

TRANSADVOCATE

Kelly Osbourne, Angie Zapata, and Why Words Matter

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Abstract

Yesterday I wrote a post about Kelly Osbourne's transphobic rant in the Glamour UK. There were many attacks on my character by the Kelly Osbourne Twitter Army, but one tweet questioned my use of Angie Zapata in criticizing Kelly. I told Osbourne that: @MissKellyO R U denying U used "chick w/ a dick" or tranny? [...]

Article

Yesterday I wrote a post about Kelly Osbourne's transphobic rant in the Glamour UK. There were many attacks on my character by the Kelly Osbourne Twitter Army, but one tweet questioned my use of Angie Zapata in criticizing Kelly. I told Osbourne that:

@MissKellyO R U denying U used "chick w/ a dick" or tranny? Do U know how awful ths words R & how they dehumanize us to the point of death? The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO and you should learn to apologize when you say dehumanizing things that kill people. Your hateful words have wings. The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO People die because people talk like you did of us. You should learn what being an ally is. Seriously. The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO think abt ths. Angie Zapata's killer referred 2 her as a thing & was shocked when he was convicted. Words have impact. The Transadvocate

@RiotDollie I wasn't trying to humiliate @MissKellyO at all. Simply trying to point out to her that her words contribute to the harm of us The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO I wasn't comparing you to that. I'm saying that his words about Angie are caused by the dehumanization of trans people. The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO it's why words are so powerful. They have the ability to effect people's motivations and actions. The Transadvocate

@MissKellyO that's essentially wht I'm saying 2 U. I dont mean 2 harm U. But regardless of how U said it, yr words R harming trans people. The Transadvocate

My mention of Angie Zapata triggered this response:

@transadvocate using Angie Zapata's death to promote your agenda is no different than Israel Luna using it in the movie trailer for TOTWK QueenzofMedia

@transadvocate ABSOLUTELY unreal that you would link this to the killing of people..UNREAL. you should be ashamed. QueenzofMedia

It wasn't on a whim that I mentioned Zapata. She was on my mind front and center. Angie Zapata was an eighteen year old trans woman that was brutally beaten to death by Allen Ray Andrade. When he was arrested Andrade said he killed "it".

Andrade told a Greeley police detective that he thought he "killed it," referring to his alleged victim, a police affidavit said. - Denver Post

During the trial he said:

"It's not like I just went up to a school teacher and shot her in the head, you know what I mean? It's not like I went up to a law-abiding straight citizen."

A witness for the prosecution said of Andrade:

"The defendant's use of the word 'it' to refer to the victim exemplified what we already know about hate crimes. He saw Angie Zapata as expendable, and he believed that she deserved to die," said Crystal Middlestadt, director of training and education at the Colorado Anti-Violence Program.
The Examiner

I'm not comparing what Andrade did to what Osbourne said. That would be absurd. But her bigoted language does contribute to a society that sees trans people as less than human. It may be a drop in the bucket, but it does matter. The bigotry that Andrade expressed is a bucket full of those drops. Osbourne's words do contribute to the ongoing dehumanization of trans people.

Her "chick with a dick" comment is highly offensive to the majority of trans women. It's a term that is used in pornography and is closely related to she-male. GLAAD called the New York Post's use of she-male as "a dehumanizing slur." The phrase "chick with a dick" and she-male were given birth mostly in the porn industry.

While Osbourne has apologized for the incident on Twitter, she has yet to make a public statement to the press. The press that is running story after story (1,2,3,4,5,6, and many more) of Osbourne's offensive words but absolutely nothing about her apology. Until she apologizes publicly, her bigotry will continue to fan the flames of hatred. And many of her fans will see trans people as things to be mocked and be humiliated by. If she wants to be called an ally of the trans community, she needs to act like one. And she needs to understand one thing...

words do matter.

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