

Toshio Meronek: It's Toshio. This episode is about the Transgender District in the middle of San Francisco, which is a small bureaucracy that was created by the city, real estate developers and a select few trans people, and has had the effect of essentially just being a shield for non-trans politicians, police and real estate developers. Jemma DeCristo is back to tell us more about why the first official trans district in the US spells doom for the trans community that it is alleging to protect. And so I talk with Jemma in the second part of this episode, but in this first part, I'll give you a background of how the Trans District came to be and why. Cultural districts are basically ways to justify gentrification and policing on behalf of real estate speculators and the politicians they fund. As we know, trans people are under threat of violence across the US now, as always. And in neoliberal San Francisco, politicians know it's useful for their own careers to sort of wrap themselves in the trans flag. Meanwhile, they're hiring more police to abuse the queer or trans youth that make up such a huge percentage of people who are houseless here in the city. In July 2022, there was a recall of the progressive DA Chesa Boudin that was funded mostly by out-of-state conservative donors. And as a result of the recall, San Francisco got a new DA, Brooke Jenkins, who swore she'd be tough on crime and vowed to lock up and punish more people for quote unquote survival crimes and charge people under 18 as adults. And one of her first public appearances as DA was a photo op for press and social media, where she toured the Trans District with the mayor and the head of the Trans District. This was shortly after the Trans District helped to get police paid overtime to march in the Gay pride parade, which we covered in an earlier episode, and also shortly after. The Trans District's chief strategist, as her title says, did a bunch of social media commending the mayor's increased funding for the police. So for this first part, I'm going to read a little bit from an article I did for Vice back when the Transgender District was hatched in 2017, updated a bit, and then we'll get into the interview with Jemma. In the Tenderloin over the years, there have been many attempts, but few successes at bringing in richer residents and displacing people who aren't super rich. The real estate moguls at Shorenstein Realty and Group I hatched a plan to change this, which was to bring in a Trojan horse with trans flags all over it. They helped to create an official cultural district in San Francisco called the Transgender District, and they did it with the help of a few locals calling themselves the Compton's Coalition, as well as the San Francisco supervisor, Jane Kim, who we covered in an earlier episode of the show. The Compton's Coalition was named for the Trans Riot at Compton's Cafeteria back in 1966, which is one of the first instances we have of queer and trans people rioting against the brutal police state. So, fast forward to 2017, and the coalition was promoting the idea of an official district where queer and trans people could, quote, feel safe. Whenever someone brings up the idea of safety, you always have to ask the question: "Safe for whom?" And in this case, by creating a deal with real estate developers and the

city, we can guess the answer to that question. Back in 2017, Honey Mahogany, who was briefly on RuPaul's Drag Race and attempted to have a political career in which she decided to embrace the police, in her campaign ultimately to win a supervisor seat. In the end, she lost it to a gay cop, Matt Dorsey. Anyway, at the time, she said that we couldn't just let buildings be torn down without trying to preserve our history. I also talked to Felicia Elizondo, who a lot of people know as Felicia Flames. She was one of the, as she said at the time, quote, "Drag queens, transvestites and hair fairies," end quote, who rioted at Compton's Cafeteria back in 1966. She's featured pretty heavily in Screaming Queens, which is the great documentary about Compton's Cafeteria and the riot there. She also spoke about how the only support that people had as trans people in San Francisco back in the day was from each other, and how, as a teen, quote, "We were Black, Asian, Mexican, but we were all community: gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender. We were all in the same boat. We were there in the because we liked it. We were there because our parents had thrown us out and disowned us." In order to create this, quote unquote, "haven" in the middle of San Francisco for trans people, the city and the Compton's Coalition would require Shorenstein or Group I to build about 60 below market rate housing units. Shorenstein and Group I had been attempting to construct a hotel and condo complex in the TL for years, and these developers would put \$300,000 in a city fund to make the district a reality. And so in exchange, they would face much less resistance in moving forward with the construction. Keep in mind that the \$300,000 they were putting towards the district is less than half of the cost of one single condo in the new condo complex. And with Jemma, we'll get into more about why the Trans District specifically, but cultural districts and arts districts more generally, are pretty much just ciphers for gentrification and the police. Consider yourself blessed because Jemma DeCristo is back to help us learn more about why the Transgender District and other cultural and arts districts are basically neoliberal inventions from hell.

Jemma DeCristo: Hello. Hi. I'm not back. I'm. I'm. I've always been here. Thank you for having me back, though.

Toshio Meronek: Let's start out with for people who don't know, what are cultural districts.

Jemma DeCristo: If I was to talk about them in more general terms, I would say that they sort of appropriate the language of sanctuary in most cases, that is sort of endemic to queer communities or that we base a lot of our identity on. Of course, a really good example of this is featured in Christina Hanhardt's "Safe Space." And of course, that book, kind of tongue in cheek at times, uses the term safe space to talk about the way the logic or idea of a safe space, or you could also kind of use the word sanctuary, to talk about San Francisco, right, has been largely appropriated through these kind of broader state and market practices of visibility and official city presence.

But generally speaking, a cultural district is something which appropriates the language of sanctuary in our names in order to give back to us a form of what someone like Dean Spade would call 'administrative care' or 'administrative violence.' And they're more often, I would say, waged against the communities in whose name they claim to speak or memorialize.

Toshio Meronek: Exactly. So you have them sort of posing as the singular voice for a community in San Francisco. There are a few different cultural districts that are funded in part through the city. In many cases, they are the result of developers in the cities and maybe a few nonprofits coming together to declare that a new development is going to be a win for everyone involved. And it is a win, but only for a select few. So on the official map of San Francisco, we have ten different cultural districts, including the Transgender District, the Leather District, the Native American district. There's Calle 24, the Latinx district, and the Mission. There's the Filipino district. That was the first one. And they're really the result of developers in the city coming together to hatch a plan for "How are we going to gentrify a neighborhood without causing too much of a stir?" With a few people from each of these communities represented as staff members. And during this talk at UC Berkeley that you gave, I think you gave a really good assessment of what's going on with the Trans District specifically.

Jemma DeCristo: Yeah. So I'm going to quote either – and I can't remember – I'm not sure that they would care if I got it right – but either Dean Spade or Mariam Kaba, I think, who said something like, "Ask the state for anything and it will give it back to you in the form of police or prisons." And I think cultural districts are a very good example of this. So I want to specifically think about – I would say that we look at cultural districts as the kind of culture the state gives back to us as police generally. We might think of something like culture as a wholly positive thing that represents our autonomy or our agency, or all the kind of life giving attributes that we would like to espouse and hold in the world. But really, what I think it's helpful to understand cultural districts is that they are really the most prime example of the state giving us back policing, against and eventually without, the people it claims to uplift and protect. So in the case of the Trans District, it's helpful for us to understand it. And more accurate, frankly, as the 'Policing of Trans People District' that the state is returning to us. That is both in the name of trans people, but is actually against trans people and hopes to inspire us to thrive without trans people. If people have listened to to Sad Francisco before, you'll have heard hopefully, the really excellent podcast that – one of my favorite ones – my two favorite are the Parker Elementary one, of course, and the Susan Stryker one about the Geo Group facility. And I was on a panel where people were like, wait, what are we going to do about the fact that the Geo Group facility is, you know, this sort of very immediate,

terrible sign of – it was the site of Compton's, and now it's a prison. That's an important question. But I think one problem about that is it doesn't take into account the world outside the prison and cultural districts are a great example of what someone like Eric Stanley would point out is making the more and more of the world the prison. That's what cultural districts aspire to do. And so we can't talk about abolishing a single prison in the Tenderloin if we're not talking about how the Trans District itself is trying to make the Tenderloin more and more of a prison-police state surveillance apparatus. I think in particular, I would encourage people to understand cultural districts as an extension of carceral violence. They, however, disguise themselves in kind of what is, to use a very common language now, a rebranding practice. They're a rebranding of police and prisons, is probably the simplest way to think about it, right? Because they celebrate, quote unquote, the culture that they claim that are they they're named after. So, you know, thinking about cultural districts as part of these renaming ceremonies, christenings, we could call them, or groundbreaking ceremonies. And they often have these elements where someone cuts a big ribbon, usually the police, mayors and all our favorite nonprofit officials, right?

Toshio Meronek: They might throw an annual gala called the Riot Party, for example.

Jemma DeCristo: Sponsored by US Bank.

Toshio Meronek: Correct. And so we've had local performers like Nicki Jizz dropping out of Transgender District events as a result of being essentially tricked into these events honoring anti-Black, anti-trans institutions like the Mayor's Office or the police.

Jemma DeCristo: People have kind of started to wake up to what cultural districts are and specifically the Trans District, which I think is maybe the most brutal version of this because, as you've alluded to and discussed, both in this show and previous ones, Toshio, the Tenderloin is kind of one of the last bastions of lesser gentrified parts of San Francisco. So rather than when it didn't work to meet the Tenderloin with abject force like send in more and more and more and more police, what we're seeing with the Trans District is that it is kind of a euphemism for punishment, as so many other forms of punishment. Just as we could criticize how carceral a lot of services have become in the last 40 or 50 years in the US, things like welfare, medical care, and of course, nonprofit services. We see a similar kind of euphemism of policing and punishment in the trans district and what it embodies, and that it's basically trying to rebrand policing, as we've, of course, seen in the last, you know, 50 years or less, really, since the civil rights movement as safety or culture or a term they like to use for cultural districts and especially the Trans District placemaking, which are largely, as you pointed out earlier, with the SERIF building manifested in terms of

real estate and architecture that have nothing to do materially in terms of resources and capital with the communities they claim to often memorialize.

Toshio Meronek: Right. And you pointed this out, it cost \$90,000 for the initial painting of light poles, the colors of the trans flag, to kind of denote like where the borders of the Trans District were. And, you know, that's, that's cute and everything. But this is happening as the area is being gentrified, and is unaffordable to most people.

Jemma DeCristo: Right, I mean, I think like you're pointing out the flagpoles are, to me, the simplest example, and you'll often see versions of them as what we would kind of call cultural markers that distinguish cultural districts. With queer districts, it's usually something to do with one of the god awful flags and their proto-nationalist military affiliations. Yeah, but you're you're right. This is another way to think about how cultural districts try to make culture official in an area that often those cultures kind of unofficially and even against state repression, occupied and lived. Right? So areas for, you know, Black and Black trans folks are often areas we live in, despite the fact that they don't want us to live at all or don't want us to live, except for, you know, on the bare means. And so I would encourage again, people to think about not only our cultural districts, about making official the culture, but again, to bring in the policing element they're about officiating culture. And I would use officiate to relate it to things like policing, managing, refereeing. If you think of officials and of course, the mayor, right, cultural districts are all about giving the mayor, the state, the police access to regulate the communities. In other words, who counts as the good kind of trans people and who counts as the bad kind, who counts as the good kind of Latinx people, who counts as the bad kind? And that's all of what cultural districts are trying to do.

Toshio Meronek: What is the Trans District claiming to do, from your understanding?

Jemma DeCristo: So the Trans District is interesting because it's, technically, the Trans Cultural District, is technically a nonprofit. But what's really fascinating is there is no actual accessible office. It's kind of an innovation in the way the innovation – I use that pejoratively, of course, in nonprofits and that nonprofits, of course, hate the quote unquote service populations that they take – in most cases, actually despise, the people they're supposed to be working on behalf of. And with the Trans District, what's kind of interesting about it is, you know, it's almost like, like an amplified version of a nonprofit in that it doesn't actually exist in a physical space. It is a kind of almost an intermediary for, again, policing, real estate money. They don't offer any direct services. There's lots of nonprofits we could point to, for example, you think about during the so-called AIDS years, you know, that would like give medical

resources, relay you to doctors. The Trans District doesn't offer a physical site. There is no physical – I mean, this is particularly interesting for something that claims to represent, quote unquote, a community. There is no physical place for the community it claims to represent to actually go to like, get clothes, get food, get... And we can we should criticize how people get those things through nonprofits to begin with. But I think what's fascinating and sad about the Trans District is it doesn't even feign to offer those kinds of things. It's very clearly like a shell corporation of a nonprofit in the most, in the most intense sense. It's interesting. It has – a nonprofit's dream is what the Trans District is, because it's the management structure without the people that it's supposed to serve. And what I encountered is not only does the head of the Trans District Aria Sai'd make a huge salary, much more than I do, probably three, four times more than I do – what it does is it poaches a select few, again, the good trans people, from the community to work for it to kind of march with police, which they have done on multiple occasions, take pictures with the mayor and the DA – also cops. Right? So one story I have from that panel is one of the people who worked there was relaying her story of how difficult her life was and then was like, oh, the leader of the Trans District, Ari'a came up to me and, and gave me \$800 and said, you're working for me now, girl. And then she paused and was like, I had to pay her back. But wow, gee whiz, did she save me from the streets. So it's kind of like, who gets to – I mean, it also is very – there's a religious history to this too, in terms of if we were to go back to Christianity, clerical culture and things. But it's very much the managerial structure of a nonprofit with none of the services and none of doesn't have to deal with any of the people that it claims to be, again, to use the nonprofit word, on behalf of.

Toshio Meronek: Right. And until COVID closed the WeWork within the borders of the district, the Trans District was run out of a WeWork shared office space, which, granted, I've only been in a WeWork once, but it didn't feel like the most open environment to anyone that didn't look a particular way, that didn't look like a techie, which I can...

Jemma DeCristo: "Techie-passing," right?

Toshio Meronek: I could pass as a techie. So this gives us a little sense for what the Trans District claims to do and what it is not. And we've talked about this a little bit, but more explicitly, what role does a cultural district play for the mayor, or the cops?

Jemma DeCristo: There's a couple there's a couple angles to that one. I think it's the general, the general function of memorialization or some of the limits of it. Right? The Trans District, not unlike the Leather District, or you see this with other cultural districts – one huge problem is sometimes that the nonprofits... So we should distinguish, we could call it, the nonprofit community that champions

for them partially or on their behalf. Their arguments are that these are kind of a guard against us being annihilated from the neighborhood. Right? So like, we need to be remembered that we lived here. "We were here," you know, when in actuality they are an intensification of a removal of the people from that neighborhood. They help facilitate and extend that. So in the case of the Trans District, right, the flagpoles are part of this kind of memorial project where we that you see, I mean, you know, we see this other parts of the country, but it's especially true of San Francisco, where people are constantly talking about Compton's as if there aren't still trans people there, right? Oh, 1966 you know, it's all about the year of the thing. And what it does is it kind of puts trans people in the past. That's one thing. And what it does by doing that is it pretends we're we're honoring our quote unquote ancestors or transcestors in order to enact current violence, current and future violence, on and on, and intensified current and future violence against trans people who do live there. And this is, this includes the violence of police and the most despicable police. Of course, politicians like London Breed and Brooke Jenkins as well as it kind of helps disguise a lot of the ongoing harm that these people create. And so this includes anything that the non profit, I mean we talked about the non profit managerial structure, a minute ago, this includes the act of hoarding and stockpiling of resources in the nonprofit. Right. So we're going to give it to this nonprofit to say we're quote unquote we're giving it to trans people, literally so we don't have to give it to actual trans people except for the 3 or 4 who work for the company. And so there's the hoarding and the stockpiling of resources from the state and people like the mayor that it facilitates. These contribute to this kind of production of the small managerial meaning, small but meaningful managerial class of trans people who participate in disciplining these unruly or ungovernable bad trans people. Right? So most of those living on the street, right? And these trans people, who are the bad trans people, who are officiated out of existence or regulated out of existence or swept in sweeps, in most cases, don't get to count as trans. Instead, these people who are, you know, marginalized, even more marginalized than the people making, in some cases, six figures working for the Trans District, they're disappeared under the brush of criminals, addicts, druggies, the unhoused, categories that are meant to be like these are the categories we can do violence to, as opposed to... Right now in San Francisco, as you alluded to, there is a special state official discourse of San Francisco as a sanctuary for trans people. Now that you see all these kind of stripping of rights and anti-trans bills. So when they're sweeping people in the streets of the Tenderloin, aka in the Trans District, oh, we're not sweeping trans people. We're sweeping addicts. It's an open air drug market or something, to use that, I guess that's Heather Knight's term, right? So that's what the...it's not just an alibi. It actually creates this legitimate state narrative. And so we see the mayor taking a picture with the good kinds of trans people. "Well, certainly she would never kill trans people or enact policies

that do," when in fact, of course they do. Creates like a – I would comfortably use this since it's headed by a black trans woman. It creates kind of an overseer culture.

Toshio Meronek: You clued me into anti-poverty campaigns that existed in the 60s and 70s. Can you talk a little bit about how the cultural district, it's not like this totally new innovation?

Jemma DeCristo: No. Yeah, absolutely. So I mean, I think and this is an important word, and it's something I which I write about a lot, right, the Trans District is an extension of what people would call beautification practices or state beautification practices. Right? And again, that's a really good example of something where most people are not going to say – most people would hopefully say, "Well, I'm against removing poor people just for being poor," or something like that, but less people would say, "I'm against beauty and beautification," right? So in the 50s and 60s, things like anti-poverty programs, urban renewal model cities programs, these all became an integral part of initiating – and these go all the way to YIMBYism and things like that, which are an extension, of course, of urban renewal. These sort of genocidal anti-black redevelopment campaigns increasingly took on this kind of artificial cultural, artificial artful cultural politic that we would call beautification. And this was a way to sneak in and actualize more violent forces under this language of beautification. These kind of programs started around the 50s and 60s. There's a lot of really interesting writing on them, but basically city monies and federal monies and private foundation monies like the Ford Foundation, the Danforth Foundation, these are – obviously the Ford Foundation still exists – these were directed towards anti-poverty campaigns, and they conscripted in a lot of cases, they were directed specifically at black neighborhoods, you see different examples like in LA, they were directed at a lot of Latinx neighborhoods, too, but these basically conscripted people within the community to become part of this aspirational managerial class. And one example I've talked about, not San Francisco, but I'm sure similar things happened is in New Haven, Connecticut, which I think you in were recently, there was this campaign called the Freddy Fixer Program, which basically deputized young black kids or youth into this sort of voluntary proto-police force tasked with cleaning up or beautifying the neighborhoods and wiping them clean of any graffiti, littering or vandalism, that, of course, as we know, you know, originates in, in many cases from some kind of state neglect. And these sort of projects were really mostly about: one, during the civil rights movement, and this is maybe a little bit different of a context, they were mostly about quelling ruling class fears by the Black elite who was emerging then, the established white ruling class in the state, that they would lose control over poor Black communities that were becoming more radicalized with the civil rights movement and then the Black Power movement. We would probably more now say these are more directly angled at quote unquote, blight neighborhoods, a lot more in the 50s,

60s and 70s. You can think of a lot of parts of New York. They started to – probably by the 70s – and as we see with the Tenderloin much later, maybe the late 90s or 2000s, they much later started to kind of fallow, fallow the fields, or blight the neighborhoods for the purposes of real estate development more specifically. And I grew up with this, if you grew up poor and black, I think you probably were subject to something like this, like PAL, the Policemen's Athletic League, all these kinds of programs that in addition to kind of disciplining or neutralizing the energy and anger of, you know, poor Black people, especially youth, they were also about building these kind of insidious intimacies with policing structures. So in the case of Freddie Fixer, a lot of kids would march with the cops and, you know, they would get free police badges and things like that. And it's very similar to at least when I was growing up, things like the Policemen's Athletic League, basketball, the Boys and Girls Club, all these programs that sort of attempt to divide and conquer poor black communities and specifically poor black youth by sifting out who will, who will come with the police, who will be intimate with the police and be friends. If you want to use the word friends, who's going to become friends with the police? And who are we going to put in jail and kill? And these were all done to, of course, reduce radicalization that groups like, say, the Black Panthers and others. And we could think of our own context in the Bay, you know, basically playing on and speaking to the anger of young Black youth for how they're being treated by the police and the state. And so it's also part of a kind of divide and conquer strategy. To emphasize what I was saying earlier is that it's – about it's about creating the good trans people versus the bad. It's also about neutralizing the bad trans people by making the good ones discipline them, because – on behalf of the police, if not directly.

Toshio Meronek: And that's kind of what you got to see at this talk. We don't have to put them on blast.

Jemma DeCristo: I saw a lot of there were a lot of really delusions of grandeur and probably a conversation for another time. But there was one person who worked for the Trans District who said, I would like to turn it into a business district, which, of course, you know, businesses are no nicer to unhoused trans people than anything else. So... And also the irony, right, of turning Compton's, which was a trans riot against a small business. And I don't say that like good for the girls, like it was to point out that businesses don't give a shit about people either, if they don't have money, if businesses are not part of the community, I would fundamentally disagree with people who would make that kind of argument. So that's absolutely one argument I saw. I also saw another argument to bring around the Freddie Fixer thing is that the same person said, and this happened this weekend, unfortunately, "We're leading a trans-led youth march through the Tenderloin." They alleged youth had come to them to organize this, and this was on a panel that was supposed to be anti-

carceral. And then she said, "Yes, well we're anti-carceral. But we were worried about the safety of the youth. So we reached out to an old police friend of ours to do security for it." And I think that's very telling. There is no there is no critique of policing in any of these sort of endeavors. It's helpful to see it so stark because really it's just marching with the police and for the police at that point, that's what it becomes, just like Pride and other things. One story I have from that panel is, one of the one of the panelists was really interested in sharing her story and what it involved was that she said, "Well Ari'a," the head of the Trans District, again who makes six figures, "she saved me, she's such a visionary she saw me on the street and I was, you know asking for money, and she said, 'You need to stop asking for money, girl, here's eight hundred dollars, you're working for me now,'" and she confidently added, "I had to pay her the 800 back to get clothes for myself for the job." And you know I worked at a grocery store as a kid, I didn't like paying for the uniform I had to wear to work there. I didn't consider that benevolence, but I particularly don't consider the weird pimp culture aspects of the, of the Trans District, right, of this idea that we're poaching the good trans people off the street and sending them out there to work for us and they owe us back and there's this weird kind of servile, paternal, really kind of paternalistic relationship, I don't, I don't personally flinch at saying that.

Toshio Meronek: Like a dad who really is into bootstrapping.

Jemma DeCristo: Yeah, very much that, yeah so that is also just, just to add sort of more rather than calling it material context, we can call it tea for this situation. Yeah and it's it's pretty wild to think that it works in this kind of weird... but again San Francisco has this very corrupt sort of pimping culture that I think we would say you know we wouldn't have London Breed without.

Toshio Meronek: Yeah. We've talked about art washing a bit on on the podcast, these districts they come with money not to house people, not to give people like bare necessities, but to beautify the area and I mean this is just an aside, but we were saying - this famous trans artist just as the trans District was being hatched, somebody from Group I had gotten in touch with Wu who at the time I believe lived in Athens, Greece

Jemma DeCristo: Greece, yeah.

Toshio Meronek: - was at the time bugging Wu about doing a mural for the Trans District.

Jemma DeCristo: Right and I think it goes, to what you're saying, the, often, the beautification budget is - I think you're alluding to this - is called "funds for placemaking" and I think it's really interesting to think about this idea. And San Francisco is just a

great example, right, we have at least, as you've talked about in multiple episodes 60,000 plus vacancies and probably double or triple that if we're being – if we're guessing – accurately and it's a funny idea that the state gives people a pretty minuscule... you know few couple... a few thousand dollars to quote unquote placemake. Which is this, again, this kind of almost euphemism for housing or something, when they could actually just expropriate the housing and give it to the people who it claims to be about and that's what closer to what should happen, right? So you know, Wu's a very successful artist who I'm sure doesn't necessarily need the Trans District money, but even morals aside, and politics aside –

Toshio Meronek: Turned it down.

Jemma DeCristo: Right, and turned it down, yeah and – but it's funny to think that's who would have benefited from the Trans District rather than someone who lives here, one, and is also you know more systematically marginalized.

Toshio Meronek: Sure.

Jemma DeCristo: That is like you're saying, very indicative of what placemaking – they're not going to call it housing because it's not housing they're not giving housing to trans people, they're not giving food, shelter, etc., non-carceral versions of these things, they're giving this weird, this fake party budget.

Toshio Meronek: The "Riot Party"?

Jemma DeCristo: The Riot Party is a great example, yeah.

Toshio Meronek: Right, well let's talk a little bit about where the funding for the Trans District ends up, which is things like, the Riot Party which is a Compton's-themed gala and then things like the ninety thousand dollars that went to painting the light poles in the area the colors of the trans flag.

Jemma DeCristo: The trans flag painted light poles are not – have nothing to do with creating resources or safety for actual marginalized trans people, especially unhoused trans people, addicts, users, sex workers, undocumented folks living kind of in the quote-unquote margins. These poles cost ninety thousand dollars, which could have just gone to those communities as an actual resource, right? What these poles are about is they quite literally are a frame for photo ops. You can look up photos of Brooke Jenkins with Trans Cultural District head Ari'a Said, and they are photo ops. These photos frame the neighborhood as the safe trans place, you know, again to use that word 'safe space,' the official trans space, the trans space that officiates who gets to count as a livable trans person rather than a dead one, and you can see how they are essentially photo ops for

people like Brooke Jenkins, London Breed, who every day go to their office and exacerbate and extend the deadly conditions of anti-trans violence towards trans people. These are people that kill trans people with their policies and their words and their actions, and light poles are basically a frame or an alibi for what they do.

Toshio Meronek: It's pretty dastardly and so you have people with basic needs not being met and all this violence against trans people, and the state's response to all this violence is, instead of addressing the violence, let's put money to some contractor who for ninety thousand dollars will paint the light poles the colors of the trans flag. Speaking of beauty, I know that we both have a riot party get prepared for so we'll leave it there. Thank you as always Jemma for peering over our shoulders.

Jemma DeCristo: So welcome, you have a lovely shoulder!

[Music]

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