

It has been many years since he hurt me but it continues to impact my life, especially now that I am reliving it. I am nervous that it will always affect me because my brain was still developing when I knew him. I want to tell my story so that it is not mine anymore. I experienced a lot of shame over the years because of what happened but I now realize that my story was actually his the whole time.

I met him at summer camp when I was a very innocent 15 year old, he was 22, and he got me separate and away from my friends. He gained my trust and already started to cross physical boundaries by being overly affectionate, but nothing sexual happened. I was not used to any of it and I had never been alone around a guy that age before. I had not even kissed anyone yet. I was so trusting because I had been lucky and I had been treated with respect by guys my age. At first, he made me feel seen and understood in a way that was so comforting. I was walking into something I couldn't possibly understand.

My brain still desperately wants to hold on to good memories of that time at camp despite all the bad things that followed and even though I now know that he was grooming me. He continued to build my trust in him by writing me letters, sending me Anti-Flag records and posters, and telling me how much he loved me as I turned 16.

He initiated a physical relationship when I was 16 and he was 23 in the tour van and everything went too fast before I was ready or before I understood what was happening. It was all so new for me. My body froze and it felt wrong but my brain couldn't believe or process that it was happening because I trusted him with my body. He was beloved by my group of friends and he identified as a feminist.

I felt like I was not there. I felt like I did not have agency. He "taught me" things. He told me I was special and that I was an exception because I was younger than him and he did not normally date girls my age. He insisted that I do things that I now understand were degrading. It did not feel good but I did not have the context at that time to understand. He made jokes about taking my virginity and he was happy about it. It felt weird and confusing then but now it makes me sick. Aside from the night we met, my good memories of him are when I was at a safe distance: in a car, at a show, in a restaurant, or with other people around us.

Even back then, he tried to hide me and my age from anyone in his circle. He had me convinced it was because I was special and an "exception" but in retrospect, it was another huge red flag. I believe he wanted to procure me for the long term and that he manipulated me accordingly. I was so young and I was watching carefully. It later became meaningful to me that others who were similarly situated to him were not abusing their power. Sometimes we mean more to one another in life than we are able to know at the time.

Where he should have protected me, he exploited me, all while telling me how much he loved me. It was very confusing then and it still is now. I don't think our brains are able to make sense of "love" (or whatever it was) and abuse. To protect myself, all I wanted to remember was the "love" and that continues to be something I struggle with to this day. To survive and move forward, I tried my best to push down the trauma of the control he had over our sexual relationship and the control he had over my emotions. I have now come to believe that he was coercing and violating other teenage girls at the same time as he was taking advantage of me. That has been a whole new dimension of horror and betrayal to process more recently. So much deception and manipulation. I wish I had known then what a healthy relationship felt like. I eventually confronted him about feeling taken advantage of and about how badly he had treated

me and told him that he needed help. But now seeing a more full scope of what he has done, it was so far beyond me.

After our relationship ended, I had to watch him live out his dreams while I fell into a very deep depression because of all that he had taken from me. I spent years of my life trying to rebuild a healthy sense of self-worth. Maybe I still am. I feel like I personally experienced gender inequality because of the actions of this person who promised me- and us all- that he stood for something better. I am quoted in the Rolling Stone article as saying I was “thrown to the side of the road” and that is exactly how I felt: my body in a ditch, trying to figure out how to climb out, while he toured the world becoming more and more popular with so many fans who looked up to him. Meanwhile, it is still too emotionally painful for me to contemplate who I might be and what my life might look like if Justin had actually been the person he promised me that he was.

I still don't know how but somehow over the years, I learned to look away from anything he was doing publicly. It was too painful to see any of it. It was easier to try to push it all down and try to forget it all or to do mental gymnastics to rationalize it to myself. But it was always with me.

I was always waiting for someone to speak up about who he really was while at the same time hoping that somehow he had become a better person over the years. There are no words to describe the pain I felt when I heard Kristina's story and then saw so many other stories pop up online, some to eventually be included in the Rolling Stone article. I have cried everyday since July 19. First for Kristina, then for the other survivors, and then because I wish I had been emotionally capable of saying something earlier because I had often considered it. Lately I also cry for my young self, who was silly and shy and loved the Clash.

To my fellow survivors: we fought through extreme fear, anxiety, and trauma and we relived some of our worst memories and most personal moments to tell the truth about a public figure more powerful than us. We are the real thing. We are punk rock.

Thank you to everyone who believes and supports survivors.

And to Justin Geever: Fuck you.

- Olivia (“Karina”), survivor of Justin Geever