Will the real Brennan please stand up?

May 28, 2013   Reach: 1,085 Total Views

Many trans folk are aware of Brennan for attempts to overturn trans equality elections, her targeting, outing and trans-shaming of non-cis folk and for claiming cis privilege doesn't exist because not butch lesbians can access all the privilege that comes from not being trans.
But a month ago, Brennan began contacting me. She sent me her personal phone number and email saying that should I ever have questions, I should feel free to contact her. I did contact her. We played telephone tag, sent texts and when at last I had a firm commitment for a scheduled phone call, she apparently ignored my call. Since I couldn’t get her on the phone, 10 days ago I sent her an email with the questions I had for her and thus far she’s ignored them. Moreover, while I was waiting for her to make good on her offer to answer some questions, she apparently contacted a MRA site and asked to be a contributing author on their site.

Yes. Cathy Brennan: MRA activist. But, I’ll get to that in a moment. First, here’s the evidence to back up my previous paragraph, along with the questions Brennan appears to be ducking:

5/6/2013: Brennan extends invitation.

I called her the next day. Here’s an example of the telephone tag that went on for days:

[sc_embed_player fileurl="http://www.cristanwilliams.com/b/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/CB-VM.mp3"]

Here’s some of the texts back and forth:
Here are the emails:

Catherine Brennan
May 15 (2 d ago)
Cathy Brennan

Dear Cathy,

Would you like to schedule a time for a call tomorrow? It seems that without an appointment, we’re not able to connect on the phone. I have meetings all afternoon today and yesterday, but you indicated that you’re available in the evenings.

Alternatively, since you’ve indicated that you’re open to me emailing you, I’d be happy to converse well. Please let me know which is most convenient for you.

Thanks!

Cathie

Catherine Brennan
May 15 (2 d ago)

Hi Cathy:

I just got your transient. I’m happy to see you e-mail. If you don’t mind, I will contact you with questions concerning your reaction.

1. What did you mean by “transient”?
2. You’re not in good health. Why are you coming out of the closet today?
3. Definitely, you’re a brave man. However, I’m not sure that you need to feel this way all the time. I think that everyone should be able to pursue their professional interests. If you’re interested in pursuing this area, please let me know how you can pursue those interests.

The second set of questions is about your experience as a person.

1. What is your answer about the “transient”?
2. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
3. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
4. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
5. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
6. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
7. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
8. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
9. Answer if you think about the “transient”.
10. Answer if you think about the “transient”.

Thank you.

Cathie

SCOTUS grants stay allowing Texas abortion clinics to stay open! #bodyautonomy
you are as a real person.

1. When did you first meet a trans-identified person? What was the experience like for you?
2. You’re an out and proud lesbian. What was your coming out process like?
3. Professionally, you’re a lawyer. Why law? Also, have you found that your status as either/both lesbian and female affected your ability to pursue your profession?
4. You’re an outspoken activist. Was there an event that motivated you to become an activist?

The second set of questions is about your experience as an activist.

1. What are your thoughts about the “TERF” label?
2. What are your thoughts about the “RadFem” label?
3. Internet trolls aside, where do you feel the trans movement shares some common ground with the aims/goals of radical feminism?
4. If someone were to ask you what your reputation is in RadFem circles, what would you say?
5. If someone were to ask you what your reputation is in trans circles, what would you say?

http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:qOVl6rZDK10J:www.transadvocate.com/will-the-real-brennan-please-stand-up_n_9501.htm+&cd=2...
6. I've noticed that you've had some (publicly) contentious activist relationships with other RadFems. Why do you feel that it came to that level of public contention?

7. What is your proudest/happiest/most fulfilling moment as an activist?

8. What was your hardest moment as an activist?

9. As you understand it, what happened to radfemhub.com?

10. Julie Bindel was highly critical of the type of rhetoric that went on at the radfemhub. She said, "I hereby denounce Rad Fem Hub for being rabid maniacs." Do you feel that people who denounce places like radfemhub are, by their rejection, supporting the patriarchy?

The last set of questions have to do with ideology/theory.

1. If someone were to assert patriarchy isn't real, what would you point to as being evidence of the existence of patriarchy?

2. What have you heard trans people point to as being evidence of a set of privileges people accrue by virtue of not being trans?

3. I've heard some RadFems use the term rape in various ways.
When you talk about the act of rape, what action are you referring to? Do you believe that a transwoman can be raped?

4. Do you believe that people can have a subjective experience their body outside of the context of culture?

5. The FBI defines gender identity as “A person’s internal sense of being male, female, or a combination of both; that internal sense of a person’s gender may be different from the person’s gender as assigned at birth.” When you say gender identity what do you mean?

6. The FBI defines a hate group as “An organization whose primary purpose is to promote animosity, hostility, and malice against persons of or with a race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity which differs from that of the members or the organization.” Some would argue that the decades-long behavior and rhetoric of TERF leadership qualifies the TERF movement as a hate group. As a leader, in what ways do you work to not promote “...animosity, hostility, and malice against persons of or with a... gender identity which
differs from that of the members...” of the TERF movement?

7. I've had internet death threats, faced doc dropping, internet bullying, targeting of my friends and family, etc. I know that you're dealt with a lot of this type of crap as well. It seems that this experience of hate-filled push-back is fairly common in the era of internet activism. How have you personally dealt with it? Would you have advice for other activists on how to deal with it?

After getting nothing but silence from Brennan after her apparent willingness to answer questions, I set her a follow-up email:

Hello? Echo-o-o-o

While I've not heard from Brennan, the MRAs have.

Apparently while I was busy waiting for a reply from Brennan, she was busy putting herself out there to support the MRA movement. Here's the email Brennan apparently sent to someone named Loy Finly over at avoiceformen.com:
Hi. I’m Cathy “Bug” Brennan and I want to support the Men’s Rights Movement.

I will say that the email listed on the above email is the exact email Brennan used when corresponding with me.

Brennan’s support of the Men’s Rights Movement is kinda ironic since she tweeted the following earlier this year:

More from the SPLC’s voice of reason on MRA issues

Apparently around the same time that she seems to have decided to support the MRA movement, she changed many of her accounts so that they are not longer publicly available:

Brannan’s personal site is no longer public
I've no idea what's going on with Brennan. Obviously she wants her privacy. Obviously she wants to work with MRAs. At the end of the day, I don't personally care what's going on with her. I don't care if she chooses to side with MRAs, TERFs or some other fringe group.

The point of putting all of this out there is to prove that I've made a good faith effort to take Cathy up on her offer of dialogue. My questions to her will remain open to her. Should Cathy choose to be honest about her claim that she's open to dialogue, I'd be happy to talk about the questions I've laid out as they're central to the ideology that Brennan, in particular, has worked to so hard to support.

UPDATE: BRENNAN RESPONDS
homeless shelter and co-founded the first federally funded trans-only homeless program, pioneered affordable health care for trans people in the Houston area, won the right for trans people to change their gender on Texas ID prior to surgery, started numerous trans social service programs and founded the Transgender Center as well as the Transgender Archives.

Cristan is the editor at the social justice sites TransAdvocate.com and TheTERFs.com, chairs the City of Houston HIV Prevention Planning Group, is the jurisdictional representative to the Urban Coalition for HIV/AIDS Prevention Services (UCHAPS), serves on the national steering body for UCHAPS and is the Executive Director of the Transgender Foundation of America.

How do you feel about this story?

FASCINATED  AMUSED  EXCITED  SAD
Will the real Brennan please stand up? | The TransAdvocate

Womyn's Musical Festival
September 12, 2014

Facebook (0)
Google + (0)
WordPress (6)

Add a comment...
No comments yet

Add a comment as Cathy Brennan

6 COMMENTS

sophias-choices
Curiouser and curiouser.
I left a fb comment on a transadvocate post a month ago to the effect that Cathy Brennan has a significant history of saying she was willing to engage, and then simply data mining and continuing hostilities or silence. She, or someone, didn’t appreciate that and fb
notified me that it was taken down as offending community standards and blocked me for 12 hours, presumably in ignorance of the fact that CB is clearly a public person in this regard.

Thought it illuminating a year or so back when someone on Bilerico quoted back comments that CB had made in the past to her. The response by CB was to ask ‘Are you stalking me ?’. On being told that the person had googled her and read some of her online comments, CB came back with ‘You are stalking me!’ and exited the discussion.

Clearly it’s of interest to try and work out why she behaves in such an irrational fashion, beyond simple ‘tactics’. Possibly there is a part of her that does recognise that what she does is inherently violent, and she simply refuses to acknowledge her past, however recent and obvious, to wall off that recognition.

Then there’s her odd definition of rape, avoiding forced oral or anal penetration. OK, according to her definitions that means that trans women can’t be raped, but it is fairly gross regarding cis women’s experience. Could that indicate that she is trying to elide a personal history of male sexual violence within her general stance? That something like that has made her supersensitive to ‘guys’ knowing anything about her? Perhaps, though, that’s a typical trans womans thought to explain seemingly irrational hatred. ‘Abuser goes on to abuse’ is a comfortably
understandable commonplace.
A bit like believing that of
course there could have been
a major disruption of emails...
Personally, that doesn’t extend
to believing her answers here
are anything other than
something she can quote to
demonstrate actual
‘engagement’.
One last, slightly off topic
point. ‘Terfs’ makes sense as a
term to the trans community.
It distinguishes between the
bulk of rad fems and those
who emphasise the original
transsexual empire beliefs a la
Janice Raymond. But if they
could agree on a neutral term
– orradfems for original rad
fems for example, I for one
would prefer it. One less thing
to divide women.

MAY 29, 2013 AT 10:34 AM Reply

@riotgrill says:
May 29, 2013 at 3:00 am
RT @itsjustahobby: Will the real
Brennan please stand up?:
http://t.co/G6soOQGkdI

Mercedes Allen
That’s because she didn’t
actually want to be challenged,
she wanted your IP address,
phone number and any other
potentially identifying
information, so she could do
some digging — either to
uncover dirt, or else uncover
vulnerabilities (employer info,
places that publish you, etc).
And maybe to argue with you,
if it meant that you’d give her
something she could use as
validation of her persecution
meme. Watch your back.
You will not get a straight answer from her, because her positions are always relative to who she is speaking, and keyed toward fomenting division between several factions. That’s all.

MAY 28, 2013 AT 11:46 AM Reply

friday_freakin_jones
She now claims she’s never doxxed anyone?
My personal encounters with her reflect a different reality:
She noticed me posting stuff under my real name on Bilerico using my Facebook account, connected that to what I was saying under my pre-Web online pseudonym at Endablog, and she decided to try and dox me.
She ran Web searches on my real name, found that I had once owned and administered a .NET website, checked the WHOIS history on that website, and decided that since I’m one of them there “sex changes” that I must be the current owner of
the site, a man I
handed the keys
over to in 1999.

I’m not sure if
she thought I
was assigned
female at birth
and became the
dude who owns
my old website,
or if she thinks
I’m a trans
woman who
leads a double
life or what, but
she decided to
post several
articles on her
now-private
“iblamecathybrennan”
WordPress blog
that connected
what I said at
Endablog as
fridayjones to my
real name to the
first male name
she found
connected to my
real name in any
way in a manner
designed to
indicate that I
was “really” that
man who now
owns and
administers my
old web site.

So yeah, Cathy
Brennan tried
REALLY REALLY
hard to “out” me
by permanently
connecting my
legal name to a
male name, and
of course she
made sure to
accuse me of
“rape-iness” for
telling her that I was NOT interested in her in “that way.”

What exactly would you call it other than “doxing” when someone tries their level best to connect a person’s legal name to the term “rape” and to “out” what she believes to be a trans woman’s former masculine assigned-at-birth name to anyone who runs a simple Web search on the trans woman’s legal name?

One thing I will give Cathy Brennan credit for: Even though the old WHOIS lookup would have revealed my actual street address (we were all a bit more naive about security in those days), she did not hand out my street address to her radfem pals, some of whom live in the same region I do, and all of whom seem to be mentally unstable and violent.
personalities. I believe that there ARE lines that CB will not cross, and that there is still some kind of a human being living inside of that bigoted persona she’s created.

I think that there is still hope for Cathy Brennan, that it’s still possible for her to have an epiphany and wake herself up from her own self-induced nightmare.

MAY 29, 2013 AT 12:42 AM
Reply

@jaspergregory says:
May 28, 2013 at 9:41 am
Will the real Cathy Brennan please stand up?: http://t.co/EWw1o7VbNU
Reply

@Keltik_ says:
May 28, 2013 at 7:46 am
RT @itsjustahobby: Will the real Brennan please stand up?:
http://t.co/G6soOQGkdI
Reply

LEAVE A COMMENT

Name *

Email *

Website