

Harry Styles' comments on gay sex and sexuality are frustratingly coy

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The Guardian (London)

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theguardian

**Section:** MUSIC; Version:2

**Length:** 1035 words

**Byline:** Guy Lodge

**Highlight:** In a new interview with Rolling Stone, the actor-singer stresses that his new same-sex romantic drama is not as gay as it sounds

### Body

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Harry Styles has spent a few years at that unfortunate stage of mega-celebrity when everything he says is subjected to forensic online scrutiny for intricate layers of meaning, implication and self-betrayal – so it's just as well, for him at least, that he's got very good at soundbites that, even when parsed to the nth degree, don't say very much at all.

The singer-actor's interviews tend to be rife with uncontroversially quotable statements on the value of kindness, creativity and following your own path. His latest spread in Rolling Stone largely follows suit, dropping such bombshells as "It's okay to be flawed ... I make mistakes sometimes," "If I have kids at some point, I'll encourage them to be themselves," and, on taking up therapy, that "So many of your emotions are so foreign before you start analysing them properly." Well, if you were Harry Styles, why would you go any deeper than that in a public forum?

Yet again, the interview sees Styles sidestepping the matter of his own sexuality – a habit that has seen the star, whose preference for non-binary fashion keeps leading the media into chasing a more declarative statement of identity, accused of "queerbaiting" in more heatedly righteous corners of the internet. "Sometimes people say, 'You've only publicly been with women,' and I don't think I've publicly been with anyone," he says – a perfectly reasonable stance, even if some might argue that his apparent relationship with his Don't Worry Darling director Olivia Wilde seems more or less public.

When the conversation shifts to his burgeoning film career, however, Styles is somewhat more drawn on the subject of sexuality – and does himself few favours. The occasion for his increased candour is My Policeman, a British prestige drama set to premiere at Toronto next month: Styles plays the lead role of a closeted gay cop in 1950s Brighton, who begins a relationship with a man while marrying the woman who has fallen for him. It's a specifically queer story dictated by the UK's criminalisation of male homosexuality. Its gay screenwriter, Ron Nyswaner, has specialised in LGBT+ narratives through a career that includes Philadelphia, Freeheld and Soldier's Girl; its director, theatre luminary Michael Grandage is queer, as are Styles's co-leads Emma Corrin and David Dawson.

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It's disappointing, then, to read Styles downplaying the film's queerness in a way that smacks of a past era's panic: "It's not like 'This is a gay story about these guys being gay,'" he says, as the article stresses what a "very human story" the film is. "It's about love and about wasted time to me." This is an age-old tactic to make gay subject matter more appealing to timid, potentially prejudiced majority audiences; it's the same mentality that has made "love is love" the standard slogan in bringing straight allies to Pride and queer-rights causes. Everyone likes love, right? Can't we all be united on that front, and leave it there?

The more you stress love, however, the less you have to think about sex – which is, of course, the key sticking point for many an anti-queer bigot. Styles soft-soaps this point, too, in the service of playing up the supposed universality of this gay romance: "I think everyone, including myself, has your own journey with figuring out sexuality and getting more comfortable with it." True enough, if you accept "sexuality" as a general catch-all term for sexual consciousness and activity, though the sense remains that Styles is using the language of empathy as an evasion: as long as *My Policeman* is presented as a film about everyone, the question of why he starred in it – and, from the growing faction of activists advocating for queer-identifying actors to be cast in queer roles, whether he should have done – can be largely avoided.

Still, Styles stumbles most when addressing the film's actual sexual content: "So much of gay sex in film is two guys going at it, and it kind of removes the tenderness from it," he says. "There will be, I would imagine, some people who watch it who were very much alive during this time when it was illegal to be gay, and [Michael] wanted to show that it's tender and loving and sensitive." Sure enough, in this regard, Styles is extending a line of conversation begun by his director: in a June interview in *Vanity Fair*, Grandage stated he wanted the sex scenes to "quite literally show something that was about 'lovmaking' in the broadest sense of the word, something that was choreographically interesting and not just some kind of thrusting sense of sex going on".

Styles shouldn't be pulled up too harshly for sticking to a tactful, tasteful party line, but there's an implicit bias in his words that is surprising from a professed queer ally, not to mention – perhaps less surprisingly – an apparent lack of awareness of queer cinematic representation. What films has he been watching, for starters, to back his bold claim that "two guys going at it" accounts for the bulk of gay sex on screen? If he's been binging on the explicitly sensual art cinema of Alain Guiraudie and Julián Hernández – or simply loading up on gay porn – fair play to him, but in the mainstream crossover bracket that *My Policeman* is targeting, frank gay sex scenes are a conspicuous rarity. Think of *Call Me By Your Name*, with its coy pan over to a breeze-blown tree when things get heated between its two male lovers, or *Moonlight*, a queer film most effectively built on the absence of sexual expression, or even the brief, shadowed "going at it" passage of *Brokeback Mountain*, and it's clear gay films still have to play by strict rules of restraint to break through.

Is there something definitively un-tender about frank, thrusting sex between two men? Or is Styles simply falling unwittingly into an age-old strain of homophobia – the one that professes no issue with homosexuality as long as its physical realities are censored from view? *My Policeman* may yet prove to be as intimate and emotionally stirring as these early marketing feelers want us believe; Styles may well be terrific in it. But for Generation Z's greatest pop icon to promote his first overtly queer work on such fusty, coyly old-fashioned terms is a letdown.

**Load-Date:** August 24, 2022

## Facebook parent culls large Proud Boys network from sites

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 25, 2022 Thursday 9:54 PM GMT

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**Length:** 324 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Facebook parent Meta says it has removed a network of accounts linked to the **Proud Boys**, a far-right extremist group it banned in 2018

### Body

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Facebook parent Meta says it has removed a network of accounts linked to the **Proud Boys**, a far-right extremist group it banned in 2018.

Meta said on Thursday that it recently uncovered and removed about 480 Facebook and Instagram accounts, pages and groups linked to the **Proud Boys**. That brought the total number of **Proud Boys** assets it has removed to around 750 this year, it said.

Although the group has been banned from Meta's platforms, the company said it has seen repeated attempts by its members at evading the ban. People behind the efforts are not identifying themselves as **Proud Boys** openly, creating front groups and using Facebook or Instagram to steer people to other, less moderated platforms, it said.

Such tactics are commonly used by extremist groups and those spreading misinformation as they try to evade social media companies' crackdowns.

While the **Proud Boys** and other extremist groups have at times found homes on smaller internet platforms that cater to right-wing audiences, none come close to the reach of Meta's properties, where they can recruit members more easily.

The former leader of the **Proud Boys** and other members of the group were charged this summer with attacking the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 to stop Congress from certifying President Joe Biden's 2020 electoral victory.

Henry "Enrique" Tarrío and four others were charged with seditious conspiracy for what authorities say was a plot to forcibly oppose the lawful transfer of presidential power during the joint session of Congress on Jan. 6, 2021.

The seditious conspiracy indictment alleges that the **Proud Boys** held meetings and communicated over encrypted messages to plan for the attack in the days leading up to Jan. 6. On the day of the riot, **Proud Boys** members carried out a coordinated plot to storm past police barricades and attack the building with a mob of Trump supporters, the indictment says.

The trial is scheduled to start on Dec. 12.

Facebook parent culls large Proud Boys network from sites

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2022

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## Special Agent Details Chuck Schumer, Proud Boys Close Encounter on Jan. 6

Newsweek.com

August 23, 2022 Tuesday 4:37 AM EST

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The Newsweek logo is displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font against a solid red rectangular background.

**Length:** 583 words

**Byline:** Ewan Palmer

**Highlight:** Court documents say a special agent yelled "evac evac evac" while trying to protect the senator from Joshua Pruitt during the Capitol riot.

### Body

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Court filings have shed further light on how close a member of the far-right **Proud Boys** group got to then-Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer during the January 6, 2021 riot at the Capitol.

Joshua Pruitt, 40, will be sentenced on Friday, August 26, after pleading guilty in June to one count of obstruction of an official proceedings in relation to the insurrection.

New filings submitted by prosecutors over the weekend, seen by CNN, feature a Capitol Police special agent, identified only as M.L., detailing the moment Pruitt came face to face with Schumer while the Democrat was being evacuated on January 6 for his safety.

M.L. described pulling Schumer out of his chair on the Senate floor as they and two other members of the senator's security detail headed to the basement of the Capitol while trying to escape the building during the riot.

The court documents say Schumer and his detail were "crouch[ing] behind the recessed walls for cover" while they waited for an elevator to take them to a vehicle so they could escape.

The leader of Schumer's detail, a sergeant identified as K.F., then saw Pruitt approaching them. K.F. made eye contact with the **Proud Boy** and yelled out "evac, evac, evac," prosecutors said.

While fleeing the area with Schumer, K.F. described hearing Pruitt "getting louder behind him," and that "he felt as though they were being chased."

Schumer and his security detail quickly then ran down a ramp and shut a set of double doors behind them while fleeing from Pruitt, resulting in the **Proud Boy** turning and walking away.

Then-Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell had approached the same double doors while attempting to move to a secure location shortly afterwards, before also turning back.

## Special Agent Details Chuck Schumer, Proud Boys Close Encounter on Jan. 6

M.L. said that he believed Pruitt was just around four or five seconds away from reaching Schumer during the incident.

Details of the encounter were previously mentioned in Pruitt's statement of offense.

The document described how Schumer and his security detail headed towards the elevators in the northern part of the Capitol Visitor's Center in an attempt to get the senator to a secure location.

After Schumer and the detail ran back down the ramp, Pruitt proceeded southbound through the Capitol Visitor's Center, toward a set of double doors that officers were guarding.

Pruitt eventually left the Capitol after being made aware by police that shots had been fired during the disorder on January 6.

While inside the Capitol, Pruitt threw a "Quiet Please" sign across an atrium, as well as a chair across a room in the Capitol Visitors' Center. He was also present as rioters confronted Capitol Police officers inside the building during the riot.

In his victim impact statement, M.L. described how his family feared he could have died on January 6, and that he still recalls the encounter he had with Pruitt.

"My wife and daughter understand that their husband and father could have died that day, like some of my colleagues. They will never rest easy whenever I go to work again," he wrote, reported NBC News.

"Every day I enter the beacon of our country, the U.S. Capitol, I relive the memories of that day, and none are as impactful as the moments I saw Mr. Pruitt approaching us with the intent to inflict harm to the Majority Leader," M.L. said. "It was only due to our teams preplanning of alternate evacuations procedures and quick actions that this impending meeting did not result in blood shed or serious bodily injury."

Schumer has been contacted for comment.

[Link to Image](#)

## Graphic

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Charles Schumer and the **Proud Boys**

Getty

In this combination image, Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer (D-NY) the State Dining Room (Inset) of the White House August 16, 2022 and a member of the Portland **Proud Boys**, rides through a **Proud Boy** gathering on July 16, 2022 in Gladstone, Oregon.

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2022

## White nationalism, fired by social media, is on the rise, attracting young white men | Opinion

Newstex Blogs

Pennsylvania Capital-Star

August 25, 2022 Thursday 12:06 PM EST

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**Length:** 2303 words

**Byline:** Capital-Star Guest Contributor

### Body

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Aug 25, 2022( Pennsylvania Capital-Star: <https://www.penncapital-star.com> Delivered by Newstex)

By Sophie Bjork-James

White nationalists keep showing up in the hearings of the U.S. House committee investigating the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection[1].

Evidence is mounting that white nationalist groups[2] who want to establish an all-white state played a significant role in the violent attack on the U.S. Capitol that left five dead and dozens wounded.

Thus far, the hearings 'have documented how the **Proud Boys** helped lead the insurrectionist mob[3] into the U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C.,' journalist James Risen wrote in the Intercept.

Based on July 12, 2022, testimony from a former Oath Keepers member[4], the white nationalist group coordinated with[5] the Three Percenters[6], another group of white nationalists, and the Proud Boys[7] in mobilizing their extremists groups[8] to rally in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 6, as asked by President Trump in his Dec. 16, 2020, tweet.

As a cultural anthropologist[9] who has studied these movements for over a decade, I know that membership in these organizations is not limited to the attempted violent overthrow of the government and poses an ongoing threat, as seen in massacres carried out by young men radicalized by this movement[10].

In 2020, for instance, the Department of Homeland Security described domestic violent extremists as 'presenting the most persistent and lethal threat[11]' to the people of the United States and the nation's government.

In March 2021, FBI Director Christopher Wray testified to Congress[12] that the number of arrests of white supremacists and other racially motivated extremists has almost tripled since he took office in 2017.

'Jan. 6 was not an isolated event,' Wray testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee. 'The problem of domestic terrorism has been metastasizing across the country for a long time now, and it's not going away anytime soon.'

The Southern Poverty Law Center[13], a nonprofit civil rights group, tracked 733 active hate groups across the United States in 2021.

Based on my research[14], the internet and social media have made the problem of white supremacist hate far worse and more visible; it's both more accessible and, ultimately, more violent, as seen on Jan. 6 at the U.S. Capitol and the shooting deaths[15] of ten Black people at a Buffalo grocery store, among other examples.

An expansive, online network

In the 1990s, former KKK leaders including David Duke[16] rebranded white supremacy for the digital age.

They switched KKK robes[17] for business suits and connected neo-Nazi antisemitic conspiracies with broader anti-Black, anti-immigrant and anti-Islamic racism.

From the 1990s to the late 2000s, this movement largely[18] built discreet online communities and websites peddling racist disinformation.

In fact, for years one of the first websites about Martin Luther King Jr.[19] that a Google search recommended was a website created by white nationalists that spread neo-Nazi propaganda.

In 2005, the white nationalist website Stormfront.org[20] had 30,000 members - which might sound like a lot. But as social media expanded, with both Facebook[21] and Twitter[22] opening to anyone with an email address in 2006, its views got a lot more attention. By 2015, 250,000 people had subscribed to become members of Stormfront.org.

Between 2012 and 2016, white nationalists on Twitter saw a 600% increase in Twitter followers[23]. They have since worked to bring white supremacy into everyday politics[24].

The Tech Transparency Project[25], a nonprofit tech industry watchdog group, found that in 2020 half of the white nationalist groups tracked by the Southern Poverty Law Center[26] had a presence on Facebook[25].

Without clear regulations preventing extremist content, digital companies, in my view, allowed for the spread of white nationalist conspiracies[27].

Racist activists used algorithms as virtual bullhorns to reach previously unimaginable-sized audiences.

Enter the 'alt-right'

White nationalist leaders, such as Richard Spencer[28], wanted an even bigger audience and influence.

Spencer coined the term 'alt-right' to this end, with the goal of blurring the relationship between white nationalism and white conservatism. He did this by establishing nonprofit think tanks like the National Policy Institute[29] that provided an academic veneer for him and other white supremacists to spread their views on white supremacy.

This strategy worked.

Today, many white nationalist ideas once relegated to society's fringes are embraced by the broader conservative movement.

Take, for instance, the Great Replacement Theory[30]. The conspiracy theory misinterprets demographic change as an active attempt to replace white Americans with people of color.

This baseless idea observes that Black and Latino people are becoming larger percentages of the U.S. population, and paints that data as the result of an allegedly active attempt by unnamed multiculturalists to drive white Americans out of power in an increasingly diverse nation.

A recent poll showed[31] that over 50 percent of Republicans now believe in this conspiracy theory.

(YouTube screen capture)

In 2016, during Trump's presidential campaign, Vice Magazine co-founder Gavin McInnes[32] formed the Proud Boys[33] to further the goals of the alt-right by protecting white identity with the use of violence if necessary.

**Proud Boys** members are affiliated with white nationalist ideas and leaders, but they deny any explicit racism. Instead, they describe themselves[34] as 'Western chauvinists' who believe in the supremacy of European culture but also welcome members of any race who support this idea.

Along with pro-gun militias such as the Oath Keepers[35] and Three Percenters[36], the **Proud Boys** are an experiment in spreading white nationalist ideas to an online universe of potentially millions of social media users.

Why do people join these groups?

Data from manifestos posted online by white nationalist groups shows that many mass shooters share a few common characteristics - they are young, white, male and they spend significant time online at the same websites.

The alleged shooter in the killing of 10 Black people in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Buffalo on May 14, 2022, described his reason as wanting to stop what he feared as the elimination 'of the white race'[37].

His fears that people of color were 'replacing' white people came from 4chan[38], a social media company popular among the alt-right.

In 2019, nine African American church members were murdered in Charleston by a young white man who became radicalized through Google searches[39] that led him to openly white supremacist content.

Massacres in a Walmart in El Paso, Texas[40], at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand[41], and at a synagogue in Poway, California[42], all took place after the shooters began spending time on 8chan[43], an imageboard popular with white supremacists and the home of QAnon posts[44].

For many of these individuals, the most important part of their radicalization was not about their home life or personality quirks, but instead about where they spent time online.

A racially diverse democracy at stake



The reasons men join groups like the **Proud Boys** and Oath Keepers - and even some liberal groups - is less clear. A former Proud Boy member offered one reason[45]: 'They want to join a gang,' Russell Schultz told CNN on Nov. 25, 2020. 'So they can go fight antifa and hurt people that they don't like, and feel justified in doing it.'

Antifa[46] is a loose-knit group of usually nonviolent activists who oppose fascism[47].

Other former extremist group members describe[48] seeking camaraderie and friendship, but also finding racism and antisemitism.

Former Oath Keeper Jason Van Tatenhove testifies on July 12, 2022, during a hearing by the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capitol (Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

But more than any other issue, racial demographic changes[49] are providing recruitment opportunities for white nationalists, many of whom believe that by the year 2045[50] white people will become the minority in the United States.

In July 2021, the most recent date for which statistics are available, the U.S. Census Bureau notes that of the estimated population of 330 million American citizens[51], 75.8% are white, 18.9% are Hispanic, 13.6% are Black and 6% are Asian.

What is also becoming clearer is that the spread of white nationalism endangers the idea of a democratic nation where racial diversity is considered a strength, not a weakness.

Sophie Bjork-James is an assistant professor at Vanderbilt University. She wrote this piece for The Conversation, where it first appeared[52].

[ 1]: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/10/politics/jan-6-us-capitol-riot-timeline/index.html> [ 2]: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/jan-6-committee-tuesday-1.6517650> [ 3]: <https://theintercept.com/2022/06/17/jan-6-hearings-right-wing-white-nationalists/> [ 4]: <https://theconversation.com/former-oath-keeper-reveals-racist-antisemitic-beliefs-of-white-nationalist-group-and-their-plans-to-start-a-civil-war-185006> [ 5]: <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/justice-department/new-evidence-reveals-coordination-oath-keepers-three-percenters-jan-6-rcna30355> [ 6]: <https://www.start.umd.edu/publication/three-percenters-look-inside-anti-government-militia> [ 7]: <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/09/985104612/conspiracy-charges-bring-proud-boys-history-of-violence-into-spotlight> [ 8]: <https://www.npr.org/2022/07/12/111132464/jan-6-hearing-recap-oath-keepers-proud-boys> [ 9]: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=MwUgXPAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao> [ 10]: <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/16/1099034094/what-is-the-great-replacement-theory> [ 11]: [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020\\_10\\_06\\_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020_10_06_homeland-threat-assessment.pdf) [ 12]: <https://apnews.com/article/fbi-chris-wray-testify-capitol-riot-9a5539af34b15338bb5c4923907eeb67> [ 13]: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-map> [ 14]: <https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/fea2.12011> [ 15]: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/for-buffalo-shooting-victims-and-survivors-it-was-like-every-other-day> [ 16]: <https://www.msnbc.com/the-reidout/reidout-blog/david-duke-donald-trump-tucker-carlson-rcna3413> [ 17]: <https://www.thestoryoftexas.com/discover/artifacts/grand-dragon-ku-klux-klan-robe-and-hood> [ 18]: <https://rowman.com/ISBN/9780742561588/Cyber-Racism-White-Supremacy-Online-and-the-New-Attack-on-Civil-Rights> [ 19]: <https://www.mic.com/articles/165540/googling-martin-luther-king-returns-neo-nazi-propaganda-why-won-t-google-fix-it> [ 20]: <https://www.science.org/content/article/it-s-toxic-place-how-online-world-white-nationalists-distorts-population-genetics> [ 21]: <https://www.facebook.com/facebook/> [ 22]: <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/what-is-twitter> [ 23]: <https://apo.org.au/node/67247> [ 24]: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0966369X.2019.1710472?journalCode=cgpc20> [ 25]: <https://www.techtransparencyproject.org/articles/white-supremacist-groups-are-thriving-on-facebook> [ 26]: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2000/internet-hate-and-law> [ 27]: <https://www.splcenter.org/hate-and-tech> [ 28]: <https://www.vox.com/identities/2019/11/4/20947833/richard-spencer-white-nationalism-audio-milo-alt-right> [ 29]: <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2020/01/10/once-political-force-richard-spencer-and-national-policy-institute-go-quiet> [ 30]: <https://theconversation.com/replacement-theory-isnt-new-3-things-to-know-about-how-this-once-fringe-conspiracy-has-become-more-mainstream-183492> [ 31]: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/05/09/nearly-half-republicans-agree-with-great-replacement-theory/> [ 32]: <https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2021/06/the-secret-history-of-gavin-mcinnis> [ 33]: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/proud-boys> [ 34]: <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/pride-prejudice-the-violent-evolution-of-the-proud-boys/> [ 35]: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/oath-keepers> [ 36]: <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/three-percenters> [ 37]: <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/16/1105776617/buffalo-shooting-suspect-says-his-motive-was-to-prevent-eliminating>

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## Notes

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