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Intro to Women and Gender Studies

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Content Warning: Sexual Violence

You Will Not Play This Sh*t in My House: Intolerance of Abuse for the Sake of Art

I will not support the work of artists and celebrities who abuse and exploit others. I will not stream their music on Spotify, I will not retweet them, I will not buy their merchandise, and I will not watch their film appearances. I will not subsidize the lifestyles of those who do not respect the autonomy and the physical well-being of others, and if you do, I will tell you to turn that sh*t off, and then I will tell you why.

Tekashi Six Nine, a trap music star, pled guilty to the use of a child in a sexual performance in 2015, and was charged with strangling a fifteen-year old boy in the Houston Galleria a year ago. Chris Brown, pop superstar, notably pled guilty to a 2009 felony assault against his then-girlfriend, Rhianna, that left her hospitalized, and among half a dozen other criminal charges involving serious assault, he has been charged with sexual battery, gender violence, hate violence, assault, interference of civil rights and intentional infliction of emotional distress against a group of women who attended a party of his in 2017. Kevin Spacey, a venerated actor, has been accused by over thirty young men and women of non-consensual sexual advances and contact, often using his status and appeal to impact on their careers as a

coercive tactic. Need we even mention Harvey Weinstein? Kodak Black, a rap sensation, was arrested in 2016 for the sexual assault of a high school student who came to her school nurse for help. This year, he targeted openly lesbian artist, Young M.A., with anti-gay and sexually harassing lyrics in his song “Pimpin’ Ain’t Eazy”, and when she responded via Instagram Live calling him “weird” and stating that men were simply not her preference, he responded on Instagram live with explicitly sexual harassing statements. The late XXXTentacion admits and relishes in interviews to serious hate crimes against women and gay men, and was charged with appalling treatment of his former girlfriend including kidnapping, holding captive, and aggravated felony assaults. This woman was subsequently harassed and threatened by XXX, his fans, and even his colleagues in the rap community. Here, in our own home, star Horned Frogs football player KaVontae Turpin recently pled guilty to charges of assault causing bodily injury to his girlfriend, Raiesha Atwater, in the parking lot of the Edge 55 apartment complex.

These individuals all respectively continue to have significant support from the community in their fan bases. I am informing you of their crimes not for the shock value, but to set up my argument against the position of those who continue defend these celebrities and support their work. When you support these individuals, you excuse their crimes. You say, “It’s ok”, and to those victimized by their actions, you say, “It doesn’t matter”. By making these sentiments public through your actions, be it a retweet of Justin Bieber defending Chris Brown or “stanning” Six Nine, you tell the people in your community, your friends, that perhaps their victimizations don’t matter either. You certainly don’t designate yourself as a safe person to disclose this nature of trauma to.

Imagine this: your best friend dismisses your experience of sexual violence at the hands of your mutual friend, because of their relationship to them, and because their Sound Cloud has

really started to take off lately. You would feel invalidated, and alone. Perhaps you wouldn't bother seeking out help, or seeking out justice, because if your own friend doesn't care, then who will?

When you support abusers, you communicate this attitude to those in your community. Knowingly or not, it is likely that you are alienating your peers, your friends, and your family when you disregard the perpetration of these crimes rather than cancelling the perpetrators. I am not asking you to be judge and jury: I am asking you to stand in solidarity with the people that did not deserve what these headliners did to them.

“While KaVontae Turpin may have been a star on the football field, his actions here are unacceptable and will not be tolerated,” prosecutor Lloyd Whelchel said in a statement. “Turpin was held accountable for his conduct...”

This is the attitude and matching actions I am looking for. I am asking that for the sake of your sisters and daughters, your sons and brothers, and the friends that you don't know yet: don't perpetuate rape culture and the cycle of abuse via silence by becoming complicit through your support.

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