Transgender Homicides in Britain, 2000–2025: Victims and Perpetrators

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Abstract

Transgender people are often portrayed as especially vulnerable to violence, but estimating victimization rates is difficult because reliable population denominators are lacking. This paper proposes an alternative approach, comparing the ratio of transgender homicide victims to perpetrators. It analyzes all homicides involving transgender people in Britain from 2000 to 2025. Victims were outnumbered by perpetrators, even excluding those who declared a transgender identity after imprisonment. Almost all cases involved natal males identifying as transwomen. The victim–perpetrator ratio among these individuals closely resembles that for males overall and differs markedly from that for females. BBC News published more than four times as many articles on transgender victims as on perpetrators, contributing to perceptions of exceptional vulnerability.

Keywords

Homicide, transgender, violence, crime, gender

Violence against transgender people is often described as an epidemic. This phrasing has been used by a former U.S. President (Biden 2020), by the American Medical Association (AMA 2019), by newspapers (Lees 2018; Rojas and Swales 2019), and by LGBT organizations (Human Rights Campaign Foundation 2024; Stonewall 2020a). Murder victims are commemorated in the annual Trans Day of Remembrance, instituted in 1999 and now observed throughout the Western world. The characteristics of victims in the United States have been described comprehensively (Dinno 2017; Panter 2023; Westbrook 2023). The only study estimating the homicide rate of transgender people suggests that their rate was lower than the overall population's, though the rate for young black transwomen possibly exceeded the rate for young black males (Dinno 2017). The problem with such estimates is the uncertainty about the denominator, as the number of transgender people is subject to considerable uncertainty (Biggs 2024; Stotzer 2017). The problem is circumvented in this paper by introducing a new metric, the victim/perpetrator ratio. The ratio of transgender victims of homicide to transgender perpetrators of homicide can be compared to the corresponding ratio for all homicides, and the comparison can be undertaken separately by sex. In addition, the analogous ratio can be calculated for news reports: the number of reports on victims divided by the number of reports on perpetrators.

This paper will begin by summarizing the academic literature on murders involving transgender people. The victim/perpetrator metric will be introduced and three questions posed. Are transgender people more likely to be victims of homicide or to commit homicide? Does the victim/perpetrator ratio for natal males who identify as transgender resemble the ratio for females or for males? Does the news media produce more articles on transgender victims or on transgender perpetrators? The paper's second section will detail the data and method. Victims and perpetrators in Britain from 2000 to 2025 were enumerated from lists compiled by activists, after verifying each case from news reports and applying consistent criteria for inclusion. All BBC news reports on these individuals were collated and scanned to determine whether they identified the person as transgender. In a Bayesian framework, we will derive a hierarchical Poisson model for the victim/perpetrator ratio that enables us to compute the credible interval and to compare ratios across groups. The paper's third section will provide the results for homicides. Transgender victims of homicide (11) were outnumbered by transgender perpetrators, whether people who transitioned following imprisonment are included (20) or excluded (15). All the victims and almost all the perpetrators were transwomen (natal males). Their victim/perpetrator ratio (0.8 excluding post-imprisonment transitioners) is about the same as the ratio for all males involved in homicide (0.7); it is significantly lower than the ratio for

all females (2.8). The fourth section of the paper will analyze the victim/perpetrator ratio in news reports. The BBC has published over four times as many reports on transgender victims as on transgender perpetrators, counting reports that identify the individual as transgender. This uneven media coverage contributes to the perception of an epidemic of violence against transgender people.

The terminology used in this paper deserves clarification. Transgender is used in the broad sense, to encompass people who identify as non-binary as well as natal females who identify as men and natal males who identify as women. Natal sex cannot be ignored because a key question is whether the homicide pattern for transwomen is closer to the pattern for females or for males. Homicide is defined here according to the British statistical category, which combines murder with manslaughter in England and Wales and with culpable homicide in Scotland. It is roughly equivalent to the American category that combines murder with non-negligent manslaughter.

Literature review and research questions

There is a large literature on various kinds of violence inflicted on transgender people, but this review will focus on the killing of one person by another. As the most extreme form of violence, homicides are more reliably classified and most likely to be reported. There are two comprehensive studies of all transgender victims of homicide in the United States over a lengthy period. Westbrook (2023) describes 495 victims from 1990 to 2019, and Panter (2023) 166 victims from 2013 to 2020. Transwomen (natal males) vastly outnumbered transmen (natal females). White victims were a minority; two-thirds of the victims were black. Neither author compares the number of transgender victims to the total number of homicides. Using the Center for Disease Control's figures on mortality, transgender victims accounted for 0.09% and 0.11% respectively of the total number killed by homicide during the years 1990–2019 and 2013–2020.[1]

The only attempt to calculate homicides rate is made by Dinno (2017), using figures from 2010 to 2014. He calculates rates using various assumptions about the transgender proportion of the population, ranging from 0.1% to 0.6%. Overall, transgender people are estimated to have had a lower risk of homicide than the population as a whole—unless the transgender

[1] Deaths from homicide are counted as codes E960–E969 in ICD-9, and codes U01–U02, X85–Y09, and Y87.1 in ICD-10.

population is assumed to have been tiny (0.1% of the total) *and* transgender victims have been undercounted by 20%. For black transwomen (natal males) aged 15–34, however, the homicide rate might have exceeded the rate for black males of that age, depending on assumptions. Due to the wide range of uncertainty, Dinno's estimates have attracted skepticism (Stotzer 2017).

A recent study compares the annual number of transgender homicide victims with the number of anti-trans bills introduced in state legislatures and the frequency of anti-trans language in Google searches from 2015 to 2022 (Brightman et al. 2024). All three variables are highly positively correlated, but this analysis does not account for concurrent increases in the overall homicide rate and in the number of people identifying as transgender, nor for the problem of spurious regression in time series (Degli Esposti, Schell, and Smart 2025; Granger and Newbold 1974; Twenge et al. 2024).

On the other side of the equation, murders by transgender people have not received academic scrutiny, despite a growing literature on transgender prisoners (e.g. Maycock, O'Shea, and Jenness 2025). There is one systematic analysis of violence by transgender people (Dhejne et al. 2011). This followed 324 transgender people who had undergone surgery in order to change legal sex in Sweden from 1974 to 2003. One outcome was conviction for violent crimes including assault and sexual offenses. Transmen (natal females) were ten times more likely to commit violent crimes than females of the same age in the control group. Transwomen (natal males) were almost twice as likely to commit violent crimes than males (though this difference is not statistically significant) and twenty times more likely than females (Dhejne et al. 2011, tables S1-S2).

A direct comparison of transgender people as victims and as perpetrators of homicide has never been undertaken in the literature. Considering both sides of the homicide equation provides a more balanced portrait of violence in the transgender population. It also provides an alternative conception of relative risk. Conventionally, we consider the risk of a person in a particular group being killed relative to the risk for the population overall (or to another group); this is the ratio of two rates. This ratio would reveal, for example, whether transgender people experience greater risk of homicide than the population as a whole. This paper introduces another metric, which does not require estimating the underlying population at risk. The metric is the victim/perpetrator ratio: the number of the group's victims divided by the number of the group's perpetrators. This ratio expresses whether transgender people, for example, are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of homicide. The ratio can then be compared to the same ratio for all homicides. For all homicides, of course, the victim/perpetrator ratio tends towards unity. Empirically, the ratio depends on how the number of perpetrators is measured. If it is

counted as those charged with the crime, then the ratio would vary inversely with the homicide detection rate. If it is counted as those convicted of the crime, then the ratio would also vary inversely with the conviction rate. To illustrate this metric, consider all homicides in Britain over the period from 2000 to 2024. When perpetrators are counted as those charged, the victim/perpetrator ratio was 0.9. The ratio is less than one because the great majority of homicides result in the police bringing charges—the detection rate is high—and because in a significant minority of incidents there are multiple defendants. For males the ratio was 0.7; for females it was 2.9. In other words, men were somewhat more likely to commit homicide than to be victims of homicide, whereas women were almost three times more likely to be victims than perpetrators.

The first research question, then, is whether transgender people are more likely to be victims or perpetrators of homicide. From this follows a second question: whether the victim/perpetrator ratio for transwomen (natal males) is closer to the ratio for males or for females. (This question is moot for transmen, as so few are involved in homicide.) A third question is whether the observed balance between victims and perpetrators is reflected in media coverage of homicides involving transgender people. There has been qualitative research on the reporting of transgender victims (e.g. Avalos, Jackey, and Wickel 2023; DeJong et al. 2021) and perpetrators (Ball and Suleyman 2023), but no quantitative comparison between the two.

Data and method

Transgender victims are taken from the website 'Remembering Our Dead' (https://tdor.translivesmatter.info) created for the Trans Day of Remembrance, started by Anna-Jayne Metcalfe in England. It incorporates information from the Trans Murder Monitoring project run by the non-profit organization TGEU. Similar sources are used by all other studies of transgender victims (Brightman et al. 2024; Dinno 2017; Panter 2023; Westbrook 2023). The website's scope includes non-binary people. The earliest case of homicide in Britain on this list dates from 1972, but we start in 2000 to maximize coverage. By then a transgender community had formed in Britain: facilitated by the internet and represented by an effective public advocacy organization, Press for Change (Burns 2013, 2014; Whittle 1998). Furthermore, the British legal system first institutionalized 'gender reassignment' as a protected status in 1999; the Gender Recognition Act in 2004 was the first law in the world to allow people to alter the sex on their birth certificates without any medical treatment. Thus it is hardly conceivable that the killing of any transgender person would have gone unnoticed in this era.

In every case listed on the website where the death was suspicious, someone was charged with murder or manslaughter (though in one case they were not convicted).

Transgender perpetrators of homicide are taken from the website 'Trans Crime UK' (transcrimeuk.com), whose authors are anonymous but appear to be gender-critical feminists. Alongside those convicted of murder or manslaughter, we include those who were charged but died or committed suicide before conviction and those who were found unfit to plead or not guilty by reason of insanity. The website lists 37 cases since 2000, but the scope is broad. Firstly, it includes perpetrators who cross-dressed but did not otherwise exhibit a transgender identity. Roderick Deakin-White, for instance, beat his girlfriend to death following conflict over his wearing of women's clothes, especially during sex. This 'was something in which he found great solace and was soothing', according to the clinical psychologist at his trial (BBC News 2019). Deakin-White falls under the classic 'Transgender Umbrella' circulated by the San Francisco Human Rights Commission, which specifically includes transvestites, defined as 'cross-dressing for emotional comfort', as well as transvestic fetishists who wore clothes 'for erotic purposes' (Green 1994:68). Cross-dressers were similarly classified as transgender by the popular *Gender Book* on Tumblr (Hill and Mays 2013), by a leading British sociologist of gender (Hines 2007), and by Britain's dominant LGBT advocacy organization (Stonewall 2020b).[2] The government's definition of transphobic hate crime also encompasses cross-dressers (Home Office 2024). Remembering Our Dead's list of victims in other countries does include some cross-dressers. Nevertheless, cross-dressers would not normally be identifiable among victims of homicide—this aspect of their life would not be reported in news of their death—and so they could not be counted as transgender victims. Therefore we omit cross-dressers.

Secondly, the list includes perpetrators who manifested a transgender identity only after their imprisonment. The most extreme instance was Daniel Eastwood: fourteen years after strangling a fellow prison inmate, he took the name Sophie and transferred to a women's prison (Wade 2023). Transgender advocates argue that such post-conviction identities apply retrospectively, and this convention has been adopted by the legal system and the news media (e.g. BBC News 2021). Therefore it is appropriate to include these individuals in the table of transgender perpetrators. When making comparison with total homicides, however, those individuals will be omitted.

[2] Stonewall dropped cross-dressers from the category in 2024.

Remembering Our Dead and Transcrime UK provide links to media reports for each victim or perpetrator. To independently verify each case, we searched the BBC news website for the individual's name. Apart from the two earliest homicides with transgender perpetrators, every homicide was reported by the BBC. In three other cases with transgender perpetrators, the BBC chose not to identify them as transgender. Reports on these five cases were checked in newspapers (Online Supplement, Appendix A).

Figures on total homicides are taken from the United Kingdom's Home Office and from the Scottish government, covering the period from April 2000 to March 2025 (Appendix B). For England and Wales, perpetrators are counted as those indicted: charged and appeared before court. For Scotland, they are counted as those accused: either charged, or died or committed suicide before charge.

The key metric to be calculated is the victim/perpetrator ratio. When numbers are few, as with transgender homicides, it is crucial to account for haphazard variability. Taking a Bayesian approach, we derive a hierarchical Poisson model to use the observed data to make inferences about the underlying parameters. Define the victim/perpetrator ratio for group i as $Z_i = \varphi_i / \psi_i$, where φ_i is the per capita rate of someone in this group being a victim of homicide and ψ_i is the per capita rate of someone from the group committing homicide. Given the observed number of victims v_i^* and perpetrators p_i^*, we compute the posterior distribution for Z_i to estimate its 95% credible interval (analogous to a confidence interval in frequentist statistics). To compare two groups i and j, we compute the posterior distribution of the difference $Z_i - Z_j$ which enables us to estimate the posterior probability that $Z_i > Z_j$ given the observed data (analogous to a one-tailed p-value). The derivation is provided in the Online Supplement (Appendix C).[3]

To analyze the victim/perpetrator ratio in media coverage, we focus on the most important source of news in Britain: the BBC. The verification process described above led to the retrieval of 195 articles on transgender victims and perpetrators from the BBC news website. Each of these articles was scanned to determine whether it reported that the individual was transgender (Appendix D). Coverage of the transgender victim and the transgender perpetrator with the most BBC stories was also examined in the *Guardian* and the *Daily Telegraph* (including the *Sunday Telegraph*), representing newspapers on the left and the right of the political spectrum. Articles from these newspapers were accessed from Nexis.

[3] R code for all calculations will be uploaded to GitHub if the paper is accepted for publication.

Results on homicide

Table 1 lists the 11 transgender victims. All were transwomen (natal males). Four of them were sex workers. As for ethnicity, two of the victims were black—one born in Trinidad and one whose family were from Somalia—and a third was a recent immigrant from Mexico. All but one of their killers were natal males (including one transwoman). The exception was a teenage girl who joined with a teenage boy to stab Brianna Ghey to death. None of the killers claimed that the victim had deceived them in a sexual relationship. Only in one case is there any evidence that the killing was motivated by hostility to the victim's transgender identity. Ghey's killers wished to murder someone purely for gratification, but the boy did make vicious remarks about Ghey's transgender identity. In a message to his co-conspirator, for example, he wondered whether 'it [sic] will scream like a man or a girl' (Yip 2024, para 14).

The British victims can be compared to victims in the United States over a similar period, 1990–2019 (Westbrook 2023). For every British victim, a suspect was charged with their killing, whereas the killer was unknown for half the American victims. In both countries, transwomen vastly outnumbered transmen. The racial composition, by contrast, was very different: two-thirds of the American victims were black. The average number of American victims per year was 39 times greater than the number of British victims, while the American total population was only 5 times greater than the British population, and the American average homicide rate was just over 4 times the British homicide rate. Unless the transgender proportion of the population in the United States was at least twice as high as the proportion in Britain, then those figures imply that the relative risk of a transgender person being killed—relative to the risk for the population as a whole—was higher in the United States.

Table 1. Transgender victims of homicide in Britain, 2000–2025

Year	*Name*	*Natal sex*	*Gender*	*Perpetrator*
2000	Christine Chappel	Male	Transwoman	Brother-in-law
2004	Penny Fletcher	Male	Transwoman	Son
2007	Kellie Telesford	Male	Transwoman	Male sexual partner
2009	Andrea Waddell	Male	Transwoman	Male client
2009	Destiny Lauren	Male	Transwoman	Male client
2010	Sonia Burgess	Male	Transwoman	Transwoman friend
2012	Chrissie Azzopardi	Male	Transwoman	Male drug dealer
2015	Vanessa Santillan	Male	Transwoman	Husband
2018	Naomi Hersi	Male	Transwoman	Male client
2019	Amy Griffiths	Male	Transwoman	Male sexual partner
2023	Brianna Ghey	Male	Transwoman	Male and female student

Table 2 lists the 20 transgender perpetrators, giving the name under which they were convicted. Two were transmen (natal females), one was a natal male who identified as non-binary, and the remainder were transwomen (natal males). Two transwomen were convicted under male names, but apparently had adopted their new gender identity before sentencing. The court heard that Alan Baker was 'undergoing gender treatment'; Baker was subsequently incarcerated in a women's prison. The court heard that Gerald Matovu 'identified as female from the age of eight and now [intends] to seek gender reassignment'. Five of the perpetrators—one transman and four transwomen—only manifested their transgender identity after imprisonment. Three of the perpetrators were non-white: one born in China, one Tamil born in Sri Lanka, and one whose surname indicates Ugandan ancestry. Of their victims, 15 were male (including one transwoman) and 5 were female.

There was no trend in either victims or perpetrators over the 25-year period.[4] The absence of an upward trend is surprising given the substantial increase in the transgender population.

Table 2. Transgender perpetrators of homicide in Britain, 2000–2025

Year	*Name*	*Natal sex*	*Gender*	*Victim*	*Prison transition?*
2000	Karen Lawson	Male	Transwoman	Boyfriend	
2000	Robert (later Emma) Page	Male	Transwoman	Male neighbour	Yes
2001	Samantha Read	Male	Transwoman	Husband	
2004	Craig Hudson (later Kimberley Green)	Male	Transwoman	Wife	Yes
2004	Daniel (later Sophie) Eastwood	Male	Transwoman	Male prison inmate	Yes
2008	Nicolle (later Kobi) Earley	Female	Transman	Grandmother	Yes
2010	Senthooran/Nina Kanagasingham	Male	Transwoman	Transwoman friend	
2011	Christopher (later Crystal) Hunnisett	Male	Transwoman	Male sexual partner	Yes
2013	Melissa Young	Male	Transwoman	Male neighbour	
2013	Paris Green	Male	Transwoman	Male friend	
2013	Alan Baker	Male	Transwoman	Male sexual partner	
2015	Claire Darbyshire	Male	Transwoman	Father	
2016	Kayleigh Woods	Male	Transwoman	Female flatmate	
2016	Jenny Swift	Male	Transwoman	Male friend	
2018	Gerald Matovu	Male	Transwoman	Male sexual partner	
2020	Rowan Thompson	Male	Non-binary	Mother	
2021	Scarlet Blake	Male	Transwoman	Male stranger	
2023	Anarlyn Jones	Female	Transman	Mother	
2024	Joanna Rowland-Stuart	Male	Transwoman	Husband	
2025	Aurin Makepeace	Male	Transwoman	Former boyfriend	

[4] Trends are estimated using Bayesian Poisson regression of the annual number of victims or perpetrators on year, with priors for the intercept and the year coefficient specified as Normal(0,

The number of patients with diagnoses or drug prescriptions indicating a transgender identity in the United Kingdom, for example, is estimated to have increased almost eightfold between 2000 and 2018 (McKechnie et al. 2023). The increase in the transgender population surely exceeded the decline in the overall homicide rate, which fell by a third or by half, depending on whether the numerator is victims or accused perpetrators.

The absence of natal females among the transgender victims is notable. Female perpetrators were also exceptional. Yet evidence suggests that natal females were at least a substantial minority of the transgender population over this period. Using prevalence among patients from 2000 to 2018, 31% of those whose sex could be determined were natal females (McKechnie et al. 2023). Natal females comprised 36% of people who received a Gender Recognition Certificate to change legal sex from 2004 to 2024 (His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service 2025). By the end of the period, moreover, the sex ratio was surely close to even; in the Census of Scotland in 2022, slightly more natal females than males considered themselves trans (National Records of Scotland 2024).

Transgender victims and perpetrators comprised a tiny fraction of total homicides, of course. Victims were 0.060% of the total, and perpetrators were 0.073%—from here, perpetrators will always exclude post-imprisonment transitioners. As already emphasized, the lack of reliable numbers for the transgender population makes it impossible to compare the homicide rate of transgender people to the overall homicide rate. All that can be inferred is that transgender people would have experienced greater risk of homicide were they to have comprised less than 0.060% of the population, averaged over the period 2000–2025. The victim/perpetrator ratio, by contrast, does permit comparison. The ratio for transgender people was 0.73, slightly under the overall population ratio of 0.90.

Making the comparison separately for each sex is possible for natal males who identified as transgender (one as non-binary and the remainder as transwoman). Their victim/perpetrator ratio was 0.79. With such small numbers, of course, the 95% credible interval ranges widely, from 0.36 to 1.7. (Ratios are rounded to two significant figures to avoid spurious precision.) How does this compare to the pattern of homicides in the overall population? Among all females involved in homicide in Britain from 2000 to 2025, the victim/perpetrator ratio was

2). For victims, the 95% credible interval for the exponentiated year coefficient (incident-rate ratio) is 0.90–1.06; for perpetrators, it is 0.98–1.13.

2.9, with a 95% credible interval from 2.7 to 2.9.[5] The difference is statistically significant: the posterior probability that the ratio for natal males who identify as transgender was lower than the ratio for females exceeds 0.999. For all males, the victim/perpetrator ratio was 0.69, with 95% credible interval of 0.68 to 0.71. This overlaps with the credible interval for natal males who identify as transgender, and so there is no discernible difference between them.

Results on media reporting

Table 3 summarizes BBC news articles on homicides involving transgender people, excluding perpetrators who identified as transgender after imprisonment. Coverage was dominated by the case of Ghey. This killing was exceptionally tragic given that the victim and perpetrators were only 16 years old, and particularly horrific given that the motive for killing was gratification. Several vigils were held in cities across the United Kingdom. Coverage continued after the killers were sentenced, as Ghey's mother became a campaigner for mindfulness education and online safety. The perpetrator who received the most coverage was Scarlet Blake, who beat and drowned a Spanish immigrant. The motive was sexual gratification, and the trial revealed disturbing details about the torture of a cat. On average, each victim was the subject of 12 articles, while each perpetrator was the subject of 4; the difference between these is statistically significant (the posterior probability that victims have more articles exceeds 0.99).[6] This difference, however, is entirely due to the coverage of Ghey's murder.

[5] The ratio for females might include some transgender people, but they would comprise such a tiny fraction of the total as to make no practical difference. How transgender victims and perpetrators are categorized by sex was not necessarily consistent over this period (Sullivan 2025). Our requests to the Home Office and the Scottish government under the Freedom of Information Act for clarity on categorization have been refused.

[6] This is estimated using Bayesian negative binomial regression of the number of articles per individual, using priors of Normal(0, 5) for the intercept, Normal(0, 2) for the victim coefficient, and Exponential(1) for the shape parameter.

Table 3. BBC news articles on transgender victims and perpetrators of homicide in Britain, 2000–2025

Name	*Articles*	*Articles mentioning that individual is transgender*
Victims		
Christine Chappel	6	4
Penny Fletcher	1	0
Kellie Telesford	8	7
Andrea Waddell	13	9
Destiny Lauren	7	4
Sonia Burgess	1	1
Chrissie Azzopardi	1	0
Vanessa Santillan	3	1
Naomi Hersi	5	3
Amy Griffiths	3	1
Brianna Ghey	89	74
all victims	137	104
average per victim	12.5	9.5
Perpetrators		
Karen Lawson	0	0
Samantha Read	0	0
Senthooran/Nina Kanagasingham	4	2
Melissa Young	4	0
Paris Green	1	0
Alan Baker	1	0
Claire Darbyshire	3	1
Jenny Swift	5	4
Kayleigh Woods	5	3
Gerald Matovu	6	1
Rowan Thompson	7	3
Scarlet Blake	11	3
Anarlyn Jones	5	3
Joanna Rowland-Stuart	5	3
Aurin Makepeace	1	0
all perpetrators	58	23
average per perpetrator	3.9	1.5

Differentiating articles that mentioned that the individual was transgender from those that did not, there is a marked difference between the BBC's treatment of victims and perpetrators. Where a transgender person was the victim, the great majority of articles mentioned their trans identity, usually fairly close to the top of the story. The article reporting the conviction of Ghey's murderers, for example, mentioned this in the second sentence: 'The 16-year-old, who was transgender, was stabbed 28 times in a 'ferocious' attack …'. The sole exception was the reporting on Amy Griffiths. Only one out of three articles mentioned 'her transgender identity' (in quoting the judge), and that occurred only in the nineteenth sentence.

Where the transgender person was the perpetrator, by contrast, just under half the articles mentioned the fact that they were transgender. The difference in treatment is statistically significant: the 95% credible interval for the probability of an article on a perpetrator mentioning their transgender identity was 0.34–0.59, while for a victim it was 0.75–0.88 (or 0.67–0.89 omitting Ghey).[7] A notable example is Blake. Most articles referred simply to an 'Oxford woman'. Only a few mentioned that 'she came out to her parents as transgender at 12'—and then only in the sixth sentence. This fact was added to one article only after complaints from readers (BBC 2024). Furthermore, in a few cases where a perpetrator's transgender status was reported, the focus was on them as a victim of suicide. Reports on Jenny Swift and Rowan Thompson that mentioned their transgender identity focused on their suicide while incarcerated, with headlines such as 'Transgender woman found dead in cell at HMP Doncaster'. The fact that they had committed murder was mentioned only later in the articles.

In total, then, BBC News produced 4.5 times as many articles mentioning transgender victims as articles mentioning transgender perpetrators (and some of the latter framed them primarily as victims of suicide), even though in reality perpetrators outnumbered victims. This does not necessarily demonstrate deliberate editorial bias on the part of the BBC. Firstly, reporting on legal proceedings is inevitably influenced by the language used in court. 'A person's gender at birth or their transgender history should not be disclosed unless it is necessary and relevant to the particular legal proceedings', advises official guidance for judges (Judicial College 2021:326). In justifying its coverage, the BBC observed that Blake's transgender identity was not mentioned by police before the trial and mentioned during the trial only towards the end, when it was introduced by the defense (BBC 2024). Secondly, reporting will reflect public response to a killing. The huge response to Ghey's murder—from LGBTQ+ radio stations holding a minute's silence to a child competing in a triathlon in Ghey's honor—naturally generated additional media coverage. Nevertheless, the BBC's treatment f the most recent transgender murderer, Aurin Makepeace, is telling. It reported Makepeace ('a woman') being charged with murder, but exceptionally chose not to report the subsequent trial and conviction. This absence conveniently enabled the BBC to avoid mentioning that Makepeace iss transgender.

[7] This is estimated using Bayesian binomial regression of the proportion of articles mentioning an individual's transgender identity, using priors of Normal(0, 5) for the intercept and Normal(0, 2) for the victim coefficient.

It is worth comparing how two daily newspapers reported the most prominent victim and perpetrator in the BBC's coverage. The *Daily Telegraph* mentioned Ghey in 68 articles and Blake in 18. All but two of the articles on Blake also mentioned that Blake is transgender; most of these articles focused on the ensuing controversy over the police's recording of the killer as female and over the BBC's own reporting. The *Guardian* mentioned Ghey in 111 articles and Blake in only 2. Both articles on Blake mentioned that Blake was transgender, though one of them was edited to add this fact after initial publication. Such an extreme disparity between Ghey and Blake in the *Guardian* is perhaps to be expected. What is surprising is that that the *Daily Telegraph* reveals the same disparity, albeit less pronounced than on the BBC news website (which featured eight times as many articles on Ghey as on Blake).

Conclusion

It should be acknowledged that the analysis depends on the enumeration of transgender victims and perpetrators in Britain from 2000 to 2025 being complete or nearly so. The possibility that some individuals are not counted—either because a murder went undetected or because the individual's transgender status was not known—cannot be excluded. Nevertheless, the initial lists were compiled by activists who were predisposed to maximize the number of victims and perpetrators respectively, and these biases offset each other. We have verified the initial lists against news reports, and in every case found these to be accurate. Furthermore, we applied uniform criteria to victims and perpetrators, hence the exclusion of cross-dressers from the list of perpetrators.

We have introduced an alternative metric for comparing violence: the victim/perpetrator ratio. Using this ratio, the paper is the first to compare the numbers of transgender victims and of perpetrators—and to compare the ratio in media reports. There are three main findings. First, more transgender people committed homicide than were victims of homicide in Britain in the 21st century. The victim/perpetrator ratio was 0.7 excluding post-imprisonment transitioners. Without reliable figures on the transgender population, it is unknown whether transgender people were at greater risk of homicide than the population as a whole. If they were at greater risk than the population, however, then we would also conclude—given the victim/perpetrator ratio was less than one—that they were more likely to commit homicide. If the extent of fatal violence suffered by transgender people in Britain is considered to be an epidemic, then the same epithet applies to the fatal violence inflicted by transgender people.

The second finding is that transwomen followed the male rather than female pattern of homicide. The victim/perpetrator ratio for natal males identifying as transgender was 0.8, and

this approximates the ratio for all males, 0.7. It is much smaller than the ratio for all females, 2.9; the difference is statistically significant despite the small numbers. This finding has obvious implications for policies in the sphere of criminal justice, for example in the placement of transwomen in women's prisons.

The third finding is that the BBC published many more news articles mentioning transgender victims than perpetrators. The victim/perpetrator ratio in reports that mentioned the individual's transgender identity was 4.5. The extraordinary coverage of one horrific killing accounts for some of this disparity, but not all. Unbalanced media coverage creates an exaggerated impression of transgender people as victims of homicide. The lack of balance has various causes, aside from editorial choices. One is the legal system: it discourages the disclosure of a suspect's transgender status, but encourages the disclosure of a victim's status with the category of transphobic hate crime (introduced in Scotland in 2009 and England and Wales in 2012). Another cause is the response of advocacy organizations. Naturally organizations in the LGBT movement will publicize victims from the communities they represent, exemplified by the annual Trans Day of Remembrance.[8] In recent years, the gender-critical movement has called attention to transgender perpetrators of violence, but this does not appear to have impacted the BBC's reporting (though it has influenced right-wing media like the *Daily Telegraph*).

Can these findings be generalized beyond Britain? In the United States, the composition of transgender victims is quite different, with the majority being black. In addition, transgender people in America seem to experience a higher risk of murder—relative to the population—than in Britain. Therefore we might expect the victim/perpetrator ratio to be higher in the United States, though that is a question for future research. Can these findings be generalized to lesser forms of violence? The finding that transwomen are closer to the male than the female pattern of homicide echoes the result from the Swedish longitudinal study of violent crime (Dhejne et al. 2011). Unfortunately almost all studies of violence focus exclusively on transgender people as victims. The nearest is a survey of Finnish school students that asked respondents whether they bullied others as well as whether they experienced bullying (Heino, Ellonen, and Kaltiala

[8] Public attention depends on the characteristics of the perpetrator as well as the victim. When three gay men were stabbed to death in England in 2020, LGBT organizations scarcely mentioned the killings, presumably because the murderer was a Libyan refugee motivated by Islamism.

2021). Transgender students reported being bullied more than their peers did, but they also admitting bullying others more. The study's data enable victim/perpetrator ratios to be calculated. For all students in total, the ratio was 2.0; for transgender students, it was 1.4. Thus transgender students were relatively more likely to bully others (or at least to report it).

There is an important lesson here for academic research. There are many more studies of transgender people as victims of violence than as perpetrators of violence. Perpetrators are discussed, moreover, primarily as victims of the prison system. No individual study can be faulted for focusing on a single aspect of a phenomenon, of course, but in aggregate they can nevertheless provide a misleading portrayal of the phenomenon as a whole. We hope the victim/perpetrator ratio will provide a useful metric for empirical research, while also serving as a reminder of potential epistemic biases in social science (Burt 2026).

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Appendix A: Sources for transgender perpetrators not mentioned or not identified as transgender by BBC News

- **Karen Lawson**
  'Sex op man is jailed for killing', *Hartlepool Mail*, 27 Jan 2001, pp. 1, 3; 'Fatal attraction to a sex op killer', 29 Jan, p. 21.

- **Samantha Read**
  'Transsexual killer is jailed for six years', *Berkshire Live*, 22 July 2002; https://www.getreading.co.uk/news/local-news/transsexual-killer-jailed-six-years-4274429.

- **Melissa Young**
  'Former sex sauna boss reveals the demons that haunted transsexual killer Melissa Young', *Daily Record*, 30 Aug 2014; https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/crime/former-sex-sauna-boss-reveals-4131601.

- **Paris Green**
  'Transgender murderer Paris Green to have reassignment surgery on NHS', *The Times*, 19 Nov 2018; https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/scotland/transgender-murderer-paris-green-to-have-reassignment-surgery-on-nhs-hl80fnl7k.

- **Aurin Makepeace**
  'Trans woman who stabbed her murderer boyfriend to death after meeting him in men's jail faces life in prison', *Daily Mail*, 25 Mar 2026; https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15678893/Trans-woman-prison-stabbing-boyfriend.html.

Appendix B: Total Homicides in Britain, April 2000–March 2025

England and Wales: murder, manslaughter, and infanticide

Victims		*Suspects indicted*	
Male	Female	Male	Female
11,231	5,066	16,074	1,611

Source: Home Office *Homicide Index*, provided in response to Freedom of Information request FOI 2025/12555; *Homicide in England and Wales: Year Ending March 2025*.

Scotland: murder and culpable Homicide

Victims		*Accused*	
Male	Female	Male	Female
1,604	459	2,453	325

Sources: *Homicide in Scotland 2002*; *Homicide in Scotland 2010–11*; *Homicide in Scotland 2023–24*. *Homicide in Scotland 2024–25*.

Appendix C: Hierarchical Poisson Model for Population-Specific Victim/Perpetrator Ratios

We define the victim/perpetrator ratio for population i (representing males, females, or transwomen) by $Z_i = \frac{\phi_i}{\psi_i}$, where ϕ_i and ψ_i represent the per-capita rates of being a homicide victim or perpetrator, respectively. Given observed counts of victims v_i^* and perpetrators p_i^* for each population i, we seek posterior distributions for Z_i to estimate and compare ratios across populations.

Model

We assume each population is observed over a common time period T, with population size N_i. The population-specific per-capita rates are $\phi_i, \psi_i > 0$. The counts are modeled as:

$$\begin{aligned} v_i^* \mid N_i T, \phi_i &\sim \text{Poisson}(N_i T \phi_i), \\ p_i^* \mid N_i T, \psi_i &\sim \text{Poisson}(N_i T \psi_i), \end{aligned}$$

independently across populations i conditional on $N_i T, \phi_i, \psi_i$.

Prior Distributions

We place the following priors with fixed hyperparameters:

$$\begin{aligned} \phi_i &\overset{\text{iid}}{\sim} \text{Gamma}(a_\phi, b_\phi), \\ \psi_i &\overset{\text{iid}}{\sim} \text{Gamma}(a_\psi, b_\psi), \\ N_i T &\overset{\text{iid}}{\sim} \text{Gamma}(a_s, b_s), \end{aligned}$$

where we use the shape-rate parameterisation for the Gamma distribution, so that if $X \sim \text{Gamma}(a, r)$, then $\mathbf{E}[X] = a/r$, $\text{Var}[X] = a/r^2$. Based on prior knowledge that $\phi_i, \psi_i \ll 0.001$ and N_i ranges from hundreds to tens of millions, we set weakly informative hyperparameters: $a_\phi = a_\psi = 1$, $b_\phi = b_\psi = 1000$, and $a_s = 1$, $b_s = 10^{-5}$. These yield:

- $\phi_i, \psi_i \sim \text{Gamma}(1, 1000)$, with mean $1/1000 = 0.001$ and variance $1/1000^2 = 10^{-6}$, concentrating mass on small rates.
- $N_i T \sim \text{Gamma}(1, 10^{-5})$, with mean $1/10^{-5} = 10^5$ and variance $1/(10^{-5})^2 = 10^{10}$, allowing population sizes across several orders of magnitude.

Posterior Distribution

The prior-likelihood combination is conjugate for ϕ_i, ψ_i, and $N_i T$, allowing closed-form full conditional distributions:

$$\begin{aligned} N_i T \mid v_i^*, p_i^*, \phi_i, \psi_i &\sim \text{Gamma}\left(a_s + v_i^* + p_i^*, b_s + \phi_i + \psi_i\right), \\ \phi_i \mid v_i^*, N_i T &\sim \text{Gamma}\left(a_\phi + v_i^*, b_\phi + N_i T\right), \\ \psi_i \mid p_i^*, N_i T &\sim \text{Gamma}\left(a_\psi + p_i^*, b_\psi + N_i T\right). \end{aligned}$$

Posterior samples $(\phi_i^{(t)}, \psi_i^{(t)}, (N_i T)^{(t)})$ for all populations $i = 1, \ldots, n$ and iterations $t = 1, \ldots, T_{\text{iter}}$ are obtained using Gibbs sampling. For each iteration t, the quantity of interest is:

$$Z_i^{(t)} = \frac{\phi_i^{(t)}}{\psi_i^{(t)}}.$$

To construct the Posterior distribution we generated $120,000$ posterior points, discarded the first $20,000$ points (burn-in), and thinned the remaining by retaining 1 in 10 points. This resulted in $10,000$ posterior points.

Comparing Ratios Across Populations

To assess whether the ratios Z_i differ across populations, we compute the posterior distribution of differences $Z_i - Z_j$ for pairs (i, j). If the 95% credible interval for $Z_i - Z_j$ excludes 0, it suggests a statistically significant difference. Additionally, we estimate posterior probabilities $P(Z_i > Z_j \mid \text{data})$ to quantify the likelihood that one population's ratio exceeds another's.

Appendix D: News Media

For the analysis of BBC News, a custom Google search engine was configured to search the domains `news.bbc.co.uk` and `www.bbc.co.uk/news` (the domain changed in 2010), and a Python script created to search both domains using the API. The search excluded results from `www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics`, `news/av`, and `news/live`. The script was called to search for the name of each perpetrator or victim as a phrase (e.g. `"Brianna Ghey"`). The script returned the URL, headline, and (where possible) date. Some headlines were clearly irrelevant, especially for more common names. All relevant articles were read and recorded on a spreadsheet.

Each article was scanned to see if it identified the individual as transgender, either in the headline, the body text, or a photograph caption. Besides the explicit terms 'transgender' and 'transsexual', phrases such as the following are included:

- now identifies as male
- born male but has lived her life as a female
- transition to a woman
- had been living as a woman
- undergoing sex-change treatment
- change of gender

Conversely, articles are classified as not identifying the individual as transgender if they only mentioned an alternative name, with phrasing such as:

- previously referred to as Bronwyn
- legally known as Jonathan
- born Alexander

For newspapers, the Nexis database was searched for the two names, restricting the publication to either (a) the *Guardian* (London) or (b) the *Daily Telegraph* (London) or *Sunday Telegraph* (London). For the *Guardian*, Nexis does include articles published on Sunday (until April 2025 the printed Sunday newspaper was the *Observer* rather than the *Guardian*).

Curiously, Nexis contains only one of the *Guardian*'s two articles on Scarlet Blake: 'Cat killer sentenced to life for Oxford murder as part of sexual fantasy' (26 Feb 2024). A Google search for the name on the domain `www.theguardian.com` finds another article: 'Cat killer guilty of murdering stranger as he walked home in Oxford' (23 Feb 2024). This article was updated after publication to incorporate a 'reference to Scarlet Blake's transgender identity', and so perhaps the original was deleted from the Nexis database.