



April 28, 2014

To David Choe,

We, the Asian Pacific Coalition (APC) at the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA), are a collective of twenty-five Asian American and Pacific Islander organizations. We are the official voice of the Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) community on campus. Through our Principles of Unity, a code by which our coalition organizes by, we affirm the positive and accurate portrayals of Asian Pacific peoples, women, and minorities.

In particular, we want to illuminate the problematic nature of your podcast that was aired March 10, 2014, in when you mention your actions and experiences in a massage parlor. You describe in great detail on your podcast your actions toward a particular masseuse and how you forced your masseuse to touch your genitals and forcibly perform actions in which we strongly believe is rape, not “rapey behavior.” Continually, women are seen as inferior to males, as we have seen in the past and as it still persists in different forms today. One in every six American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime, a clear indicator that sexism is alive and real. Furthermore, Asian American and Pacific Islander women have historically been seen as mere objects, hyper-sexualized and used for sexual gratification and lewd fantasies for the patriarchy. This mentality of viewing women as subhuman will only continue the violence enacted against women and other peoples every two minutes in this country.

You mentioned that your actions were “rapey” but you assert that you are indeed “not a rapist”. However, your actions clearly fit the description of a rapist. When you involve someone else in sexual interactions without their consent, that is not “rapey behavior”; that is rape. Consent is defined as a clear and explicit verbal agreement, a spoken “yes, I would like that”. Eyes alone cannot express consent. Your actions and attitude contribute to the rape culture at large by silencing the voice of sexual assault victims by dismissing your abusive actions as just “rapey behavior.” “Rapey behavior” is rape.

Not only that, but you later claimed that the story was an extension of your art. However, “rape” should never be used for art. In doing so, you trivialize the experiences of violence that women face. Regardless of whether or not the story was true, your actions were unacceptable.

In light of April being National Sexual Assault Awareness Month, we urge you to acknowledge the actions described as what they are--rape. As a notable API male, you must realize that you are a representative of your community and that you are accountable for your words and actions. With a broad following, you have the potential to educate your supporters on the subject of rape culture. Therefore we ask you to not only be honest about your behavior, but also to utilize your influence for constructive change. We believe in the power of art to convey a meaningful message, and we hope that yours will convey a more positive one in the future.

Sincerely,
The Asian Pacific Coalition at UCLA

3230 Campbell Hall
405 Hilgard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1546
Tel: 310.825.2974 | Email: apc.ucla@gmail.com