

Deli Worker Maces Woman He Thinks Is Transgender: Lawsuit

By [Aila Slisco](#) On 10/10/23 at 2:14 PM EDT

A New York City woman has sued a deli, alleging that a former employee assaulted her as he mistook her for being transgender.

Jasmine Adams, a 35-year-old mother of two, filed a lawsuit on Monday, alleging that she was attacked by a cashier during a visit to purchase marijuana for a friend at Staten Island's West Brighton Deli Grocery & Grill on July 28, according to New York's *Daily News*.

Following a dispute over the marijuana—which has become widely available at retail stores in the city since it was legalized in 2021—the worker purportedly became hostile and threatened to call police, prompting Adams to urge him to follow through with the threat.

Adams, who is bisexual and was wearing an [Apple](#) Watch wristband featuring rainbow Pride flag colors at the time, alleges that the worker then called her a "transvestite" and flew into a violent rage.

"I heard him call me a transvestite," Adams told the *Daily News*. "I'm like, 'Transvestite? I'm a whole female. I have lady parts.'"

The lawsuit accuses the deli worker of spraying Adams in the face with mace before running from behind the counter to further assault her. Adams said that she attempted to hit him with a coffee pot when he grabbed her hair and dragged her out of the store while calling her a "b****," according to the suit.

A video of the incident reviewed by the newspaper purportedly shows the worker dragging Adams down a set of concrete stairs as bystanders react with shock. With Adams on the ground, the worker proceeds to kick her in the head.

"Next thing I know when I opened my eyes, I was outside next to my car on the floor," said Adams. "I said to myself that I gotta get outta here because I don't know if he's going to kill me." Adams went home with bruises and cuts and called police. She says that she was asked to return to the scene, where she waited four hours for police to arrive. When officers showed up, they seemingly knew the attacker, calling him "Mr. Fourth of July," according to the lawsuit.

The worker has since been fired from the store, although police reportedly said that he has not been identified and that West Brighton Deli Grocery & Grill has refused to help in this regard.

In response to a request for comment, the New York City Police Department told *Newsweek* via email on Tuesday that no arrests had been made in the case and that the investigation is ongoing.

The lawsuit filed against the deli in Staten Island [Supreme Court](#) on Monday alleges that Adams was attacked because the worker "perceived [the] plaintiff to be transgender."

"Even if I was a transvestite, what does that have to do with anything?" Adams told the *Daily News*. "Why were you so comfortable putting your hands on me? I wasn't being aggressive. I didn't have any weapon. I was a customer."

A [study](#) published in 2021 by the Williams Institute at the [University of California](#) Los Angeles School of Law found that the transgender community was over four times more likely to experience violent victimization—defined as aggravated or simple assault, rape or sexual assault—than their cisgender counterparts.

LGBTQ+ activists say that a recent increase in transphobia, fueled by an [anti-transgender movement](#) pushed by conservative politicians, affects not only the transgender community but also cisgender people who are mistakenly perceived as transgender.

"We keep warning y'all that far more cis people will be hurt by anti trans violence," transgender activist and lawyer Alejandra Caraballo [wrote](#) in response to the Staten Island incident on X, formerly [Twitter](#).

A children's track meet in Kelowna, British Columbia, ground to a halt in June when an adult man demanded "proof" that a 9-year-old cisgender girl who was competing was not transgender.

The girl's mother, Heidi Starr, then [told](#) *Newsweek* that the man's wife baselessly referred to her and the girl's other mother as "genital mutilators," "groomers" and "pedophiles."

In July, 59-year-old Michelle [Peacock](#) was killed in Richmond, Indiana, when, police said, her 67-year-old neighbor Tommy Earl slit her throat with a straight razor under the mistaken belief that she was transgender.

Earl reportedly told police that he was not ashamed of the killing and would "do it again" since he believed Peacock was "a male acting like a woman," according to a report citing court documents from Indianapolis [Fox](#) affiliate WXIN.