

## Trans-mission

Kris King – September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011

<http://www.rantinaminor.co.uk/2011/09/trans-mission/>

This blogging lark can be a bit frustrating sometimes. There you are thinking you've got the week's topic sorted and the post itself well under way (alright, 1/6th under way) when, suddenly, almost out of nowhere, along comes something that throws a massive spanner in the works and everything changes. One minute your article was one thing, the next you find you have to begin the slow, difficult process of turning it into something else entirely. Since there are no wrongly imprisoned teens to write about, and most of my relatives are thankfully of good health, what could it be this time? Well, it was, in fact, Fox News psychiatrist Dr. Keith Ablow's article on Chaz Bono, son of Cher (and Sonny), and his upcoming appearance on "Dancing With The Stars". I won't dignify the article with a link, so please take my word for it when I tell you, in no uncertain terms, that Dr. Keith Ablow is an ignorant, hate-mongering, transphobic shit-bag.

Again, this is one of those cases where, in the interests of full disclosure, it's only fair of me to make absolutely clear that I'm not entirely unbiased when it comes to this particular subject. I have two transgender people in my life; my wonderful partner, Raven, who, like Chaz Bono, is a trans man (i.e. female to male, or FTM), and my good friend Aerynne who is a trans woman (i.e. male to female, or MTF). I have been a close observer from day one of what life is like for someone with gender dysphoria; I've seen how someone can be unwilling to look in the mirror because they know that, whenever they do, all they will see is something that looks, and *feels*, fundamentally *wrong*; I've seen how someone can be so terrified of what they think the world sees in them, or how they feel about them, that they end up borderline agoraphobic, and all because people often won't see a particular gender at all and instead judge them to be a freak of nature.

I've seen the hoops that someone with gender dysphoria has to jump through in order simply to be recognised. Over the last 6 or 7 years I've been to countless appointments and assessments, dealt with hundreds of bits of paperwork and referrals, made seemingly never-ending train journeys to specialised clinics and hospitals hundreds of miles away (and burned much of my holiday time, and what little money I have, each year in the process). I spend more time on the phone in an average month than a 14-year old with a texting addiction does in a year, and I have had to familiarise myself with the acts of law pertaining to gender identity in order to get vaguely, threateningly litigious on the arses of institutions that have been unable, or frankly unwilling, to update personal records despite being presented with legal documents that would not so much stand up in court as pogo stick out of it and stomp it flat.

Whenever I've had to explain gender dysphoria to someone I've often described it as though the brain were wired to a gender that is different to the body it's being carried around in. I was both surprised, and rather smugly pleased, to discover that I was more on the money than I thought – recent [research into brain structures of transgendered people](#) somewhat supports the idea. There are numerous scientific explanations as to the potential causes of gender dysphoria, including neurological structure and function, genetics, hormone exposure, etc., but it is generally classified as a *medical* disorder, and not a mental illness (many authorities, including the NHS, do not classify it as such, although, because of the impact it can have on mental health, it is often dealt with as a mental health issue).

Dr. Keith Ablow's article belies an understanding of this condition that is both way below that of a complete, drooling spanner like myself (whose only medical training is how to unwrap an Elastoplast), and is infested with seething bigotry to such an extent that one would be tempted to put money on him being the first recipient of the inaugural "Jerry Fallwell Memorial Intolerant Prick Of The Year Award". To be honest I'm amazed that a psychiatrist working for Fox News is even able to spare the time to write articles like this; I'd have thought that when you've got people like Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, and Glenn Beck (who, between them, cover borderline, narcissistic, and histrionic personality disorders at the very least) as colleagues you'd have enough to deal with on a day to day basis to keep you busy until your retirement (and probably beyond – there's certainly

enough source material to work with to get a writing career and several conferences a year out of it).

Often, when someone exposes their intolerance, they do so by trying to mask it as having some kind of altruistic purpose; in Ablow's case it's about protecting children – specifically, it's about protecting children from catching "teh trans" by encouraging their parents to not let them watch "Dancing With The Stars" (where they will be confronted with the stark, and shocking, reality that people like Chaz Bono actually exist). Rather than allow children to be introduced to the idea that our species is infinitely more diverse and interesting than many of us can imagine, Ablow instead labels the whole thing "toxic" and a "tragic celebration of transgender surgery". He seems to hold the grossly distorted belief that seeing a TV show where Len Goodman awards a 7 to a dancing trans man before an applauding audience might somehow encourage the young girls of America to hack off their own tits and fashion a fake penis for themselves because their inability to properly connect with girls at school must mean they're really a boy underneath.

In Dr. Ablow's article (or, as we should probably more accurately refer to it, his "transphobic rant dressed up as a public service announcement") he suggests vulnerable children, who may be in the process of establishing their own gender and sexual identity, don't need the "mainstreaming" (as he puts it) of someone who themselves has an issue with identity because that would present the transgender journey as a "smart or heroic one to take". Yes, in Ablow's world, not only are kids completely fucking stupid and will look at a tranny on TV and say, "I want to do that", but the medical profession would clearly open the door for them and wave them through without an assessment or anything. Not only that, but Ablow seems to think that being transgender is, like avian flu, measles, and "teh ghey", somehow **contagious**.

Not content with the idea that a child would wish to bring down a tidal wave of bigotry upon themselves on a mere whim by *choosing* to be transgender (as if such a thing were possible), Ablow demonstrates an unbelievable lack of sensitivity and respect by repeatedly referring to Chaz Bono using female pronouns. The most obnoxious part of this whole disgusting tirade, however, is when he compares sufferers of gender dysphoria to someone who would have their limbs removed under the belief that they were born to be an amputee. Only the most sad and pathetic creature ever to drag itself from the very bottom of a festering scum swamp of dishonesty and intolerance could contemplate making such an analogy, which is entirely constructed to shock and appall. Only someone with a complete disregard for medical fact and human decency could try to draw a comparison which denigrates both conditions.

He describes the position of "Dancing With The Stars" as being that "Chaz Bono's chemically and surgically altered appearance is a blessing to us all". No it isn't, you moronic fucking imbecile – the NBC show's position is nothing more than the fact that *it's a dancing show with some stars in it*, and Chaz Bono is one of the contestants this year! Chaz Bono's appearance absolutely *is* a blessing, but to **Chaz Bono** who, having long ago had to come to terms with being born into the "wrong" body, has had to go through a painful and arduous process to, as my friend Aerynne describes it, "correct a rather large birth defect". As for the notion of it not being comparable to the "triumphs achieved by the heroes of the Civil Rights movement", Ablow is, once again, dead wrong because the transgender community is today having to wage the exact same battle against intolerant dickholes like Ablow that women, people of colour, and homosexuals had to fight in decades past.

I would like to make it clear that I do not, in any way, wish to portray Dr. Ablow as some kind of bigoted opportunist who's trying to take advantage of the media exposure Chaz Bono's appearance on "Dancing With The Stars" will inevitably bring in order to advance his distorted ideas about the transgendered and raise his profile. Not at all ... he manages that quite well on his own:

Make no mistake: I would have gone to the ends of the earth to help Chaz Bono if she had come to me for help

What, by disrespectfully refusing to use the correct pronouns?

I would have treated her with dignity ...

You've demonstrated in your article what you think dignity means.

... and summoned every ounce of my intellect ...

Wow, **both** ounces!

... and empathy ...

You'd have to find some first, you douchebag.

... to explore her psyche with her

In other words you'd have told him to pull himself together and blamed it all on some TV show he saw when he was a kid.

I would have pried loose every family secret hidden by the Bonos

And, presumably, exploited them for massive profit in the form of books and talk show appearances?

I would have enlisted the help of every expert I know—some of the world's best—at everything from endocrinology to hypnosis

You'd have sought help from people who persuade latent show-offs to pretend they're chickens on stage?

I would have teamed up with a spiritual counselor, if that seemed indicated

In other words you would have to tried to Jesus the tranny out of him.

And if all that failed ...

Why on earth would it? I mean, you clearly would have tried *really* hard not to approach the problem from a medical point of view.

... and if Chaz Bono wanted either to kill herself or to undergo gender reassignment surgery, I would have taken that journey with her

Wait, what? Are you saying you'd make a suicide pact with Chaz Bono? I know you work for Fox News and everything, but you're not *completely* beyond rescue.

Somehow, with enormous compassion and love and God's help, we would get through it

Dude, calling someone "toxic" is not exactly indicative of compassion and, if there is a god, then it was he who made Chaz Bono transgender in the first place, you fucktard.

But I would feel no triumph in it, no sense of any heroic overcoming obstacles and righting the flesh in accordance with the soul. I would feel pathos. I would feel the limits of my attempts to truly heal Chaz Bono, and I would wish her well with a life that had veered, seemingly unavoidably, into a very dark place

And yet, strangely, he didn't, as you opine, come to you for help or ask your opinion? Could it be because the transgendered don't want some wingnut like you trying to psyche them out of who they are and then pity them if it works?

I'm going to take heat for saying all this, by the way

Yes, and with bloody good reasons.

I would rather be the one shouting "The Emperor has no clothes!" than one of the happy-go-lucky villagers applauding the tragic parade

Actually, Dr. Asshole, you're the one shouting "the emperor is wearing the *wrong* clothes – cover your child's eyes lest they be irreparably damaged!"

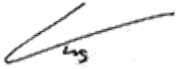
So, here it is. One psychiatrist's prescription, sure to cost me a lot of hate mail, but reward me with the certainty that I am stating what I believe to be true and that I am doing my job: If you care about your kids, don't let them watch "Dancing with the Stars" starring Chaz Bono.

So, there it is, the appeal to both emotion and your own authority as a means to engender the same bigotry in others that you are wracked with yourself.

There are many reasons to not watch "Dancing With The Stars", chief among them being that it is a truly awful bastard offspring of the wonderful original "Strictly Come Dancing". The former is dripping with artifice, and has taken all the class, elegance, and sophistication out of the latter, leaving it as not so much a celebration of the art of dance as a special olympics for C-listers desperate to prove that they've got at least one marketable entertainment skill. Don't believe me? Just check out this [sublime and exquisite charleston by Chris Hollins and Ola Jordan](#), the 2009 series winners, and

remember that, prior to this, Hollins was the sports presenter on BBC Breakfast. When you've done with that, go and have a look at some of the other stunning dances from other performers on "Strictly".

There, in fact, used to be a time when I thought dance was the lowest form of communication; that was long before I actually sat and watched "Strictly Come Dancing", but not after I had remembered the existence of mime. As soon as I had seen "[The Boy With Tape On His Face](#)" even mime had to be significantly upgraded, and I've since begun the search for a new lowest form of communication. Maybe it's TV psychiatry, self-help books, and the kind of self-aggrandising, attention-seeking bullshit peddled by shit-bags like Dr. Keith Ablow?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'KMS' or similar, written in a cursive style.