



Rihanna Kelter facing felony charges shows “stand your ground” is not for trans people

Description

default watermark

rihanna kelter

Rihanna Kelter, [a transgender woman in Wyoming](#) is facing felony charges for pulling a weapon to defend herself after being subject to homophobic and transphobic slurs. *Slate* magazine reported that Kelter was about to end a work shift when several men on the street began yelling slurs at her. [Then](#)

Moments later, according to court testimony and surveillance footage, the man shoved Kelter to the ground hard enough to injure her tailbone.

Kelter responded by drawing a pistol from her bag, chambering a round, and pointing the weapon at the man who had pushed her. She kept the safety on and never fired. The man and his companions retreated.

However, the man who shoved Kelter and began the confrontation has not been charged. But, Kelter is now facing charges of aggravated assault and possession of a deadly weapon with unlawful intent. If found guilty, she could face up to 15 years in prison.

For a nation as heavily invested in [stand-your-ground](#) as the US, Rihanna’s fight in court has become one that shows the systemic homophobia and transphobia in the justice system.

Kelter and “stand your ground”

Kelter’s arrest seemingly contradicts the Wyoming [“Stand your ground”](#) law, permitting an individual the right to defend themselves. In spite of the evidence presented, the man who assaulted her, (referred to as Durham) hasn’t faced a single charge. Kelter has had to leave her job due to her

charges and faces an arraignment on the 24th of June 2026.

Many LGBTQ+ news and advocacy platforms have reported on her case, highlighting the unfairness and [hypocrisy](#) of the situation. They point out the irony that in a nation so proud of its citizen's ability to arm themselves, the moment a trans person uses it against bigotry, it is criminalized. [As Slate concluded](#)

Kelver's experience also fits a long and troubling history of transgender people being punished for their acts of survival.

Kelver's case can be used as a clear example of the double standards applied to queer and specifically trans people in the justice system. And for the queer community it's seen as evidence of how queer people are not protected by the law to the same standards as others.

The system is not broken

Kelver's arrest is not a new phenomenon but instead just the latest in a [repeated history](#) of LGBTQ+ individuals being punished for defending themselves. In 2014, [CeCe McDonald](#) was arrested and almost faced 40 years in prison after defending herself against a group of white people screaming racist and transphobic remarks and then physically assaulting her. In 2017, [Ky Peterson](#) was arrested and convicted for murdering his rapist and was only released after 9 years of imprisonment. These two examples are also notable because they involved Black trans people. The US justice system is not only queerphobic and transphobic, but deeply racist and [anti-Black](#). There is a fundamental ideology within the justice system itself to not only punish marginalized individuals for protecting themselves, but actively working to criminalize those same communities.

Activist Peter Gelderloos wrote on [Truthout](#)

When transgender or queer people defend themselves from such violence, the law usually steps in to pick up where the vigilantes left off! White people who attack people of color who are crossing borders or transgressing socially accepted ways of behavior are defending their selves as those selves exist within society (and there is no other kind of self). Heterosexual people and cis-gendered people are defending those white heteronormative persons' sense of self.

Despite [LGBTQ+](#) people and [people of colour](#) being far more vulnerable to violent acts of hate, we are routinely punished for defending ourselves. And that is by design.

This is due to these systems of justice being built out of the very systems that perpetuate our communities marginalization. Institutionalized justice becomes a means of preserving a white supremacist and queerphobic hierarchy. When most self-defense laws were formed amongst Western countries, they weren't made with the majority of the population in mind. Like many laws, they were made to benefit a small privileged group, whilst purposely criminalising minorities for defending themselves from attack.

This is the system working as intended.

The death of rainbow capitalism

The arrest of Rihanna Kolver and the perpetuation of queer and marginalized injustice adds to a growing sentiment within the queer community. As we reach the middle of Pride month, many in the community have [pointed out](#) a noticeable decrease in the typical corporate advertising and promoting. Whereas before, companies would share posts, change logos and create merchandise, it has been replaced by [rather abrupt silence](#)

Corporations tendencies during pride were referred to as [“rainbow capitalism”](#) and was commonly met with annoyance by the queer community. It was generally understood that these gestures weren’t actual indicators of support but a means to seem progressive in order to drive more profits. However whilst the dramatic absence of rainbow capitalism is celebrated by some, [it is seen as a grim indicator by others](#)

Cases like Kolver’s and other corporate support during pride, for some in the community isn’t just an indicator of progressive stance but in fact a regression. [Capitalism may not indicate morality](#) but it can reflect our culture. And with the many events happening across the world, it is clear for queer communities that there is a resurgence in far-right politics. Rolling back queer rights is rapidly [gaining popularity](#).

default watermark

Pride is resistance

Of course, none of this is to argue that corporations *should* engage in pinkwashing during pride month. Instead, the death of rainbow capitalism is a sign that neoliberal capitalism has found that it is no longer necessary to pay lip service to queer rights. That, in turn, can be explained by the vicious bigotry from both the [UK](#) and [US administrations](#) who have normalised the creeping rise of transphobia.

Despite Pride this year possibly highlighting the ways culture has started to regress, it also represents our perseverance as a community. The reason Pride month exists today is due to the fighting and resistance of our queer forebears. Just as Rihanna Kolver herself is still fighting the legal battle for her right to protect herself, we as community must keep fighting and uplifting each other against this bigoted system.

Featured image via [Getty/Heather Diehl](#)

By [Olaitan Mos-Shogbamimu](#)

[Source link](#)

CATEGORY

1. News

POST TAG

1. charges
2. facing
3. felony
4. for
5. ground
6. kelver
7. news
8. people
9. rihanna
10. shows
11. stand
12. trans
13. your

Category

1. News

default watermark