period. Honestly it's hard to find bras at this stage of life that a mother is truly happy with bc everything is sexually geared for women and young girls so you just have to talk and teach them to help them navigate for themselves."

There were a number of people who began arguing semantics, and that the 6/6x sizing on the bra meant that it's a size 6 and not sized for 6-year-olds. Which started a whole discussion as to whether or not this really was a child's bra. Judging from the original photo with the mom's hand on the bra, it certainly does look like it was sized for a child.

**Charlotte Johnston**  
It's size 6, not age 6!  
Like · Reply · 9 · 1d

**Nikki Marasco**  
So how old is a child that is a size 6? Well, 1-2 year olds wear a 2T, which stands for 2 year old toddler, and 3T and 4T are also toddler sizes, and then 5 year olds move into size 5...so...

SOURCE: FACEBOOK

It's worth mentioning that there are several other clothing brands that manufacture padded bras for children, however, not all of them mold/shape the same way these bras in the Mom's post do. What are your thoughts? Is it OK if a six-year-old's rocking a padded bra? Or is it just another gross example of over-sexualizing children from a very young age?

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# Ellen DeGeneres show staff 'loving' toxic, mean workplace allegations

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Ellen DeGeneres has been filming *The Ellen Show* from her California mansion. (EllenTube)

Ellen DeGeneres is not as nice as you think. At least that's what countless of her former and current employees are claiming amid reports of a "toxic" workplace environment at *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*.

And they're loving every minute of it, sources claim.

Insiders told US Weekly that Ellen's employees have rallied together in light of a BuzzFeed News article where staffers said the daytime talk show host's happy persona is "bulls\*\*t [that] only happens when the cameras are on".

“They’ve been calling and texting each other about the story,” a source connected to the show’s production told the outlet.

“They’re loving that the truth — which has been an open secret for years in the industry — is finally receiving more interest.”

Ellen, 62, has seen her reputation as a beacon of positivity chiselled away in recent months. In the *Buzzfeed News* piece, staff claimed she fired people for attending family funerals or taking medical leave, and alleged that producers joked two Black employees looked similar.



Others claimed that direct managers instructed lower-ranking employees not to speak to the entertainer if they saw her around the office.

The flood gates opened this year after one of Ellen’s ex-employees, Kevin T Porter, described her as “one of the meanest people alive” in a winding Twitter thread.

Spikes have, over the years, been thrown by celebrities, former employees and viewers under the comedian’s feet. She has always denied them, once saying to the New York Times: “That bugs me if someone is saying [that she’s not nice] because it’s an outright lie.”

But it seems that those in the senior ranks of the show have sought to keep the

ongoings of the *Ellen* show a secret, the insider claimed. They said that staff have to sign nondisclosure agreements as a condition of their hiring.

“You can’t say anything, even nice things, even if you get fired, even years after you’ve left,” the insider said.

***Ellen* show producers: ‘We realise, as many in the world are learning, that we need to do better.’**

In a statement to *BuzzFeed*, *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*’s executive producers Ed Glavin, Mary Connelly and Andy Lassner said: “Over the course of nearly two decades, 3,000 episodes, and employing more than 1,000 staff members, we have strived to create an open, safe, and inclusive work environment.

“We are truly heartbroken and sorry to learn that even one person in our production family has had a negative experience. It’s not who we are and not who we strive to be, and not the mission Ellen has set for us.

“For the record, the day to day responsibility of the *Ellen* show is completely on us. We take all of this very seriously and we realise, as many in the world are learning, that we need to do better, are committed to do better, and we will do better.”

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# Elton John sued by ex-wife for '£3 million' after writing about her in his book

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Elton John is being sued for a reported £3 million by his ex-wife Renate Blauel, who claims he broke the terms of their divorce by writing about her in his book.

John, 73, met Blauel, 67, a German-born sound engineer, in 1983 while he was working on his comeback album *Too Low for Zero*.

The pair were married for four years before the relationship ended with John's announcement that he is gay, and they divorced in 1988.

In June, 2020, Blauel filed an injunction against her former husband, although

the details were unclear.

But legal documents filed in London's High Court this week show that Blauel is suing John over comments he made about her in his 2019 autobiography, *Me*, which she said broke the terms of their divorce 32 years ago.

According to The Independent, the documents revealed that John agreed to remove passages of the book mentioning Blauel before its publication.

But she has now claimed that the sections mentioning her that were left in, while entirely positive, triggered some long-standing mental health problems.

Blauel is reportedly asking for a £3 million payout, despite rumours that she received between £5 million and £10 million when she divorced John.

### **Elton John described his regret over ‘breaking the heart’ of his ex-wife in his autobiography.**

In his autobiography, Elton John, who is now married to partner David Furnish, described his regret over “breaking the heart” of ex-wife Renate Blauel.

He wrote: “I’d broken the heart of someone I loved and who loved me unconditionally, someone I couldn’t fault in any way.

“Despite all the pain, there was no acrimony involved at all.

“For years afterwards, whenever something happened to me, the press would turn up on her doorstep, looking for her to dish the dirt, and she never, ever has: she told them to leave her alone.”

A “source close to Elton” told The Sun: “Elton is shocked and saddened by Renate’s claim, especially as he has only ever praised her publicly.”

Another “source” added: “He has always had a very pleasant relationship with Renate, respects her enormously and would never have said anything revealing about their marriage.”

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# Emma Watson, Reni Eddo-Lodge launch women and non-binary Tube map

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Emma Watson and Reni Eddo-Lodge are creating a new Tube map for London, with each stop named after a woman or non-binary person who has played a part in shaping the city's history.

The celebratory project is inspired by the book *Nonstop Metropolis* by Rebecca Solnit and geographer Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, which recreated New York's subway map with famous women from the city.

Watson, the *Harry Potter* star now better known for her feminist campaigning, and Eddo-Lodge, author of *Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race*, will work with Solnit on the Tube map redesign, a collaboration with The City of Women London.

“The project aims to identify remarkable female or non-binary Londoners who have had an impact on the city’s history in some way,” the organisers said.

“It will allocate them to each of the stations depicted on the London tube map according to their connections to a local area.

“Some of these people might be household names, others might be unsung heroes or figures from London’s hidden histories. The names might be drawn from arts, civil society, business, politics, sport and so on.”

The New York City version of the project includes names like Yoko Ono, Jacqueline Onassis, Greta Garbo, Bette Midler and Nora Ephron.

Early contenders for London’s Tube stops include Amy Winehouse for Camden, Florence Nightingale for Tooting and Zadie Smith for Brent or Queen’s Park.

Historians, writers, curators, museums and librarians will all be consulted on names of women and non-binary people for the Tube map’s 260 stops.

The public can also contribute ideas for the people who have helped shape the city.

According to the organisers: “The [New York] map then became an iconic poster and sparked numerous conversations about public space, history, gender, feminism, and memory.

“We now want to do the same for London, claiming the iconic Underground map for the women who have made and continue to make the city.”

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# Free Britney Spears movement dealt a crushing blow in court hearing

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(Frazer Harrison/Getty Images)

Britney Spears failed to attend a virtual court hearing Wednesday (July 23) over her conservatorship, all the while her father secured the judge's approval to lock her guardianship up from public view – a crushing blow to the Free Britney Spears movement.

Fans of the 38-year-old packed the outside of the Los Angeles County Court, chanting "Free Britney!" – a movement to end what fans believe is a toxic legal arrangement with many claiming that she is being controlled to the point where she is not allowed to have children with boyfriend Sam Asghari.

But Spears was nowhere to be seen on the digital stream, according to court documents seen by The Blast, with her father Jamie and mother Lynne in attendance. The hearing was called to examine the singer's finances, mental health, personal life and psychological outlook in detail.

**Courts grant Britney Spears' father wish to make singer's conservatorship strictly a private matter in a blow to the Free Britney Spears movement.**

Since 2008, Spears became entangled in a conservatorship following her public breakdown – serving as a flashpoint for her loved ones to intervene and have Jamie be in control of the musician's finances.

Over the years, the “#FreeBritney” movement has often raised pointed concerns over the pop star’s well-being. The movement reached a fever pitch last year when Spears’ Las Vegas residency was put on indefinite hold, causing many to object to the continued restrictions on her life.

The saga has vastly happened behind closed doors, and it appears that Jamie is seeking to keep it that way. He originally lodged the request March 12 to make the matter strictly private and had it granted by the courts during Wednesday’s proceedings.

Courts granted “the motion to seal the transcript, conditionally seal the Status Report filed pending a further motion, and the motion to clear and close the courtroom”, court documents said.

Outside court doors, and about a dozen “Free Britney” supporters, some even travelling out of state, buttressed signs and placards calling for the singer’s conservatorship to be ended or to “Jail Jamie”. All wore face masks, many painted with the tagline.



Some have called for Spears to have her own legal representation, with a Change.org petition tallying nearly 230,000 signatures at the time of writing.

### **Why is the star under a conservatorship?**

Spears' career saw a dramatic shift around 2007 and 2008 as she became roiled by alcohol, drugs and a rash of erratic behaviour – psychiatric evaluations ensued.

This ultimately led to courts handing down a conservatorship order, known as a guardianship in some states, which is usually done for those courts deem unable to take care of themselves. As a result, Spears' father was placed as primary conservator.



(Frazer Harrison/Getty Images)

Jamie has been in charge of Spears' finances and overall physical and mental health since then. He was, until recently, joined by lawyer Andrew Wallet in being co-conservators.

While Spears requested for judges to consider ending her conservatorship in 2019, her petition to end the conservatorship was dealt a blow last week as the court authorised Jodi Montgomery, her manager, to remain as conservator until August 22.

Montgomery handles Spears' personal affairs, acting as her care manager.

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# Gender Recognition Act: The history of the Tories and UK gender laws

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Déjà vu: The feeling when, for the second July in a row, the Conservative minister for women and equalities breaks her promise to the transgender community regarding the Gender Recognition Act.

This year, it was Liz Truss who promised she would announce the government's plan for (hopefully) improving the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) before parliament goes into summer recess. Last year, it was Penny Mordaunt.

Amber Rudd, who held the equalities brief twice after the Tories held a huge public consultation on reforming the GRA in 2018, also didn't publish the results of the consultation or announce plans for reform off the back of it.

Truss, though, does seem to have come closest to keeping her promise on announcing the results – the evidence for this includes the leak of her apparent proposals for the GRA to the *Sunday Times* on June 14 – although her public

remarks about trans youth, trans women and trans rights suggest her plans for the GRA were furthest from what the government originally intended.

Now, Truss and Boris Johnson have committed to announcing the results “over the summer”. Parliament has now adjourned, and won’t return until September 7.

While, granted, there are around 40 different calendars in existence, it seems unlikely that the Conservatives have strayed from the meteorological calendar, which is most commonly used and in which September is categorically autumn.

So, it is likely that GRA reform has been kicked into the long grass, again, and parliament will return in September having conveniently forgotten its promises to the transgender community. Unless, of course, Truss decides to publish the consultation results and her plan for the GRA over August – while neither the House of Commons nor Lords is sitting, so her plans can’t be properly scrutinised.

Read our open letter to Boris Johnson [here](#).

### **The Gender Recognition Act: From pioneering to out-of-date.**

The 2004 law – used by transgender men and women to gain legal recognition of their gender – was considered pioneering when it was introduced.

It meant that trans men and women could get a new birth certificate with the correct gender marker on it, by jumping through a number of hoops including: being over 18, getting a diagnosis of gender dysphoria, living in their "acquired gender" for two years first and providing proof of this, getting the consent of their spouse if they had one, and paying £140.

A Gender Recognition Panel, who the applicant didn't meet, would then consider this "evidence" and decide whether to issue a Gender Recognition Certificate. Trans people use this to get their birth certificate reissued with the gender marker updated.

This is a long, costly and overly-bureaucratic process, which has put off many trans people from even applying for legal recognition – only around 5,000 trans people have had their gender legally recognised in the UK, out of an estimated

population of over half a million people.

And the UK is now lagging behind – Ireland, Malta, Norway, Portugal, Argentina, Iceland and Belgium all have more straightforward or more comprehensive gender recognition laws. In most of these countries, a trans person can get legal gender recognition by "self-identification" – filling in a statutory declaration, without the need for medical evidence or the approval of strangers.

Ireland recently celebrated its five-year anniversary of introducing self-determination – a gender recognition law that removed all medical criteria from the legal recognition process for those over 18.

And in other countries, trans youth and non-binary transgender people can also access legal gender recognition.

Iceland, India, Nepal, Uruguay and Pakistan are among the countries that legally recognise a third or non-binary gender. Three major airlines recognise that non-binary people exist – Truss should take note.

It was because the GRA is out-of-date and not being used that then-prime minister Theresa May said, in 2017, that the government would look at modernising it.

Announcing that the government would run a public consultation on proposed updates, she said: "We have laid out plans to reform the Gender Recognition Act, streamlining and de-medicalising the process for changing gender because being trans is not an illness and it should not be treated as such."

When the GRA consultation opened to the public, in July 2017, it was very clear: "This consultation simply asks how best government might make the existing process under the Gender Recognition Act a better service for those trans and non-binary people who wish to use it."

### **What GRA reform was not.**

While trans rights in other countries have moved on since 2004, in the UK they have stagnated. At the same time, hate crimes against trans people went up 40 per cent in the last year, a third of UK employers won't hire a trans person, and

16 per cent of transgender women have experienced domestic abuse in the last year (alongside 7.5 per cent of cisgender women).

The GRA is not to do with any of these issues. Legal gender recognition doesn't protect you from domestic violence or being beaten up in the street.

But the constant delays over GRA reform have meant that what was intended to be a straightforward improvement to an outdated piece of legislation has become a stand-in for a huge, and toxic, public debate about transgender people in the UK.

The GRA has nothing to do with public bathrooms. It has nothing to do with healthcare provision for trans people on the NHS. Yet the issue has been used as a proxy for inflammatory commentary around whether trans people really exist, whether trans people are a threat to cisgender women and children, and whether or not we should love and support trans kids.

GRA reform explicitly never included considering changes to the Equality Act, the 2010 law that makes it illegal to discriminate against someone on the basis of their age, sexuality, gender reassignment, sex, disability, race, pregnancy, marriage or faith.

But Kemi Badenoch, the junior equalities minister, recently hinted that this could be changed – in the context of a small number of cisgender women arguing that trans women shouldn't be allowed to continue using women's single-sex spaces, like public bathrooms and changing rooms, or playing women's sports.

Suggestions like these echo those of far-right governments in other countries: in the US, Idaho has passed an anti-trans law that means schools check the genitals of teenage girls before allowing them to play on girls' sports teams; in Hungary, prime minister Viktor Orbán has legally erased trans people, banning legal name or gender changes, using language and rhetoric that mirrors that used by anti-trans pressure groups in the UK.

Gender-critical or anti-trans feminism has flourished in the UK – much to the bemusement and horror of people from other countries. Trans people in the US think that everyone in Britain hates trans people. Meanwhile, a record number of trans and non-binary candidates ran in the last general election.

Every time the Conservatives delay their GRA announcement, it becomes harder to make. What was intended as a straightforward administrative update has been stoked into a political and cultural battle by transphobic white feminists and the media.

It seems unlikely that any announcement the Tories make now can deliver on their promise to the trans community without igniting the fury of anti-trans pressure groups.

### **If not a rollback of trans rights, then what?**

Liz Truss told Labour's Nadia Whittome yesterday that the Conservatives "would not be rolling back trans rights".

This has been welcomed by LGBT+ organisations as a positive commitment from the Tories, and one that Labour will be able to hold them to account over (Labour having, very belatedly, apparently decided it will stick up for trans folk).

But as trans activist Nim Ralph told non-binary writer Jamie Windust: "Most trans people ultimately don't really care about the GRA specifically – we don't plan to change our birth certificates.

"But it's being used so maliciously as a way to open a wider cultural debate around our rights and right to exist, that strategically it's become a battle we need to fight."

The campaign to reform the GRA has swallowed up the trans community's energy for three years. Urgent, pressing issues, like violence against trans women, have been sidelined by this fight.

Updates to the GRA that trans campaigners did want – like legal recognition for non-binary people and 16- and 17-year olds – now seem farfetched, in the context of current messaging about not rolling back trans rights.

But it is not farfetched to demand that the equalities minister end this *déjà vu* and announce the results of the public consultation before next July rolls around – whether she likes them or not.

The government must publish the GRA consultation results in September and enact changes to the law that will mean more trans people in the UK can access legal gender recognition, if they want to.

And then we can all move on. I hear that the third time is (sorry) a charm, Liz.

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# Oxford student, 27, jailed after asking 14-year-old for sex on Grindr

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(Shiraaz Kureembokus/ Facebook)

A registered Oxford PhD student, 27, has been jailed after asking who he thought was a 14-year-old boy on Grindr to come over to his flat for sex. His defence was lockdown “loneliness”.

According to Metro, Shiraaz Kureembokus was caught out in a police sting operation as the 14-year-old boy he thought he was speaking to was actually a police officer. He has been jailed for 18 months and must now be listed on the

sex offenders register.

Prosecutor Christopher Hewertson said that when the “boy” on Grindr told Kureembokus his age, the Oxford student, who had previously studied in Mauritius and was about to embark on his doctoral research, responded: “It’s cool, baby, I’m 27.”

After the conversation moved from the queer dating app to WhatsApp, Kureembokus asked about school and the boy’s parents, before telling him he wanted to “get kissed, get sucked and more”.

On May 5, he invited the boy over to his flat for sex. Prosecuting, Hewertson added: “The defendant was nearly double the age of the child who he arranged to have penetrative sex with.”

Police arrested Kureembokus when they saw him wandering around outside his home looking for the boy. The PhD student admitted to arranging to have sex with the 14-year-old and said it was a “moment of madness”.

### **Sex offender ‘embarrassed’ by moment of madness.**

His defence lawyer, Brid Eve, blamed his actions on “loneliness” because of the coronavirus pandemic.

She said: “He was finding lockdown particularly hard. He was very lonely and had no friends at the college.

“On that day he made a grave error, he acted in self-gratification and loneliness from what he knew was right and legal. He calls it a moment of madness.

“He has a supportive family who have worked very hard to get him to Oxford. He is embarrassed and upset that he risked his future for this. He was suspended by the college and he risks the end of his studies.”

“It is utterly devastating for him and those around him and he will find it very difficult to rebuild his life after this.”



But judge Maria Lamb did not accept that Kureembokus's actions were driven by "loneliness", and said that the student had ruined his future.

She said: "It is quite apparent from that that you were working on the basis that the person you were communicating with was a 14-year-old boy.

"There was frequent reference to the age of the boy and the fact he was at school.

"It is clear what you had in mind, anal and oral sex activity with him. You are a young man who had a very promising career.

"This will have devastating consequences for you and your family. The clang of the cell door rings the loudest at the start."

A spokesperson for the University of Oxford told *Metro*: "We are shocked by the actions of Shiraaz Kureembokus which resulted in his conviction and sentencing.

"Shiraaz Kureembokus was a registered doctoral student and had not yet begun his research work. The Department of Education is deeply committed to the

well-being and safeguarding of children and all necessary checks are undertaken before any of our students work in schools or with children in other settings.”

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# Tory MP Danny Kruger compares trans healthcare to Alice in Wonderland

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The Conservative MP for Devizes, Danny Kruger, has compared the NHS gender clinic for trans youth to “Wonderland” – and that’s not, in his eyes, a favourable comparison.

Writing for Conservative Home, Kruger – the son of *Great British Bake Off*’s Prue Leith – said that “sex is the business of the state”.

Parroting right-wing evangelicals, he continued: “The distinction between maleness and femaleness, the essential qualities written into our biology, is a fundamental building block of society.

“For someone to cross the border between the two, formally to assume the legal status and the rights of the opposite sex, is a big deal, properly requiring the permission of government.”

Excuse us while we yawn. A Conservative, implicitly arguing that capitalism depends on families consisting of one man, one woman, and producing workers? A revelation, truly.

Kruger, whose piece was aimed at Tory equalities chief Liz Truss and urged her to “confirm the status quo” when she publishes the results of the 2018 public consultation on modernising the Gender Recognition Act (GRA) – misunderstanding, perhaps, that Truss cannot control what the public said in the consultation – went on to say that “birth sex” should be used to determine who can access which public single-sex spaces.

“Birth sex”, not gender, is also what Hungary’s far-right prime minister Viktor Orbán considers to be of the utmost importance – he emphasised as such right before he signed a bill that legally erases trans people and blocked another bill that would have tackled violence against women.

Orbán said that the bill aimed at tackling violence against women promoted “destructive gender ideologies”. Sound familiar, at all?

Read our open letter to Boris Johnson [here](#).

Danny Kruger went on to add: "To concede the claims of the extreme trans lobby – that sex is simply 'assigned' at birth – is to sell the pass. We will be in Wonderland, or in 1984, where truth is what the people in charge decide it is.

"We are arguably already there. Lewis Carroll described a child perplexed by the antics of grownups living in an alternative reality. The Tavistock NHS Clinic, where children are told they can be the sex they want to be and given puberty-blocking hormone treatments, is our Wonderland."

Seeing transgender people – who belong to a vulnerable minority group that makes up around one per cent of the population – described as "extreme" by a

sitting MP should shock and anger. It doesn't, mostly because the tone of the "debate" on trans people in the UK has already passed the point at which that would have been a nasty surprise.

Comparing NHS healthcare for trans youth – labelled the most "cautious and painstaking" in the world by experts – to a fictional, acid-trip-inspired world follows on from a long line of commentary about trans people in the UK that positions a marginalised community as "gender extremists".

But it is when a white, straight, cisgender man decides his feelings about family and biology are more important than transgender people – including when those feelings put him on the same side of a "debate" as fascist far-right dictators – that the real extremism shows.

*PinkNews* has contacted Danny Kruger for comment.

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# UK Black Pride to go ahead as virtual 15th birthday celebration

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UK Black Pride will go ahead this year as a virtual 15th birthday celebration, organisers have revealed.

The event, which is billed as Europe's biggest celebration for LGBT+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent, was postponed indefinitely in March due to concerns about COVID-19.

But UK Black Pride organisers have rolled back the decision, instead opting for a virtual 15th birthday celebration event to be live-streamed on their website.

The virtual event will celebrate UK Black Pride's 15-year history and will feature performances, live DJ sessions and speakers, as well as virtual rooms

hosted by partners in the community.

In a statement, UK Black Pride organisers said people of colour need spaces to call their own and where they can celebrate their identities safely.

**UK Black Pride virtual event will help people of colour to ‘breathe, relax and let our hair down’.**

“We deserve to be surrounded by people who love us, who understand us and who want to see us win,” the statement said.

“We deserve moments in which we can breathe, relax, let our hair down, where we don’t have to worry about explaining our existence to others.

“We deserve to find joy publicly, loudly and with abandon.”

**Too many of us don’t have safe spaces we can go back to, or family who love us without conditions and expectations.**

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