

Last week we posted a series of images in response to the misogynistic hate speech that was graffitied in North London, which included messages to “kill women” and that “females should be hung.” The post was removed by Facebook, after community members reported it for hate speech. Not for the hate speech in the graffiti, but because we named that graffiti as male violence.

Naming men’s violence against women is not hate speech against men. It is a recognition of the world we live in. According to Statistics Canada, the vast majority of people who abuse their intimate partners (of any gender) are men<sup>1</sup>. Policing statistics tell us that 96% of people who perpetrate sexual assault are men<sup>2</sup>. Research repeatedly tells us that 1 in 3 men admit to having perpetrated sexual violence, and that those who do so are more likely to hold “traditional” beliefs about gender roles<sup>3 4 5</sup>. We know it’s not all men. But it is often men, and it is a lot of men.

The City of London declared intimate partner violence and femicide an epidemic over two years ago. Femicide, by definition, is the killing of women and girls by men. Is that also hate speech? It was passed unanimously, and yet we’re accused of partisanship for naming it.

So let’s name something else, while we’re at it: it seems as though people only feel comfortable talking about violence that they can blame other people for. We saw as much in our comment section. People were fine with blaming a mentally ill person, or a drug user, or someone from “another culture.” But those same people got reallyyy upset that we named men. “But our fathers! Husbands! Sons!” As if fathers, husbands, and sons never commit violence. Why is it so affronting to your world view when we say the truth?

Men commit the vast majority of violence against women. That’s a fact. Men also commit the vast majority of violence against men. Men’s violence is a problem in our world, in our country, in our city. If that *fact* feels like a personal attack, you’re telling on yourself. It is not divisive for us to name facts. It *is* divisive to respond to truth by silencing those who speak it.

Bottom line is this: you’re allowed to hate what we say, but that doesn’t make our words hate speech. Instead of trying to silence organizations who exist to protect survivors of violence, maybe try ignoring us instead. You know, like you ignore all the other social issues that you disagree with.

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<sup>1</sup> Burczycka, Marta. 2019. “Section 2: Police-reported intimate partner violence in Canada, 2018.” In Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile, 2018. Juristat. Statistics Canada no. Catalogue 85-002-X.

<sup>2</sup> Conroy, S. & Cotter, A. (2017). Self-reported sexual assault in Canada, 2014. *Juristat*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 85-002-X.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, R. E., Silver, K. E., Ciampaglia, A. M., Vitale, A. M., & Delahanty, D. L. (2019). The frequency of sexual perpetration in college men: A systematic review of reported prevalence rates from 2000 to 2017. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*.

<sup>4</sup> Logan Greene, P., & Cue Davis, K. (2011). Latent profiles of risk among a community sample of men: Implications for sexual aggression. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 26(7), 1463-1477.

<sup>5</sup> Eaton, A. A., & Matamala, A. (2014). The relationship between heteronormative beliefs and verbal sexual coercion in college students. *Archives of sexual behavior*, 43(7), 1443-1457.