

CHRISTINE JORGENSEN & THE “INTRODUCTION” OF TRANSNESS:

- Jorgensen was one of the first public examples of a **successful medical transition**, receiving her treatment in Denmark in 1952.
- When she returned to the United States, her transformation and gender identity had been leaked to the press; she was met with hordes of reporters and became a star overnight.
- Although her time in the spotlight was imperfect, she was still treated with shocking levels of respect— she was rarely misgendered in news articles, invited to speak at universities, and became a famous nightclub performer.

MEDICAL/SOCIAL SHIFTS:

- Jorgensen’s mere existence was enough to prompt a reassessment of rigid societal norms and gender roles. Sex and gender were no longer synonymous in the medical community, and an understanding of **gender as a spectrum** was budding.

EMERGING COMMUNITIES:

- By the 1960s, a magazine titled *Transvestia* was in print; they claimed to cater toward heterosexual **crossdressing** men, but trans women were undoubtedly readers and even submitted their own writing.
- The FTM Newsletter (first shared in 1987) was a similar resource, for trans men.
- Both archives reveal a snapshot of nuances within the trans community that were yet to be worked out: outdated terminology (such as **transvestite** and **transsexual**) along with a lack of distinction between transness and crossdressing are two key examples of this dilemma.

As transgender identities become more public, they become easier to shift blame towards. Transness has become modern-day America’s perfect scapegoat.



The Daily News’ cover story, December 1st, 1952

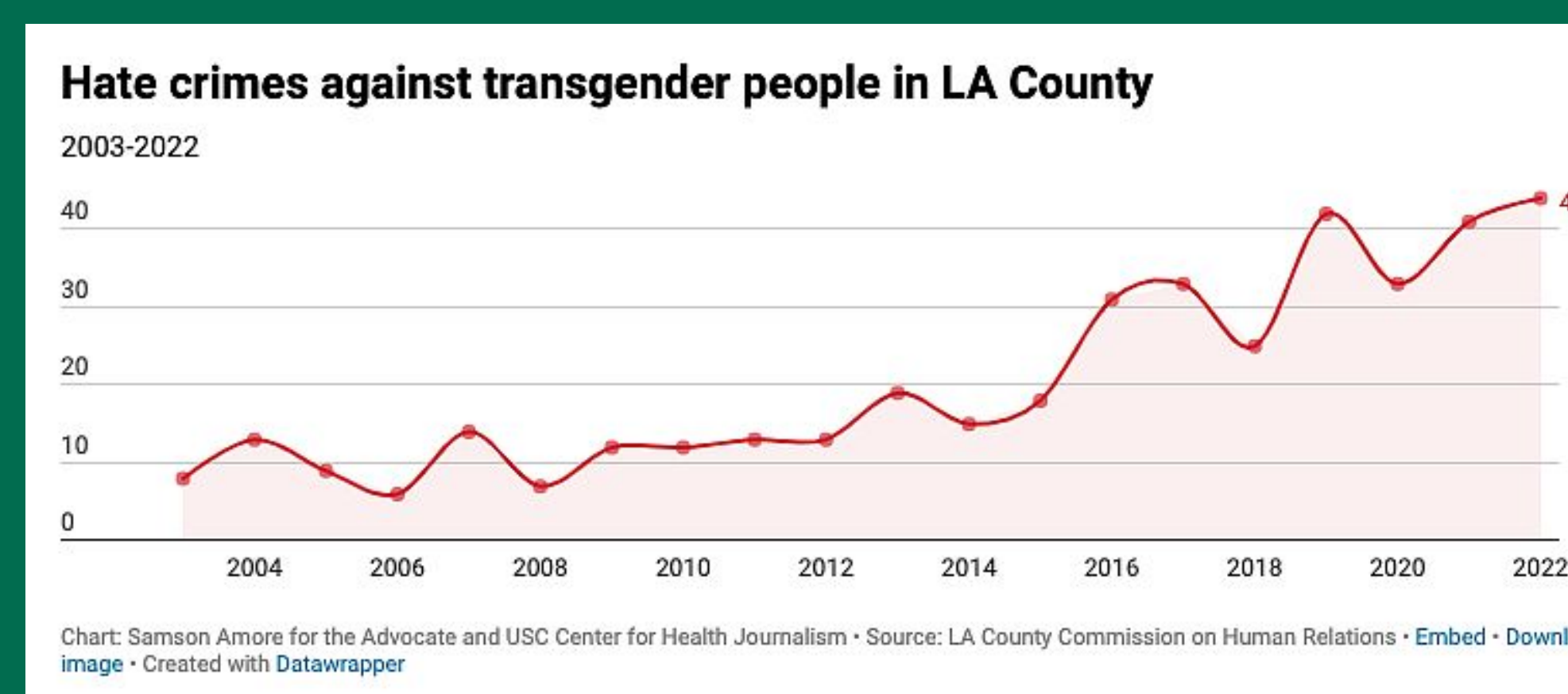


Image found via the University of Victoria’s *Vault*.



Transvestia, Vol. 07, No. 40 (also found via *Vault*).

“You seem to assume that every person is **either** a man or a woman... Each person is **actually** both in **varying degrees**... I'm more of a woman than I am a man.”
- Christine Jorgensen



Increase in anti-trans hate crimes per year (in a single county) over the last two decades. 547 trans or gender non-conforming individuals were the target of hate crimes in 2023 alone.

“One is not **born**, but rather **becomes**, a woman.”
- Simone de Beauvoir

Scan here for references and further reading! →



EMERGENCE OF THE INTERNET & THE TRANS VISIBILITY PARADOX:

- Online transgender spaces built community and enabled free sharing of experiences.
- The internet placed definitional power into the hands of its users. “**Cisgender**” was a term first created/popularized in usenet message boards, blogs, and other informational websites.
- A slight **us/them** dynamic was created by the divide between trans/cis, but also promoted action from the trans community itself to better their treatment from society at large.
- The **trans visibility paradox**: for a transgender individual, being open about this identity increases their risk of discrimination and hate-based violence, yet it is necessary to share that transness exists and therefore should not be stigmatized against. Visibility is needed to promote acceptance, but simultaneously opens up those individuals to danger.

MODERN-DAY ISSUES:

- Increasing pushes for trans visibility and trans rights altogether have essentially primed this community as a new **scapegoat**. The fight for LGBTQ+ liberation, particularly marriage equality, has mostly solidified the standing of queer Americans, yet trans ones remain under attack.
- Trans issues have become an issue of preserving family values, an issue of disobeying religion, and even an issue of the integrity of college sports. None of this is unintentional: by targeting an identity that is not fully understood to begin with, a perfect scapegoat is created.

**From Fascination to Fear:
Perceptions of Transness in
Postwar America**
Presenter: Rey Griffin