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The Power of a Voice

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The Power of a Voice

Abstract

***Trigger warning: sexual assault*

I was a freshman in college and I became a 'juvenile victim'. I became an article online and the talk of a bored group of people thinking of how crazy life is. I became comments on Facebook and I became comments in a courtroom. In all that I became, I was nameless, faceless, voiceless. That was what got to me most. I was voiceless in the process as much as I was when he stood over me, and all I could ask was, *when did my voice stop mattering?* [excerpt]

Keywords

Gettysburg College, Sexual Assault, Title IX

Disciplines

Civic and Community Engagement

Comments

Surge is a student blog at Gettysburg College where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at surgegettysburg.wordpress.com Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that -isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

THE POWER OF A VOICE

February 20, 2020

***Trigger warning: sexual assault*

I was a freshman in college and I became a 'juvenile victim'. I became an article online and the talk of a bored group of people thinking of how crazy life is. I became comments on Facebook and I became comments in a courtroom. In all that I became, I was nameless, faceless, voiceless. That was what got to me most. I was voiceless in the process as much as I was when he stood over me, and all I could ask was, *when did my voice stop mattering?*

I brought my voice back in small rooms with people who hadn't processed their assaults like I had to. I brought my voice back in telling other people just how much their voices mattered. I was a girl without power for so long, and perhaps I still see myself that way sometimes. Perhaps I still see the court speaking over me, him standing over me, everything over the softness of my voice. But I see others like me with such power, I have started to realize I owe myself the same.

One of the things they told me when they dropped the case was that he didn't think I was serious when I said stop, he said I was quiet, playful even. He said my voice sounded soft. It seemed ironic to me for him to even discuss my voice. To this day, I hear his. And so much of me wants him to still remember mine. I want him to hear my voice, the one that day almost took.

He is not the reason I need my voice back, that I worked so hard to get it back. It is for the girls that I see flinch at certain topics and rub their arms and don't want to use anything that was taken from them again for fear it might not work the same. In our solidarity, we all create our voice. And in our collective voice, we can find our individual voices.

I never quite wanted to be the person that everybody knows to confide in about their assaults. I never wanted to be the girl that everybody knows about. I learned to stop hiding it when I realized that I needed someone like myself through it all. I needed someone with a voice to bring out mine. It's been a year and a half since my first assault, almost a year since the charges were dropped. My voice has wavered since, yes. But it has not grown as quiet as he wanted it to be, and my voice will continue to rage for whoever needs it.

Anonymous