

Social Justice Watch 0818

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[Rebecca Solnit demonstrates what happens when women give up](#)

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Helpful rebuttals



for
racist talking points
(Part 1)

“Cops kill more white people than Black people.”

There are an estimated 5.7x more white people in America than black people—so yes, by sheer numbers, white people are killed by police more.¹

HOWEVER, Black people are killed by cops at a rate 3x HIGHER than white people, often when unarmed.² That's a glaring inequality, and it exists because of race.

An analysis of incidents of police violence in Minneapolis shows that the city's police killed Black people at 13x the rate it killed white people, according to Mapping Police Violence.²

This bias stems from a history of associating Blackness with criminality.³ Police officers are not profiling white people with the presumption that “they look threatening.”

1. cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/us.html

2. mappingpoliceviolence.org

3. <https://web.stanford.edu/~eberhard/downloads/2004-SeeingBlackRaceCrimeandVisualProcessing.pdf>

“But Black people commit more crime.”

This is false. Crimes committed by Black people are more reported, and/or over-attributed in a corrupt system that values arrest quotas.¹ As part of gentrification, there is often a higher police presence in diverse neighborhoods than in white neighborhoods.²

This means there is more police surveillance in general, and more instances of new white residents calling law enforcement on people of color for perceived misdemeanors (noise complaints, blocked driveways, “behaving suspiciously” etc.)³

Studies have shown that Black people are **5x more likely** to be stopped by the police without just cause than a white person.³

Black people are also **3.7x more likely** to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people, although drug use rates do not differ substantially by race and ethnicity.⁴

A study of nearly 100 million traffic stops from around the country has concluded that, on average, black drivers are **20% more likely** to get pulled over than white drivers.⁵

1. theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/12/the-criminalization-of-gentrifying-neighborhoods/548837/

2. <https://www.thecut.com/2015/08/what-311-calls-can-tell-us-about-gentrification.html>

3. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/06/03/10-things-we-know-about-race-and-policing-in-the-u-s/>

4. <https://www.aclu.org/issues/smarter-justice/sentencing-reform/war-marijuana-black-and-white>

5. <https://5harad.com/papers/100M-stops.pdf>

“Well, what about Black-on-Black crime?”

First of all, this is a discussion about racism and police brutality.

The data¹ shows that police officers are more likely to use force and violence against black people. This has been happening for generations, but lately a number of videos have gone viral, exposing to the rest of the world to what the Black community has known all too well- 1) police brutality is a problem, 2) law enforcement has a strong racial bias and 3) innocent people are dying for no good reason because they are Black.

Black people have been associated with criminality for decades in the media.² This has caused many innocent Black people to bear the presumption of guilt from an officer who decides they “fit a description,” or a stereotype.

If we must address crime between races, most crimes happen between people of the same race. If you compare white and Black neighborhoods with similar income levels,³ you see similar rates of crime because crime and poverty are linked.⁴

Finally, Black people are still at an economic disadvantage because of the enduring consequences of America’s racism throughout history.⁵

1. <https://mappingpoliceviolence.org/>

2. <https://web.stanford.edu/~eberhard/downloads/2004-SeeingBlackRaceCrimeandVisualProcessing.pdf>

3. the guardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/09/bill-clinton-black-culture-systemic-inequality-problems

4. <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/poverty-rate-by-raceethnicity/>

5. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/>

ATATIANA JEFFERSON

On the evening of October 12, 2019, Atatiana Jefferson was at home playing video games with her eight year old nephew.



A concerned neighbor noticed Atatiana's door had been left open and called a non-emergency police number.



Two officers arrived and walked quietly around the side of the home.



Officer Aaron Dean made his way into Atatiana's backyard.



Atatiana heard a noise outside
and went to investigate.



According to Atatiana's nephew, she picked up her legally owned hand gun while she approached a window.



Dean shined his flashlight into the window and shouted "Put your hands up! Show me your hands!"



Less than a second
later, he fired a shot.



Minutes later, Atatiana was pronounced dead.

Investigators confirmed that Dean did not identify himself as an officer at any point.



Pratik Sinha ✅
@free_thinker



Homosexuality is not against nature.

More than 500 species are known to practice same-sex coupling.

Religion is against nature.

No other animal practices it.



The Famous Artist Birdy Rose

Yesterday at 6:39 AM ·

...

There's two Memes here.

The one on the left has gone viral and I was tagged in it.
For a laugh - I snatched it and edited it to say "MEN" instead
of "Women" then posted it on my page.

I've just been informed that I'm on a 30day Facebook ban
because this particular post I made goes against community
standards on HATE SPEECH.

This is what misogyny looks like.

Cigarettes and alcohol
have warning labels
because they are
addictive, dangerous
and destroy lives
and
Yet women are just
allowed to roam about
freely.

Cigarettes and alcohol
have warning labels
because they are
addictive, dangerous
and destroy lives
and
Yet MEN are just
allowed to roam about
freely.

Angry

Comment

Share

The Famous Artist Birdy Rose

UPDATE.

I requested a review of my post. Facebook has
definitely deemed it to be HATE SPEECH and have
CLOSED the case so that I cannot continue to
request reviews or write to them about it again.

In the meantime, I went back to the original meme
and reported it for HATE SPEECH also. It's only fair,
right? If the meme can't be posted about men then
it shouldn't be posted about women.

Facebook has just informed me that the original
meme DOES NOT VIOLATE COMMUNITY
STANDARDS and is not hate speech.

This is what misogyny looks like.

COMPLEX

TRUMP VS. THE USPS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE
COULD IMPACT THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.
SAVE THE USPS.

COMPLEX

DID YOU KNOW?

- NEARLY 75% OF AMERICANS ARE ABLE TO VOTE BY MAIL IN THE 2020 ELECTION.

• AMONG THOSE WHO SAY THEY WILL VOTE BY MAIL,
81% SUPPORT BIDEN, 14% TRUMP.

- THE USPS IS ONE OF THE MOST TRUSTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES IN THE COUNTRY.

- WITH THE USPS ANYONE CAN SEND A LETTER ANYWHERE IN THE US FOR 55 CENTS.

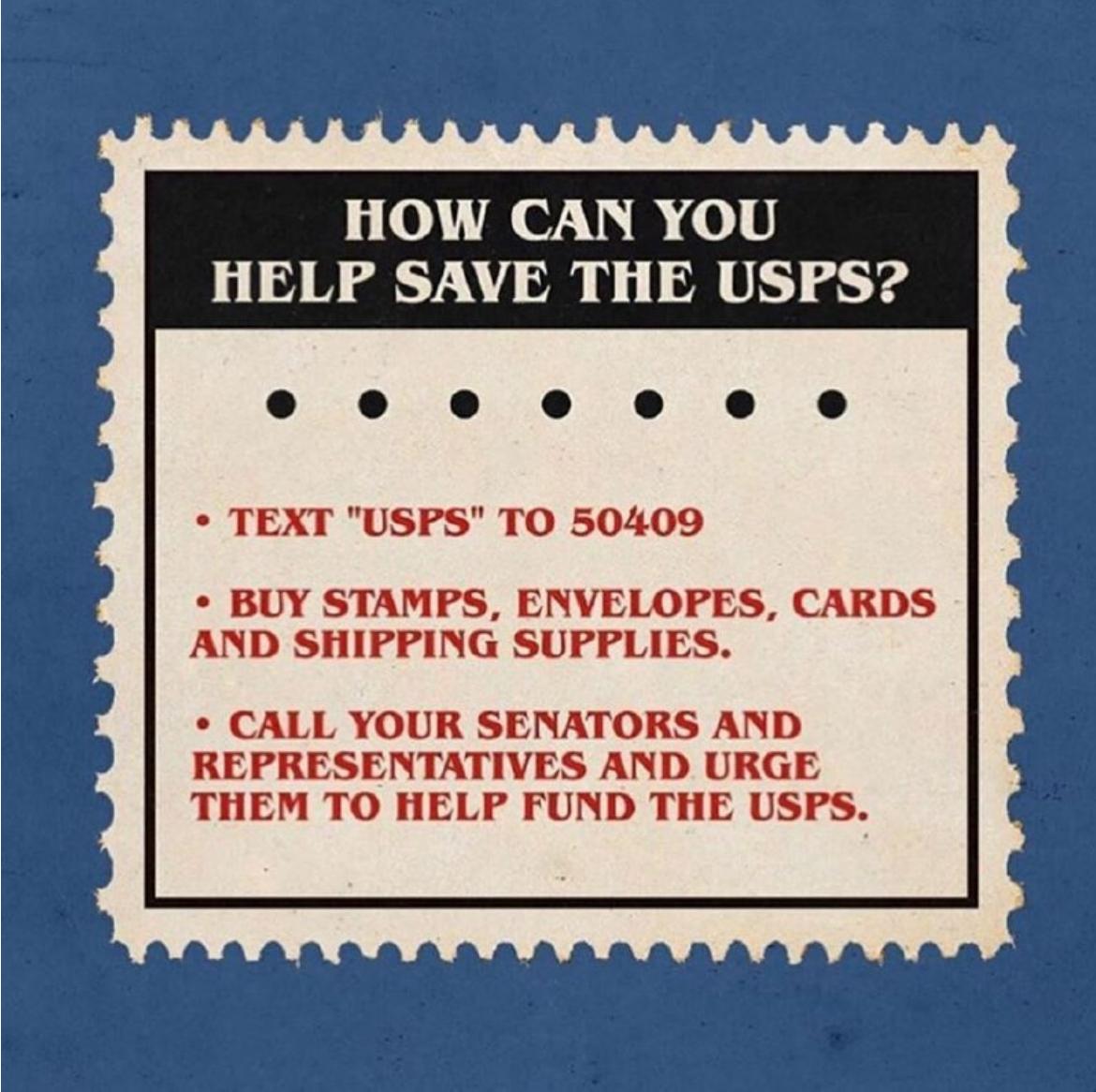
- THE POSTAL SERVICE IS ONE OF THE LARGEST EMPLOYERS OF VETERANS IN THE COUNTRY, EMPLOYING MORE THAN 97,000.

SOURCES : NEW YORK TIMES / MU LAW POLL / USPS

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

- THE CHANCES OF A FAIR ELECTION MAY DEPEND ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USPS.
- THE WHITE HOUSE REJECTED ANY FINANCIAL AID TO THE USPS FROM THE PANDEMIC RELIEF FUND.
- TRUMP HAS PUSHED TO PRIVATIZE THE POSTAL SERVICE, WHICH WOULD INCREASE SHIPPING PRICES AND HURT SMALL BUSINESSES.
- "THESE CHANGES ARE HAPPENING BECAUSE THERE'S A WHITE HOUSE AGENDA TO PRIVATIZE AND SELL OFF THE PUBLIC POSTAL SERVICE."

• MARK DIMONDSTEIN, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION.



HOW CAN YOU HELP SAVE THE USPS?

- TEXT "USPS" TO 50409
- BUY STAMPS, ENVELOPES, CARDS AND SHIPPING SUPPLIES.
- CALL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES AND URGE THEM TO HELP FUND THE USPS.



Auschwitz 1942.
China 2020. [source](#)

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telegra.ph/Rebecca-Solnit-demonstrates-what-happens-when-women-give-up-08-17

Telegraph

Rebecca Solnit demonstrates what happens when women give up
I do not know what inspired Rebecca Solnit — long respected as a writer and feminist (although I can't say I've followed her work closely, of late, mostly because I find it a bit predictable and a bit dull) — to write about the “threat” posed by “trans women”...

<https://shityoushouldcareabout.com/home/2020/8/12/the-us-taliban-peace-deal>
shit you should care about

The US -Taliban Peace Deal, COVID-19, and Women’s Rights in Afghanistan — shit you should care about

Already in a precarious position due to over forty years of conflict and a delicate US-Taliban Peace agreement, women’s and girls’ rights are threatened in the midst of COVID-19 as it aggravates the already dire humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

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Rebecca Solnit demonstrates what happens when women give up

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Trans women pose no threat to cis women, but we pose a threat to them if we make them outcasts | Rebecca Solnit <https://t.co/DFnjBs1xvr>
— Guardian US (@GuardianUS) August 10, 2020

I do not know what inspired Rebecca Solnit — long respected as a writer and feminist (although I can't say I've followed her work closely, of late, mostly because I find it a bit predictable and a bit dull) — to write about the "threat" posed by "trans women" to "cis women" last week. Perhaps I have answered my own question. The increasing banality of Solnit's writing might explain why she published a 1700 word letter in *The Guardian*, in response to nothing and no one, never making clear why *this* and why *now*. Perhaps she has a hat from which she can pull hot takes, or perhaps a predictable and dull editor requested the polemic for clicks. A writer myself, it strikes me that these kinds of pieces are what happens when one runs out of things to say.

"Dear ladies who are fearful and hostile to trans women," she begins. Which ladies, we will never know. One presumes Solnit has never encountered said ladies, personally, as she declines to offer examples. But that's not the point. The point was to offer herself a way to launch into an advertisement of her own perceived Cool Girl-ness — the "I have black friends" version of queer politics. Much of the piece documents Solnit's humble participation in San Francisco's LGBTQ scene, where everyone was kind, which I suppose is meant to comfort women who have concerns about, say, violent men raping women in prison and the complete dissolution of female sport.

I wonder what Solnit would say to me if I told her that all the men I knew were "kind" and definitely not rapists, seeing as I have never seen them rape anyone, myself, and that therefore any woman who would prefer my very kind male friends stay out of their change rooms is a bigot? Or if I said that if a man claimed to reject masculinity, he could not possibly pose a threat, and to argue otherwise was, in fact, threatening. I suspect she might have some thing to say...

Solnit explains that “transwomen do not pose a threat to cis-gender women” without explaining how she knows this and without acknowledging that, in fact, women’s concerns have nothing to do with the “trans” affix, and everything to do with sex — a category Solnit pretends not to understand.

I would argue it’s a mistake to insult your readers in this way — to assume they will be fooled by your lack of honesty and rigour. I would also argue that if a writer is trying to get people on side, losing their trust is not the way to do it.

She claims, “Transphobes are always warning us that if trans people live in peace and legal recognition and even have rights, there will be terrible consequences,” which has never been true, not even once. As one of the women I assume Solnit believes is a “transphobe,” having spent a few years now attempting to defend women’s rights, and explaining, ad nauseam, the difference between sex and gender, I can say for certain that my warnings have not been against allowing those who identify as trans to live in peace and to have rights. Indeed, I have insisted everyone should have the right to live free from harassment and discrimination, with dignity, in whatever way feels authentic to you. (Provided you are not harming others in the process, of course.) The issue is, alas, that if we offer males the “right” to claim to be female, and be treated as such, women and girls lose the ability to protect *their* rights. What are women’s rights, after all, if we no longer know what a woman is? Solnit fails to offer an answer either to the “What is a woman?” question, or the question of why women’s rights exist at all.

In an attempt to ensure us that, no, she will not be operating in the real world, and no, she will still not be providing evidence to support her statements, Solnit writes, “I assume that we here have long realized, at least to some extent, that dreaded future, and we’re all fine.”

Have we? I suspect Heather Mason, who has been trying to bring attention to the consequences of placing violent men in prisons with women, might disagree. I suspect the girls losing out on scholarships because they simply cannot compete against males might also. The immigrant women Jessica (ne Jonathan) Yaniv dragged through the BC Human Rights Tribunal because they declined to handle his genitals might also not feel “fine.” Who can say for sure. And in any case, Rebecca feels fine, which is really the most important thing.

It’s not only the the fact Solnit seems to believe we should just take her word for

it, but that she seems not to believe in listening to any woman who might like *her* word considered fairly and accurately as well. To refuse to seek out evidence to support your own claims is bad enough for someone of Solnit's stature, but to actively misrepresent and lie about what other women say and believe is worse.

The letter continues in this vein, alternating between ignorance and lazy dishonesty. Solnit either doesn't mind if people think she is a bit slow or she doesn't mind if they think she is a liar.

She completely misunderstands that "the classic 1972 children's album Free to Be You," produced with thanks to second wave feminism, argues *against* the notion that a boy should not be allowed to enjoy toys and clothes designated for girls. It was titled, "Free to Be You and Me," for the exact same reason feminists continue to argue we let children be themselves, instead of telling them their bodies and minds are "wrong" and must be altered through hormones and invasive, dangerous surgeries in order for them to truly be themselves. Failing to understand the difference between arguing against sexist gender roles and arguing against biology itself, Solnit doubles down, writing:

"Back then we thought gender really was kind of binary and defined by genitals; science has gotten smarter in the decades since and we now know it's a complex interplay of chromosomes, hormones, primary and secondary sexual characteristics and other stuff, some of which is in the brain, not the pants, and also that quite a significant number of people are born intersex, and some are misgendered at birth, and male and female never were airtight categories anyway."

In fact, Rebecca, "gender" is neither "binary" nor "defined by genitals." It is merely a set of stereotypes assumed about or imposed onto individuals *based on their sex*, which is indeed "binary." There is no culture in the world (no, not even "cultures from Native America to India") that does not understand what a woman is, what a man is, and how babies are made. One might even argue it is just a little bit racist for a white, cisgendered, thin privileged, able bodied, American, middle class woman to claim *other, foreign cultures* have some kind of mythical understanding of sex, in order to impose her own Western, academic ideologies onto the rest of the world to support her preferred vision. Which apparently is so rosy, women and girls no longer suffer things like FGM, trafficking, child marriage, domestic violence, and rape, simply due to having been born female, and, I suppose, no longer need rights on that basis.

Does Solnit believe that something changes in the moment a man declares himself “trans” that should comfort a girl trying to change after her swimming lessons? Do violent men cease to be violent if they announce they are women? How does this happen? What is the process there? And are women and girls simply supposed to “trust,” as they always have been pressured to? To not speak out or set boundaries when they feel afraid or vulnerable? Is this a feminist message? Or even a rational one? Is Solnit’s new rallying call, “Believe men”?

I don’t care how many times Solnit insists she “has trans friends and nonbinary friends” and *god I just love gay people*. I don’t care. Because *none of this* is about prejudice against any identity whatsoever. Not only do most of us, in the women’s movement, have friends of all types, including “non-binary” ones, as we are all “non-binary,” which, just a moment ago, Solnit claimed to understand. Indeed, most humans do not fit tidily into the categories of “masculine” and “feminine,” and have a wide variety of likes, dislikes, and behaviours that do not follow the rigid stereotypes laid out for us. Moreover, her ongoing insistence that this is a “problem” exclusively of “cis-gender straight women” only reveals that Solnit doesn’t know very many lesbians. Particularly not those who would prefer not to be pressured to date people with penises, but told if they do not, their sexual orientation is “phobic.” If you are so very “queer friendly,” Rebecca, might I suggest you avoid perpetuating an ideology that argues women who want to only date other women do so because of irrational fear and hatred.

For a woman who claims to understand why women might fear male violence to turn around and label this a “weird fear” or “misunderstanding,” because, *gosh, who can trust women anyway! They are just a bunch of irrational ninnies who can’t tell the difference between a female dick and a male one* is nothing if not a complete reversal of everything she has argued to date. And, hey, if Solnit has changed her mind about feminism and male violence against women, fine. We all have the right to do this. But to claim that this about-face *is*, in fact, feminism, and to gaslight women into believing their concerns are not only absurd, but hateful, is unforgivable.

The historic, global oppression of women and girls is not imaginary. We are not crazy. Women know, just as any sane person does, that men and women are different, and that there are certain circumstances where women deserve protection. In a transition house or shelter, for example. And also, sure, in the washroom. Which seems to be the only space Solnit will acknowledge — a tactic people use to intentionally make women’s concerns about gender identity

legislation seem petty. (“Just let them pee!” trans activists and their allies will insist, as though anyone is trying to stop anyone else from peeing...)

Why even bother claiming to support women’s rights if you are going to simultaneously tell women theirs don’t matter.

There are things to write about, if one is willing to ask sincere questions, take risks, and delve deeper. But Solnit, apparently, has given up on that — comfortable with her status and career, settled in to the analysis she is familiar with, and no real incentive to push further, aside from her own sense of self-worth, intellectual rigour, reputation, political integrity, and passion for critical thought and writing. While infuriating to read, I suppose we might look at this letter and Solnit herself with pity: a woman who gave up, and is now trapped in a bed of her own making.

I remember feeling a similar intellectual boredom a couple of years ago — wanting to push myself and move beyond the comfortable and familiar. So I did. Solnit, on the other hand, seems to have forgotten that writing is a gift that allows you to pursue truth and authenticity — to stretch your mind as far as it will go. She wrote this letter without thought, integrity, or effort, for an audience who she trusts to choose the comforting and familiar over delving deeper. It is as irresponsible as it is sad. I don’t know what Solnit believes she is standing up for anymore, if not women and if not her own integrity. Perhaps celebrity shares and book deals are preferable to endless threats, harassment, slander, and ostracization. Fair enough. Why give up your privilege?



Meghan Murphy

Founder & Editor

Meghan Murphy is a freelance writer and journalist. She has been podcasting

and writing about feminism since 2010 and has published work in numerous national and international publications, including The Spectator, UnHerd, the CBC, New Statesman, Vice, Al Jazeera, The Globe and Mail, and more. Meghan completed a Masters degree in the department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies at Simon Fraser University in 2012 and lives in Vancouver, B.C. with her dog.

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