



A Celebrity's Defiance

April 10, 2024

Can J. K. Rowling destroy Scotland's new anti-free-speech law with a strategic wave of a single wand?

The author of the Harry Potter and Cormoran Strike series has gotten into trouble. She defied the State by saying that men are men and women are women even when a member of one of these sexes declares otherwise.

To some, the author's statements are "hate" speech. Speech now prosecutable in Scotland, where Rowling lives.

On April 1, 2024, legislation went into effect there making it a criminal offense to "stir up hate" against members of a protected group, including transgender

individuals. This is a "crime" that can be punished by up to seven years in prison.

The law's terms are encompassing and vague.

So far, Rowling has escaped arrest, though [offering herself](#) as the subject of a test case. After the law went into effect, she penned a series of posts declaring that various men who say they're not men are in fact men: blatant "misgendering."

"If what I've written here qualifies as an offence under the terms of the new act, I look forward to being arrested," she wrote.

When the Scottish police declined, she [added](#): "I trust that all women — irrespective of profile or financial means — will be treated equally under the law.

This trust is, I fear, misplaced. As long as the law exists, Rowling's very visible defiance cannot protect everybody else who might be targeted under it.

Scotland needs more Harry Potters, er, heroes ... to stand up to this terrible law.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.