Publication: Bitch Magazine

Writer: Tina Vasquez

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Title: "It's Time to End the Long History of Feminism Failing Transgender Women"

Link to story: <http://bitchmagazine.org/post/the-long-history-of-transgender-exclusion-from-feminism>

Impact summary:

For decades, there has been controversy among feminist groups about how to treat transgender women.  In recent years, an influential group of “radical feminists” who believe transgender women are not “real women” has lobbied against allowing transgender women in women-only spaces, campaigned against gender-neutral bathroom policies, and engaged in online harassment of trans activists. This issue was largely unreported in mainstream media, both because it was seen as a niche problem and because challenging the tactics of the media-savvy anti-trans feminists carries big risks: last year, they sued a magazine for slander. But Bitch Media and reporter Tina Vasquez felt that despite the risks, we needed take a bold stand against transphobia.

Vasquez meticulously researched the radical feminist movement, collaborating with Bitch Online Editor Sarah Mirk to publish her in-depth article “It’s Time to End the Long History of Feminism Failing Transgender Women.” The article lays out the troubling history of transphobia within feminism and creates a significant new narrative for feminists: the debate on whether transgender women are women is over. We all need to work to protect the rights of people whose identities put them at risk for harassment, discrimination, and violence.

In addition to reframing this crucial issue, Vasquez’s article included never-before-reported information on how high-profile radical feminists were harassing transgender women, using social media and numerous websites to bully trans advocates.

Bringing this information to light allowed thousands of readers to see the fear these trans women had suffered in private. Beyond that, the personal power of the reporting was immediately clear: the first comment on the article, from a trans woman, reads “Thank you for standing up for us Tina.”

Publication: The Nation Institute/ The New Republic

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Title: Sexual Assault at God’s Harvard

<http://www.newrepublic.com/article/116623/sexual-assault-patrick-henry-college-gods-harvard>

Impact Summary:

Over a year in the works, Kiera Feldman’s investigation, “Sexual Assault at God’s Harvard,” uncovered a pattern of victim-blaming and covering up of sexual assault at Patrick Henry College, the elite evangelical school that serves as a pipeline to conservative jobs in Washington. The college repeatedly punished female victims while granting impunity to alleged perpetrators, she found. In one case, a dean instructed a woman to destroy incriminating text messages from her alleged assailant. This is the story of what happens at a school where leaders claim that “real rape” is rare and teach their female charges to protect their “purity” and never “tempt” their brothers in Christ.

When the story appeared last February, it sparked an uproar among Patrick Henry alums, who demanded better victim care, the hiring of a victims’ advocate, campus education, and an independent audit. Shortly after, Patrick Henry announced it would hire "a specialized legal firm” to audit the school’s policies and procedures regarding sexual assault and harassment.

The independent audit has yet to be released, but in August, the Alumni Review Committee released its own findings, condemning the administration for its failure to cooperate and saying, “We believe that the College's policies and practices on this issue need significant adjustment," including a change in who handles sexual misconduct complaints.

Then, in October, Patrick Henry President Graham Walker announced his resignation, effective immediately. College officials were quick to say that Walker's abrupt resignation had "zero connection" with "[Sexual Assault at God's Harvard](http://www.newrepublic.com/article/116623/sexual-assault-patrick-henry-college-gods-harvard)," but Alumni Association president Daniel Noa attributed the resignation to the "tremendous friction between the alumni community and Dr. Walker” in the wake of the investigation.

Publication: The Cleveland Scene

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Attending Conference: Kyle Swenson

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Title: Good Kids, Bad City: After 39 Years of Wrongful Incarceration, Ricky Jackson and the Bridgeman Brothers Walk Free

<http://www.clevescene.com/scene-and-heard/archives/2014/12/03/good-kids-bad-city-after-39-years-of-wrongful-incarceration-ricky-jackson-and-the-bridgeman-brothers-walk-free>

Impact Summary:

The impact of this story is best illustrated by a number: 39 years. That's the stretch of time during which three men claimed they had been convicted of a crime they didn't commit. It took 39 years for the state of Ohio to finally listen, largely thanks to the work submitted for the TMC Impact Award.

In 1975, three African-American teens from Cleveland's east side were convicted of murder. No physical evidence tied them to the crime. The prosecution only produced a 13-year-old boy from the neighborhood who claimed he witnessed the shooting. In 2011, [I wrote a story for the Cleveland Scene](http://www.clevescene.com/cleveland/what-the-boy-saw/Content?oid=2598138) showing how this testimony was inconsistent and physically impossible. After publication, that piece was directly responsible for the Innocence Project's decision to take up the case. The recent 2014 story documented the lawyers' efforts to exonerate these men, which began with the witness's eventual recantation and ended with a dramatic courtroom hearing. After 39 years, these men were finally released. It is the longest wrongful incarceration in U.S. history.

Our contribution was featured in dozens of news pieces, including the Associated Press, the Washington Post, Vice News, and CBS News. Our recent piece placed the exoneration in context of past wrongful convictions in Cleveland, and also uncovered unreported past claims of misconduct leveled against the main investigator in the 1975 case. We have a complete narrative encompassing the entire case, laying out for the first time the harrowing way the system snatched away three lives.

Publication: Indy Week

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Impact Summary

INDY Week’s coverage of North Carolina inmate Michael Anthony Kerr’s death in March 2014 began with a tip from a prison nurse and ended with the dismissal of nine prison workers, the reassignment of dozens of top prison officials including the prison warden, and the resignation of one of the state prison system’s highest officers.

Our seven stories (see below) sparked ongoing investigations by the N.C. State Bureau of Investigation, Disability Rights N.C. and a federal grand jury, as well as a comprehensive review by North Carolina prisons—in cooperation with disability rights advocates and leading psychologists—of the use of solitary confinement on inmates with a mental illness. Major policy changes are expected.

The INDY was the first media outlet to report Mr. Kerr’s death, including the fact that he was left handcuffed in a cell in solitary confinement for days in a Taylorsville, N.C., prison with no food or water, covered in his own feces. There was no apparent cause for his isolation by prison officials, only that he was suffering from a mental illness combining the elements of schizophrenia and depression. A medical examiner’s report later stated that Kerr died of dehydration and that he was not being treated for his illness.

Despite the fact that our initial report in early April generated attention from national and state outlets with more resources and reporters, I’m proud of the fact that the INDY was consistently accurate, balanced, probing and first in its coverage. Without our reporting, I do not believe the truth of his death would have come out.

Title (this is a series of 7 stories)

1. Mentally ill inmate dead on arrival at Central Prison in Raleigh 4/1/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/dead-on-arrival-at-central-prison-in-raleigh/Content?oid=4009765>

(Note: This version online includes the N.C. Department of Public Safety's announcement of an investigation into Mr. Kerr's death, which came after the Indy began asking questions. That announcement came too late to make our initial print deadline.)

2. Five fired after inmate's death 4/16/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/five-fired-after-inmate-death/Content?oid=4082227>

3. "His eyes had a far-off stare." New details on inmate's death. 4/30/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/indyweek/his-eyes-had-a-far-off-stare-new-details-on-inmates-death/Content?oid=4155311>

4. DPS chief:  A "preponderance" of evidence against fired prison workers

5/1/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2014/05/01/dps-chief-a-preponderance-of-evidence-against-fired-prison-workers>

5. Autopsy blames dehydration for inmate's death

9/25/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2014/09/25/autopsy-blames-dehydration-for-inmates-death>

6. Two new dismissals following inmate's death

9/30/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2014/09/30/two-new-dismissals-reported-following-inmates-death>

7. Federal investigation  under way into death of N.C. inmate

10/3/2014

<http://www.indyweek.com/news/archives/2014/10/03/federal-investigation-underway-in-death-of-nc-inmate>

Indy Week cont.

Publication: Miami Times

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Title:  "Shock & Awe"

<http://blogs.miaminewtimes.com/riptide/2014/12/miami_cops_misuse_tasers_with_deadly_results.php>

**Impact Summary:**

Because this article was only published at year's end, its full impact remains to be seen. However, our reporting is already stirring things up. Back in in August of 2013, New Times reporter Michael E. Miller broke the story of Miami Beach Police fatally tasering 18-year-old artist Israel Hernandez. That story led to ongoing investigations by local and state authorities. It also led to a pending lawsuit and a report to the United Nations Committee Against Torture. Miller's new investigation expands upon that original reporting. (<http://www.miaminewtimes.com/2014-03-13/news/israel-reefa-hernandez-died-by-taser/full/>)

Since Miller began investigating Taser abuse, Miami police have reopened an inquiry into Vincent Miller, the officer who secretly tased a defenseless homeless man. Officer Miller may be suspended or fired. His department has also vowed to investigate why his conduct was not caught by supervisors, which would have prevented further abuse by other officers. Half a dozen other officers are also mentioned by name in the article and could face disciplinary action.

The article's potential impact is greater still. All three police departments discussed in the piece have newly appointed chiefs. These chiefs inherited departments already under scrutiny for deadly police-involved shootings. In the past month, massive street protests against police brutality have repeatedly brought Miami to a halt. This article adds another dimension to the heated public debate over the conduct of Miami law enforcement.

Perhaps most importantly, this article suggests changes to police policies governing Taser use. It remains to be seen if local law enforcement agencies embrace these suggestions. Doing so could prevent thousands of needless and painful taserings, and perhaps even a few deaths.