

What influences the celebrity culture in our society

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There are many factors in today's world that influence the media and as a result this influence's our beliefs in our everyday life and how our culture is set up. It is no secret that the few rich celebrities and those who have money and power live a lifestyle that none of us even come close to in our time. With this money and the lavish lifestyle that they live, celebrities and the rich and empowered are almost favored in society. They are able to walk away from scenes and crimes that they commit that would land all of us in jail for a long period of time. They are able to pay a certain amount of money and have whatever their given crime was expunged off their record and continue living their extravagant and lavish lifestyle. For normal, everyday people this is not the case. It is a fact that there is a higher privilege given to celebrities when it comes to crime and punishment and they are given special treatment that no average citizen would receive.

Justice is supposed to turn a blind eye in the eyes of judgement in the law and become a fair and equal opportunity for all, which when it comes to the cases of celebrities is anything but. There are many cases in which celebrities receive special treatment or punishments for crimes that they committed in which they are so clearly guilty of that no average citizen would ever walk away from free of charges. For example, the case of OJ Simpson there was such clear and pertinent evidence to find and convict him of this heinous and wrongful crime. " The glove found on OJ Simpson's estate was only one of the nearly three dozen blood exhibits connecting Simpson to the murders. Abundant other evidence pointed to his guilt" (Alschuler 30). Even with all the evidence pointing to his guilt, OJ Simpson was able to walk free as if nothing had happened. Had this been any other person, they would

have faced many years in jail. In the state of California, “ First degree murder will have you facing 25 years to life in prison, second degree murder will have you facing 15 years to life in state prison and capital murder means that you face the possibility of execution” (Shouse 1). The fact that anyone else would have spent time in jail is relevant because of the jury members, “ Three-quarters answered yes to the question, “ Does the fact that OJ Simpson excelled at football make it unlikely in your mind that he could commit murder?” (Alschuler 33). The fact the most of the jury members think this puts an emphasis on celebrities as a whole but they are human just like us and if they commit a crime, they should have to pay the price just as any normal citizen would have to. It is unfair and wrongful that just because they are in the spotlight that they do not have to pay for their crimes and reap the consequences of their actions because murder is murder, it does not matter who committed it.

Another clear case of celebrities being given a higher privilege when it comes to crime and their punishment is the case of Rihanna and Chris Brown when R&B Song Writer and Singer, Chris Brown, assaulted and severely beat up his then girlfriend, Rihanna. It is no secret to anyone out there that Rihanna was clearly a victim of domestic abuse and violence and it has affected her in many ways. “ Her post-assault performances and public image do not cohere with a therapeutic and state-sanctioned model of recovery from intimate partner violence, in which a healthy and conforming female subject emerges after being “ saved” from her abuser” (Fleetwood 421). If there are clear and pointing factors to Brown’s guilt, including an effect on Rihanna’s life as a whole then why was he not facing or looking at

the maximum or facing the greatest punishment allowed to domestic violence? According to California State Law on Domestic Violence, “ The maximum jail sentence for a conviction under Code PC 243 (e)(1) is one year. Probation of up to three years is an alternative option, and it is a viable punishment for those who are first time offenders. Those on probation may also have to complete a Batterer’s Program, and must pay a fine of up to \$2,000” (Collins 1). Brown merely walked away with none of these punishments but other countries were willing to fight back in order to promote the campaign for domestic violence. Brown had an upcoming tour in Australia around the same time in which the news broke about the beating of his girlfriend Rihanna. He was actually banned from getting into the country because of his actions. “ And this week Brown, appealing the ban, argued that his mistakes from the past should not be held against him, but should serve as a lesson for others. ‘ I would be more than grateful to come to Australia to raise awareness on domestic violence,’ he tweeted. ‘ I am not the pink elephant in the room anymore.’”(Doherty 38). He should be responsible for his actions just as any other citizen would have to be. There should be no plea to allow him to continue to be performing his tour while he should be sitting in jail for a year thinking about the crime that he committed. The law is the law and should be equally applied to all, not just a selective group of people.

There may be many reasons as to why celebrities get off with such an easier sentencing than everyday normal people and according to Patricia Sanchez Abril, it may have something to do with the fact of the business aspect of society that celebrities are a part of. It is no secret that celebrities are a part

of multi-million dollar corporations and contracts which allow them to live lavish lifestyles that next to none of us will ever see. " Exploring fame across disciplines reveals shared quandaries regarding the definition of public-private boundaries, the rights of the famous, and their social and financial value in modern society." (Abril 179) This means that when exploring the fame and the boundaries associated with them that people place a higher financial value of celebrities which makes it harder to make the pay for their crimes because they have enough money and so a large amount of money to just pay of their debt of the crime that they owe. This is why most celebrities can pay for their high bail outright because they make enough to support the lifestyle that they live and buy themselves a get out of jail for free card. There are also several other theories as to why celebrities and the higher elite class do not get the same punishment for the same crimes and it something referred to as the reverse-moral clause. " We define a reverse-morals clause as a reciprocal contractual warranty to a traditional morals clause'^ intended to protect the reputation of talent' from the negative, unethical, immoral, and/o r criminal behavior of the endorsee-company or purchaser of talent's endorsement" (Taylor 67). This essentially means that there is hardly anyways for a celebrity to actual pay the true price of their crimes or receive any negative reputation because the company there are signed with protects them and their talent. These celebrities sign with these big companies so that they are protected, under law from all the negative, unethical, immoral and/or criminal behavior that they so do commit. This gives an in depth explanation as to why it is easier for celebrities to get off with crimes easier because they have the backing of their companies. It is

also said that “ A celebrity is more than just a social actor whose name is well known and who garners large-scale public attention. The core of celebrity is the actor’s relationship with the public, as that relationship is documented in the media. Based on this relationship, the social actor attains economic value, and the public experiences a positive emotional response through the fulfillment of behavioral needs such as fantasy and affiliation” (Abril 181). This also largely explains the deeper meaning as to why these celebrities get off with their certain crimes or take a largely reduced sentencing than the average person. These celebrities are seen as having economic value in our society which is something that they would not be able to accomplish or produce sitting in a jail cell or being executed for their crime if it was severe enough. Since the celebrities in our culture are seen as having and providing economic value to society as a whole, this is another one of the many reason that there are able to get away with crimes without punishment.

In conclusion, there are many factors that influence the celebrity culture in our society and why when it comes to crime and punishment that they are given a higher privilege than the average citizen would receive. There are many reasons as to why and there is no sign of anything changing soon. “ Traditionally, the economic value or market price of the entertainment industry and its various components was seen as intangible and difficult to measure” (Choi 314). This reaffirms the fact that since these things are difficult to means the celebrities bring such a high economic value and market price to the entertainment industry that they will always be favored in society. The sole fact that they also have a lot of money and can afford to

buy out their mistakes also contributes to the fact of why the policies are so different when it comes to crime and punishment for them. " Punishment has become, more than anything else, an ongoing national morality play" (Kennedy 1288). In other words, everyday citizens get outraged when justice is not served properly amongst celebrities for their crimes and punishments but yet we do nothing about it because love to watch the saga unfold which leads into a never ending unfair cycle. " Celebrity is characterized by the elicitation of positive emotional responses (Rindova et al., 2006), which are derived from the actor's positive valence (Trope and Liberman, 2000) for the audience to the extent that he/she helps fulfil various behavioural goals, including satisfying a need for gossip, fantasy, identification and attachment (Adler and Adler, 1989; Gamson, 1994; O'Guinn, 2000)" (Colapinto 221). So there is clear evidence that supports the fact that celebrities get out of crimes and face less punishment if no punishment because they bring a positive economic drive in our economy and if the specific celebrity is bring about content that us viewers indulge in, then it is satisfying our needs allowing us to overlook the main problem in society that a crime is a crime and all members of society, famous or not should have to pay the price.