

On the Pride Movement

and Its Capitalist Takeover

Sylvia Rivera

June 2001

In June 2001, Sylvia Rivera accepted Brooklyn Black Pride's inaugural *Marsha P. Johnson Award*.

Before the ceremony, she spoke with activist Kristi Tho'mas.

Kristi Tho'mas (KT): Can you introduce yourself?

Sylvia Rivera (SR): My name is Sylvia Rivera. I'm co-founder of Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries, which is now Street Transgender Action Revolutionaries. And my co-founder was Marsha P. Johnson.

KT: What about the issues of — that there's a lot of organizations that have included T in their bill, like 'Lesbian, Gay, Bi, and Trans?' Is there real inclusiveness or is it just a smokescreen? How do you feel about that?

SR: Yeah that's the bottom line. It's all — it's a big smokescreen. This movement has become so capitalist. It is a capitalist movement. I see this movement becoming a "straight gay" movement, that only believes in that almighty dollar. Now what kind of logic is this? I don't understand. We don't owe the straight community a damn thing, so why should we be giving them our money?

I feel highly offended. So what is the purpose of us... not us, because — this is no longer my pride. I gave them their pride, but they have not given me mine.

But what is the purpose of them celebrating their pride and giving straight people — who still really don't accept the community, the Gay and Lesbian community, for what they are — but they want that almighty dollar of ours.

Sylvia Rivera died in February 2002.

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