

WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

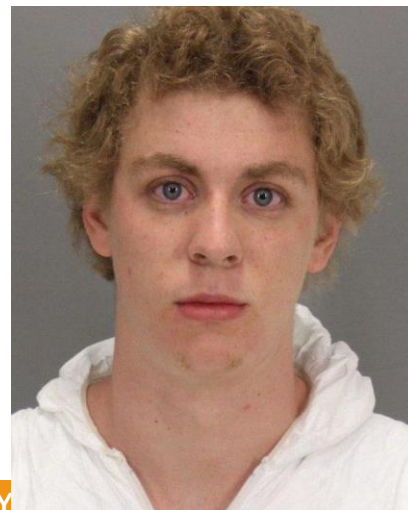
Gender is a social construct. This means that the actions and traits prescribed to men and women are not natural or necessary but are arbitrary rules deemed appropriate by society. These gender roles can be as simple as boys and girls liking different colors or as complex as the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Everyone ultimately suffers by seeing the genders as a strict binary and punishing those with personalities and interests outside of the norm. This includes the criminal justice system. Crime is actually encouraged in men because of these standards. By promoting masculinity above all else, men deny themselves more feminine emotions such as fear and sadness, and ultimately release them in the form of violent outbursts. A “boys will be boys” mentality also allows men the ability to distance themselves emotionally from their actions and commit crimes, specifically violence and rape, without remorse. The criminal justice system, created by and for men, tolerates this behavior and allows for lesser sentencing for rapists in many cases and for an easier transition back into society.

Women do not fare much better under the current system. Though they make up 51% of the United States, they are only 7% of prison inmates. Though it is true that women commit less crime than men, there are many reasons for this phenomenon. Women being less likely to become criminals can be partially explained by the rigid gender roles they are faced with. They are generally told to be timid, emotional, and weak, with those who venture outside of these norms harassed by the general populace. Even those who do go against the prescribed gender roles and commit crime are treated as though they have no autonomy. Male judges and prosecutors often want to be a paternal figure to these girls and view their actions as beyond their control. Women who commit crime are often classified as insane, victims, or simply evil. These categories tend to remove

their womanhood and leave abstract notions that do not challenge the status of gender roles. For example, a woman who is evil is not seen as representative of femininity but an outlier, and the problems facing the overall treatment of women by society can be further ignored.

CASE STUDY

Brock Turner, a freshman swimmer at Stanford university, was convicted for sexually assaulting a young woman at a party in January of 2015. Though he faced up to fourteen years in prison, prosecution recommended six, and the judge ultimately sentenced Turner to six months in jail with three years of probation. The judge feared that harsher sentencing would have a “severe impact” on Turner’s life. Letters from Brock and his father soon surfaced which showed that he did not claim responsibility for the assault and they believed him to be a good kid who got wrapped up in an irresponsible culture of college parties and alcohol. Turner’s father also categorized a brutal rape as, “20 minutes of action” for his son. By mislabeling the assault and attempting to deny responsibility for his actions, Turner, his father, and the judge are all examples of the negative effects of toxic masculinity and how it prevents justice from being served.



WHY ?

The United States is seen as a role model for other countries. By developing new policies that will benefit society, we not only help our own citizens, but we set an example for the world over. The U.S. is also currently struggling with the issues of mass incarceration and prison reform, making this the perfect time to implement new policies that will allow for a more equal treatment of men and women in the criminal justice system.

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

The first solution to helping people break free of traditional gender roles is to change the way children are educated. The mentalities that boys don't cry and are only mean to girls that they don't like must be abolished in favor of allowing children to fully express themselves in whatever way they choose. Gender roles are learned behavior and when they are not enforced at a young age, can be replaced with healthier alternatives.

On higher levels, such as high school and college students for whom this behavior is already learned, classes on gender should become part of the core curriculum and mental health facilities should be much more accessible and less stigmatized. This will allow students to more fully understand how gender operates and be able to express themselves in healthy ways. Dress codes should be equalized for men and women and be held to much more responsible standards. For example, young women's bodies should not be sexualized in the

manner that they are and ludicrous rules that are just used to enforce control over women (such as not being allowed to show shoulders or being required to wear skirts) are completely unnecessary.

In the context of the criminal justice system, equality begins with more women working in the field. More women police officers, lawyers, and judges will help normalize their place in society as well as promote the equal treatment of both genders. Beyond that, all law enforcement professionals should also be required to attend trainings which specialize in gender and be provided with mental health care (this care and training will also help with the different issue of police brutality by deconstructing the toxic masculinity and "us vs. them" mentality that permeates much of the police force).

The breakdown of gender roles in society is ultimately an extensive procedure that cannot simply be solved with a few policy changes. However, these changes will allow for a step in the right direction and hopefully, a decrease in crime overall. By destroying the way men and women are both harmed in gender roles women will have more respect and be valued as people and not simply objects; men will be able to express how they feel and will no longer feel the need for excessive aggression and toxic behaviors.

WORKS CITED

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TRANSCRIPT OF ELISABETH'S AND MY RAP (JUST IN CASE YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF IT IN THE VIDEO)

Dzien dobry.
Dzien dobry.
Jestem Elisabeth.
Jestem Bobby.
Jestesmy w USA. (yesteshme v oo s ah)

My name is Elisabeth
My name is Bobby
And we're gonna teach you all about crime policy

Here in Warszawa
We learned about crime (holla)

Warz
Sawa
Warz
Sawa
Crime
Holla
Crime
Holla

Shout out to Anna Matczak
Who had us make this project

Tak
Tak
Tak
Tak

Here comes some rhymes
Of what we know about crime

Bardzo
Duzo (duzcho)
Bardzo
Duzo

Hope that you like it
We'll see how you feel in a bit

Dobrze (dobshe)
Dobrze
Dobrze
Dobrze

Women in crime aren't treated very fair
I have some truth that I'd like to share

Men have the freedom to be angry and bad

But if a woman breaks the rules than she must be mad
The first step to go and break out of this muck
Is that you gotta realize gender's a social construct
This means that the things that boys and girls do
Aren't natural reactions but because society tells em to

Crime is considered masculine and causes such commotion
But only because boys aren't allowed to show emotion
Society tells women to be docile and meek
So when they become violent, everybody freaks
Feminism tries to make us all equal
By breaking free from gender roles and seeing us as people
No actions and traits belong to any sex
So acting like they do just doesn't make any sense

Women have to start being seen as in control of their actions
This includes murder, theft, and any crime that happens
When we see that the motives are not caused by gender
Then suddenly everyone's day gets better
Women will be seen as equal and men can be more free
Because we broke out of toxic masculinity

The criminal justice system needs a new look
By changing the ways that it sees crooks
Every criminal needs to be treated the same
The fact that they're not is really pretty lame

I'm from the South from the state of Texas
They believe in punishment that is really excessive
In this area the death penalty still reigns
I truly believe this is a dangerous game
There's many reasons that this is wrong
Now I'll tell you all about them in my song

Texas has executed over 500 citizens
Out of this number at least a few were innocent
The death penalty is an irreversible act

If new evidence is discovered there is no way to react
Cameron Todd Willingham was executed long ago
He was later found innocent what the heck oh no

Executing citizens doesn't even deter capital crime
So why don't we just make them stay in prison a long time
The death penalty doesn't have a public safety benefit
And capital punishment is costing taxpayers more than a bit
A death penalty case costs an average of \$2.3 million
That's more than it costs to keep an inmate in prison

Let's take a look at the case of Louis Castro Perez
He's an inmate on death row and he's innocent he says
The means of conviction are based on economics and race
Are these really the things we want to determine his fate
In conclusion here's what you all need to know
The death penalty really really needs to go

Thanks for listening to our schpeal
This is how we feel,
for real
Tak
Nie
Przepraszam (sheprashum)
Lody
Vino
Toileta
Woda (voda)
Wodka
Gdansk (daynsk)
Wroclaw (Vroshwa)
Nie wiem (nie viem)
Nie rozumien