

My name is Annette and I'm from Perth, Western Australia. Below is my experience, and my statement to Chris, Chris & Pat.

I am lucky enough that my experience didn't result in any physical or sexual abuse, however the behaviour I experienced at a young age in 2005 was predatory, grooming and of a sexual nature that was unwanted and surprising to me, given the bands purported values. It was upsetting and made me disillusioned with the punk music scene that I had grown to love.

I (19/20) first met Justin (30) in 2005 when I saw him randomly in a grocery store down the street from where Anti-Flag / The Lawrence Arms were going to be performing a show beforehand.

After the band finished playing, he sought me out. He spent a few hours chatting to me and it honestly felt like a really genuine friendship connection.

I would also like to note at this point that I have always looked very, very young for my age and was underweight in my teens and early 20's. I did not look like a woman by any means.

He kept saying how cute and beautiful I was and he was also saying "*I just never meet anyone I connect with on tour, this really means a lot to me, it's blowing my mind that we've met*" etc.

Looking back I see how laughable and pathetic it was for him to say that - and maybe for me to believe it. But I did believe him, because the connection we had seemed so genuine and it felt like there was that "spark". He got my email and number and started texting / emailing me that night.

After a seemingly normal start to our emailing / texting, things started to turn sexual from his side. He was asking me for nudes with winky faces in the email, telling me again how amazed he was by our connection, reiterating that he never meets anyone on tour - and that he wanted to come back to Perth after the Australian tour was over to take me to the nudist beach and hug and kiss me, and that he was going to do what he could to make that happen. He was REALLY into the nudist beach idea and kept bringing it up. I tried my best to avoid those topics, didn't send him any photos, and moved the conversation to other things.

In the end he wasn't able to come back to Perth after all and he said he was really disappointed but that he wanted to keep in touch.

When he came back for the Taste of Chaos music festival, he messaged me saying he was going to be in town and did I want to catch up?

I went to pick him up for breakfast from the hotel on the day of the show - and I had my friend who looked EXTREMELY young with me, she regularly got mistaken for a 12-14 year old.

When we got there Justin answered the door shirtless & hungover in just his underwear to me and my friend. My friend and I were both shocked and felt uncomfortable. As an added note, he didn't know I was bringing a friend along with me. I'm not sure what he might have tried if she wasn't there.

We left the hotel without him because the situation felt wrong - 20 minutes later he messaged me saying:

"What was I thinking, I just had two beautiful women in my hotel room, I shouldn't have let you go ;)"

I didn't find him attractive, but I found him very charming, friendly and easy to connect with.

We talked about all kinds of things, from Laguna Beach, to how the singer from a very well known pop punk band was a sleazebag who slept with different women on every stop of the tour and cheated on his wife. To me this behaviour now seems like grooming because it was making him seem "safe" and that he wasn't a person that would ever do that type of thing.

I remember seeing other members of Anti Flag at the time and asking where Justin was, because he had asked my friend and I to bring him some vegan food - they heard us and turned away and ignored us.

At the time it felt hurtful - but in hindsight they weren't turning away from us as people, but I believe distancing

themselves from what they knew to be true.

At the festival, he ended up getting me side of stage for my favourite band - Taking Back Sunday - and then disappearing.

I ended up catching up with him one final time - and I don't fully remember how this happened, but I brought him some vegan chocolate to his hotel room and we just chatted for a bit. I noticed that he was sexting a woman while we were talking as I could see what he was typing on his phone and I pointed it out to him - he was like 'ahhhh that's just a good friend of mine' with a big wink. I remember I was sitting on the bed at that point, and thought it was a good time to leave. I gave him a hug and said bye.

We didn't really keep in touch after that.

What I find ultimately disturbing is that I don't even think he would remember me. He has done this to so many young women, and to me that's terrifying.

And to have it be such a pattern of behaviour in every town, city, show, tour - even myself living almost as far away as you can possibly get, he was doing what he could to entice young women to send sexually explicit photos, and grooming them to have sex with him.

My message to the rest of the band is this:

In my opinion, you guys were frauds, you promoted looking out for one another at your shows and how important it is to help those in positions of limited power, and then went ahead and turned a blind eye against young women, teenagers and girls who may have needed your help at any chance you could get, because admitting to yourselves that your singer was - at the very least - taking advantage of young women, teenagers and girls would have put you in a worse off position and taken away your fame and glamorous touring lifestyle.

This is no different or better than a politician seeking to maintain their power and privilege by actively silencing, or ignoring, marginalised groups.

Your careers are over now, and I know that must be hard to accept. I can only hope that it's even harder to accept that by turning a blind eye, and thus enabling this behaviour over the past 30 years, that you allowed many, many young women to be manipulated, robbed of their innocence, and lose the opportunity to learn what consensual and respectful romantic relationships look like in addition to losing all faith in what often means the most to us - music.

There is a lot of work to be done to combat this in the punk scene and the music industry at large. While one chapter may be ending for you - you now have the opportunity to become genuine advocates for what you always spoke about. Listen to us. Hear us. Believe us. And take **meaningful** action.

- Annette