

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT: [From The Ashes, S01E07](#)

My name is Becca and this is From the Ashes, Episode 7: Violence against women is fucked up for everyone.

So, this is an episode you need to listen to all the way from the beginning, until the end.

If you're not committed to listening to this whole thing, just go ahead and stop right now.

If you're not committed to listening with an open heart, I recommend you stop right here.

Come back when you're ready.

Here we go:

To My Dearest Nephews,

You're too young to understand this now, but now is the time to write this to you.

Two days ago, I was dancing. The beats running were through me, and the beats were making my body move.

The dancing wasn't for anyone else, it was simply what was in me. In a room by myself, I would've danced just as hard.

But I wasn't alone. I was in a large crowd, and a man asked me to dance. I was in a country that wasn't my own, in a small pueblo with values completely foreign to me, crashing a party that wasn't thrown for me in any sort of way.

When this man asked me to dance, I was curious. I wanted to dance with him. See,

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we didn't share a language, I couldn't speak with him, but we could share the language that is dance. I wanted to learn his culture.

At first, it was fun. It was different. It was exciting. The way he danced was not what I was used to, and I smiled and twirled to the beat. I followed his lead.

And then. The same story. The same tired story that has plagued women for far too long.

This man. This fucking stranger. This person who did not know me, who could not even speak to me, who did not even know my name felt that he had the right to run his hands over my breasts.

Before this moment, I had been having the time of my life. There had been hours of fun, hours of laughter and dancing and movement - and in one gesture, in one assumption, and in one small action, he ruined my night.

I walked away, I walked back to the protection of the group I was with.

I made eye contact with this man over the crowd, and he seemed confused.

I tried to brush it off, I tried to be okay.

Could've been worse, right?

But no. fuck that. It was terrible in its own right.

In one small thoughtless movement, that man made me feel fear for the first time in this trip.

See, mis sobrinos, in a few days, I was planning to leave the comfortable bubble of my road family, and begin to travel alone.

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I had apprehensions before this moment about traveling alone. I know that I am a woman in a time where it isn't really safe to be a woman who is alone. But when that fear was just a theory, I could tame it. I could overcome it. I could think past it.

But in that one gesture. When that man touched me without my permission? When even the smallest manifestations of that fear became real?

I was impacted. In a real way. In a way that affected my real life.

My night was ruined. My next day ruined. And I sit here two days later in tears, wondering if I should fulfill my destiny to ride a bike north through the Americas as far as I can go.

Because I am a single woman. And simply being who I am puts me at risk for men thinking that they have the right to do what they want to me, even if my permission isn't firmly in place.

This is not a happy story, My Nephews, but you need to hear it.

Because when you grow up, you be will be faced with a choice about how you see women. How you talk about them when they are not around.

You may not think that silly words and jokes about women have an impact, but they do.

I know because the grown boys with whom I travel have become less safe for me now.

They make jokes about women. They say things about women that they don't feel are disrespectful.

They say things about women that I can't imagine they would ever say to these women in real life. They justify what they are saying by claiming they are releasing

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the thoughts that need to be released so that they don't act upon them in real life. They call themselves feminists and say they respect women.

"Raised by single mothers" they say, as I wonder what those single mothers would think about the words these boys use to discuss women behind their backs.

I love these men that I am traveling with. They are good men. I love them knowing that the way they speak about women will not change simply because I protest and express my sense that what they are saying is disrespectful.

But I cannot help but be saddened by the fact that even good men speak about women the way that they do.

That good men can justify these words, thinking that their words have no impact simply because they are spoken rarely in front of women.

Saying that, "This is just the way young men bond."

I am telling you now, mis sobrinos, the lights of my heart, the most beautiful men I know, you do not have to bond this way with other men.

Don't get me wrong, I want you to grow up talking about sex openly, honestly, and with gusto.

I want you all to have positive, beautiful sex lives. With men, with women, with anyone!

There are ways to talk about sex that place the objects of your desire in your words as people and not simply as objects.

You can talk about women using words and sentiments that do not exist on the same spectrum that would enable a person to believe that they have the right to touch someone sexually without their permission.

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I think it is too late for the grown boys with whom I am traveling to understand this. They are too set in their beliefs.

I believe it is not too late for you.

Perhaps one day, when you're old enough, you will come across this story. I hope that you will be angry.

But I hope that you use this anger for good. I hope you'll use it to motivate you to learn. I hope you use this anger and come to me to ask me how you can talk about your desire in a way that breaks the perpetual cycles of violence.

I will always have time to talk to you about sex, Mis Sobrinos. I will never judge you for your questions or what you want. And I will definitely have time to help you understand how to be dead sexy AND respectful.

And I promise, that when you are capable of rising above the immature and disrespectful banter, if you so happen to grow up and want to fuck women, you will get more pussy than the grown boys with whom I am traveling.

Strong women can smell respect from a mile away, and it is the greatest aphrodesiac on earth.

I love you. I miss you. I cannot wait to see the amazing men who you will become.

Much, Much Love for You,

Your Tia Becca.

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What you just heard was written after I spent 48 hours pretending nothing had happened.

You see, my friends had had a fucking epic night ... their night was so amazing, and so I spent 48 hours not wanting to tell them because I didn't want their memory of this epic night to be tainted.

I spent 48 hours rationalizing that what happened wasn't really that big of a deal, anyway.

I spent 48 hours telling myself that I was fine, even though (obviously) I wasn't fine.

What you heard was 100% emotion, poured out over 2 hours. There was no filter. There was no pre-frontal cortex. There was no rational thought. All of that was just how I was feeling at the time.

What you're about to hear is all the rational thought that has since filtered back into my life.

What you're about to hear is how I feel now that I've had enough time to heal and think.

We have to start here.

Violence against women is fucked for everyone, and the piece you just heard is an example of that.

Let me go ahead and break down why that piece is unjustified, and why that piece is not only fucked up for me, but for the boys. For the grown boys that are mentioned.

Let me start by saying that those grown boys who I mentioned are actually men, and they are the best fucking men I know. Regardless of what I said about them in the

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moment that I wrote this piece that you just heard, I know damn well that these men respect women.

I've seen the way they engage with women, and it's legit. And as a woman, they have engaged with me, and it's very respectful.

Rationally. When I sat down with these men the morning I wrote what you just heard, I knew that. But the morning I sat down with these men ... I was hurting.

For them, it was a morning just like every other morning, And just like every other morning we had spent together, they were having candid conversations about sex and sexual attraction. I had been listening to, participating in, and enjoying these conversations for weeks, Most of what they said - 99% of the shit they said - was absolutely harmless.

And so in this morning that was an average morning for them, what they were saying was actually really, really harmless. When I think back to the actual things that were said, it really wasn't disrespectful. It wasn't as crazy as that piece I wrote made it out to be.

But I was hurting

But they had no idea I was hurting. When they asked me how my night was, I didn't want to ruin their memory of the night by being like, "Well, some motha' fucka groped me."

So instead, I had been like, "OMG, I had such a good time."

And I don't think these guys would've held back on their sexual banter completely had they known that this happened to me, but I'm pretty sure that when I spoke to up them and was like, "Hey, what you're saying is pretty disrespectful..." they would've been way more mindful of my feelings.

I don't think they would've come at me the way they came at me.

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But I didn't tell them. And so they had no reason to modify their behavior.

And so they acted as they always acted. They were shooting the shit and bantering about fucking.

And usually, I would've joined right in, and I tried. That's why I sat down with them. But today I was hurting. And because I had been holding in the fact that I was groped without my permission, I was really hypersensitive to everything they were saying.

It all felt like violence to me. I couldn't feel it any other way. And so I told them, and I confronted them. I told them I thought that some of the things they were saying were disrespectful.

And they defended themselves. And they gave some of the rationale that you heard in the piece that wrote.

And because I was hurting and because they weren't hearing me and because everything felt like violence to me ... I lost control. Not in a crazy yelling screaming way, but in a way where I finally lost control of my capacity to pretend like what had happened, wasn't bothering me.

When they ran through their list of justifications for why their banter wasn't disrespectful, and why it was okay for them to say what they were saying, I broke down in tears. Once I was crying, I fucking let myself cry. And as I was crying, I finally let myself feel the impact of what had happened to me two nights before.

I let the fear run through me fully.

I let the anger manifest.

And then I wrote down what I was feeling in that moment. I captured it. I recorded it. I made it real.

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It fucking sucked.

Because after doing that, I had to get back in the van with these guys who, at the time, I was not feeling safe around.

Throughout the course of the day, these guys noticed something was wrong ... because they're good compassionate guys. They asked me - each one of them asked me - if I was okay. Each one of them asked what me what had happened. Everyone gave me long, genuine hugs, and each one of them told me that if I needed to talk about it, I could talk to them. They were genuine in their concern, and yet because I was hurting ...

I couldn't trust them. These men who had become my family ... I couldn't trust them.

Allowing myself to feel the emotions of what that stranger did to me separated me from the people I loved. Looking at them was painful, listening to them felt awful. It wasn't even close to being their fault, but here I was, feeling very, very alone ... taking it out on them, basically.

It fucking sucked. This one act of violence had a very real ripple in my life for like three days. And I knew that I was pulling myself away from being able to be in the present moment, enjoying the people I love, enjoying being traveling, enjoying ... everything.

Because I couldn't separate myself from this really painful thing that happened ... you know ... just 48 hours ago.

Luckily for me, a couple things happened that snapped me back into the present.

One, was that I was reading an Eckhart Tolles book and there were some passages in there that really helped me to reframe the story I was telling.

And then ... a very sexy Australian man on bike showed up in my life, and the

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thought of being able to consensually seduce someone where both they and I were willing participants in a sexual encounter?

Let's just say there's nothing like consent to pull someone like me right back into the present.

So. Over the course of the day, over the course of the evening, I worked to forgive the guy who groped me. I reconnected with people who I love, and I asked the Aussie to come back to my tent.

The following day, about 72 hours after this random dude groped me, I re-listened to what I had recorded.

One thought returned to me over and over and over:

The impact of sexual violence is never just limited to the person who was violated.

I fucking love the men I was traveling with. Deeply. I feel understood by them, and feel that they are of my same spirit. I care about them deeply and know that they return this care for me. I feel lucky to have spent almost every single hour of every single day with them for over a month.

And to be honest, If my nephews end up having half the charisma, intelligence, people skills, linguistic skills, sense of adventure, or courage that these men have ... I will count my nephews lucky.

Because my nephews will be successful, happy, awesome, independent, free-thinking human beings.

And yet, the men who I love were the men that bore the impact of my anger and fear when I sat down to write. They bore the impact of my anger and my fear when I was around them.

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In the moment I finally let myself feel what I was feeling about being groped, I wasn't able to channel my rage only toward the man who violated me. Like an atomic bomb, the negative energy that that guy catalyzed in me took them out too.

It was so irrational. So unfair to them. In that moment, I wasn't strong enough to meet the negative things that had happened to me with love. Because that is the only way to break the cycle of violence.

Instead of breaking it, I actually perpetuated the cycle of violence by lashing out at them and by not trusting them and by separating myself from them and by calling them bad people.

And while I still wholly believe that my nephews can grow up bonding with other young men in a thousand other ways than the objectification and sexualization of women, the way in which I expressed that sentiment was fully out of pocket. It was wrong. It was straight up wrong.

I almost decided not to release the beginning recording. To put it away. To pretend it didn't happen. To pretend I didn't say it. To pretend that I didn't pass the violence that had been done to me forward.

But then I remembered the story of a woman who I met in a different rural argentinean town a few weeks previously. She is a fucking powerhouse of a woman who told me a survivors story that I will never forget. And she said that it's important to tell these stories so that they stop happening. Her courage fuels me right now. If she can tell her story, so can I.

This story is one that needs to be told because I do not think that I am even close to being alone in experiencing what I experienced. And I also don't think that I'm alone in reacting the way that I did.

I don't think that I'm alone in taking out my rage on those who where close, instead of taking out my rage on the perpetrator.

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I don't think that my experience of not being able to feel safe around those I love for a little while is something I'm alone in either.

And it's only now that I'm really able to meet that man who violated me with love.

I hope that someday, someone teaches that guy the joy of asking. The joy of mutuality. The amazing power of consent to make sexual contact electric, instead of confusing and weird.

I am sorry to the men I love for taking out my anger on them. For thinking for even a moment that they weren't good men. I hope they understand that I was momentarily swept away in violence. I hope they can forgive me. I hope they know how much I love and respect each of them.

I also hope that someday, I don't have to wake up and say that I'm lucky because I "only" got groped.

I hope that my niece never has to fear traveling alone just because she's a woman. I hope that when she's old enough to travel she can go out and dance and come back with a smile on her face instead of fear in her heart.

I hope that you tell this story to your nephews when they're old enough to understand. I know I will.

And you made it! That was episode 007 of From the Ashes.

Thanks for listening all the way to the end of this one ... it was definitely an emotional one.

As a post-script, I just want to stay that I did not allow one man's actions to stop me from living my destiny.

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I started my bike trip.

I will not live in fear.

Before I go, I'd just like to say that you're digging the podcast, I'd love it if you could [drop a review on iTunes!](#)

I fucking love you all!!