

**PITCHES (SEAN TRAINOR)**

***The Atlantic (U.S.)***

“Lessons of the Bearded Lady”

Dear [NAME],

Hi, my name is Sean Trainor. I'm a freelance writer, U.S. history professor, and digital humanist in Gainesville, FL. I'm also a longtime reader and admirer of your work.

I'm writing upon the recommendation of [EDITOR], with whom I worked on a piece for The Atlantic entitled "The Racially Fraught History of the American Beard," published in January of 2014 (<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2014/01/the-racially-fraught-history-of-the-american-beard/283180/>).

As Jennie, sadly, will be moving on to [PUBLICATION], she suggested that I contact you with a new pitch that I sent her yesterday morning. Here's my idea:

In recent weeks, the struggle for the transgender rights has entered a new and important phase, as trans men and women struggle for the right to define their gender and identity in some of most fraught locations in American social life: the bathroom and the locker room.

The conflicts that have played out around these spaces have produced results that run the gamut from encouraging to disheartening. But, regardless of their outcomes, the conversations surrounding these conflicts has thus far proceeded as if struggles for gender self-determination were new in American life.

They are not. In this article, I will tell the story of America's first famed 'bearded lady': a hirsute Swiss woman named Josephine Clofullia who toured the United States in the 1850s.

Though Clofullia was not trans – the term did not exist in the nineteenth century – she did force Americans to grapple with many of the same issues at the heart of trans political struggles today: namely, the right to define one's gender as one sees fit, despite the presence (or absence) of gendered bodily features.

What follows is a unlikely tale of antebellum tolerance and understanding: one in which the majority of Americans embraced Clofullia's womanhood with few questions asked. In ~1,500 words, I hope to survey salient moments in Clofullia's career and suggest why attitudes toward gender identity were, in this particular realm, more advanced 160 years ago than they are today.

Thanks in advance for your consideration. If you're interested in the piece, I can have a draft on your desk by Thursday morning. Also, should be interested in seeing my other writing (for TIME,

Salon, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and elsewhere), you can find a full selection of links here: <http://seantrainor.org/publications/popular/>

All best,  
-Sean.

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***TIME (History)***

“The Wright Brothers: Pioneers of Patent Trolling”

Hi [NAME],

Hope you're well. I've got an idea for a brief story that I think you might be interested in.

I've recently been reading a book on the early history of aviation, and I've been struck by the parallels between the legal activities of the Wright brothers and the 'patent trolls' who have been receiving a good deal of media attention in the tech industry. Like the latter group of patent trolls, the Wright brothers tried to use an overbroad interpretation of their patent to stifle competition from other early inventors. (For a tech industry parallel, consider the case of a guy who patented a primitive method of disseminating audio files digitally, and now claims that everything from the Serial podcast to iTunes is infringing on his patent.)

My piece, therefore, would use this contemporary parallel to offer a (somewhat) unfriendly reassessment of the Wright brothers – as brilliant inventors, yes, but also as greedy, monopolistic, anti-competitive trolls, who squandered their time waging legal battles when they could have been further developing their invention.

There's no hook for the story in the next few weeks, but I thought it might be useful to have on hand for the 17 December anniversary of the Wright brothers' first flight. As for the contemporary component of the piece: patent trolls have been in the news, on and off, for a couple of years now. I see no reason why they would be irrelevant by December. I think I could tell this story in ~800 words.

Let me know what you think!

All best,  
-Sean.