

Roll down the partition please: Solange and domestic violence

The Knowles/Carter family fight can open our eyes to female to male domestic violence

By [Ellie Rice](#), Comment Editor (2013/14)

Wednesday 14 May 2014

This week, a video was posted on TMZ, a celebrity news website, apparently showing Solange Knowles physically attacking her sister's husband- Jay Z. Jay Z does not seem to return the violence, but he does protect himself by holding her foot. She appears to make contact with him three times but being much smaller than him and held back by security, she does not appear to cause him any physical harm. The family then seem to leave the hotel, the women in one car and Jay Z in another. So far no party has made any comment, and I wouldn't hold my breath for one.

While we all might want the gossip, we will never know the truth. Even if the respective parties ever make a comment on the situation, it is unlikely to be the whole truth. That family has always been incredibly private, and there's no reason for that to change now. I can imagine they are all hurting a lot. TMZ and whoever sold them that video have invaded their privacy beyond the border of what would ever be deemed acceptable in the real world. Would you want your family dramas splashed across almost every media outlet?

But there is an element of the video which is worth discussing; female-to-male domestic violence. That the video raises this issue in our minds is the only redeeming feature of this sorry episode.

Once the video was seen, people started questioning what Jay-Z had done to provoke her, as if it was his fault that he was being attacked. Reverse the genders in the situation and it all feels quite frankly bizarre. If a famous woman was being abused by a male family member, and a video of it appeared online, would anyone dare to ask what she had done to make him do it? Even if the fame element is removed, I'd hope the public would not flock to watch the video.

The men's group Parity believes this emphasis on the man as the abuser is a distorted view, and another example of gender inequality. Statistics produced by them show that in England a third to a half of abuse victims in an 'intimate' relationship setting are male. They also highlight that there are over 400 funded safe places for female victims to escape to, but none for men.

I am inclined to believe them. Violence against men certainly isn't an issue the media covers often, nor is it seen in popular culture with any frequency. This is something which needs to be looked at in more depth and which the public needs to educate themselves on. Gender equality is about ensuring everyone, regardless of their gender, has access to the same opportunities, and fighting for the rights of women alone will not achieve this. Clearly, there are scenarios in which men are overlooked in preference to women.

So, back to the video. The Knowles/Carter clan deserve their privacy, which has obviously been violated here, but if there is a positive to be taken from this incident it is that we can think about gender equality from a more unconventional perspective.



2 comments

Isidore of Seville

14 May '14 at 5:44 pm

I'd be extremely careful of quoting anything from Parity. The organisation has the stench of MRA on them.

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Nicholas C

25 May '14 at 9:56 pm

I was a victim of domestic violence for over six year. What is often overlooked in relation to me disclosing abuse is that after you do what help is available. Very little is the answer. During my recovery I saw support thrown at my ex wife yet my daughter were only given support I found for us. Many agency workers said to me that "If I had been a woman, I wouldn't have faced half the issues I had to to get help and support my daughter and I needed. I decided to try and get more information out about male victims of domestic violence <http://www.menhurt2.org> One secret many people aren't aware of is if a woman goes for help as a victim she is automatically believed. If it is a male victim he needs to be screened to prove he is a victim of domestic violence before he receives any support.

Lets not forget it doesn't matter who you are abuse hurts.... Victims should be the primary concern not gender.

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