

Statement from Jane Doe 2

From Jane Doe 2 (November, 2021):

It's been sixteen years. Sixteen years of keeping the shame hidden with its ache always present. Sixteen years of believing nobody cared. Sixteen years of managing pain in silence.

The events of this past year have shown me that many do care, and can be trusted – trusted with truth, and trusted with human hearts. While others, those with the power and responsibility to create change, cannot. My heart continues to break as I hear the painful stories of fellow survivors. The ways Liberty has failed to appropriately respond to the victims of sexual assault and harassment is wrong. The way it has persistently remained passive at best, obstructive at worst in discovery of truth, is wrong. I am determined now more than ever to see accountability and justice for how we survivors have systematically been shamed, re-victimized, and silenced.

I am relieved for the proposed campus safety measures but frustrated with an administration that continues to lack transparency, accountability, and ownership as it tirelessly passes blame. Let us not name call boxes and security cameras godly sorrow or confuse image management with repentance. I asked that those call boxes and cameras be installed sixteen years ago, following my on-campus attack and rape. I was told there were other priorities.

In an organization that lacks internal accountability for its abuses, it requires us survivors and advocates to go to great lengths to be heard. It requires us to do the unimaginable in reliving our pain. It requires us to find courage to speak about past and present failures of this administration, when we were pressed into silence. It requires us to become our own rescue from the very ones positioned to protect us, but instead buried us. We must continue to push for transparency and justice regarding our experiences. But even more than that, there are others that need protection now. I found the courage to share my story because I knew I was not alone. I was not alone in being continually shoved aside and re-traumatized at the hands of Liberty administration and staff. Others need protection today. And we will use our voices to that end. We are done being silenced, blamed, and discarded.

The last thing I was told by a top tier Liberty administrator regarding my assault before I finally chose to transfer, was that Liberty University was the safest school on the east coast, no changes to improve campus safety were going to be made, and if I didn't like it, I could leave. I was told that Liberty was not going to have students like myself trying to "run the administration". Instead of seeing my pleas for help as an opportunity to improve what was clearly broken, they saw them as a threat to public perception – to the brand. They saw their image as the most precious thing to be guarded, not the students they were entrusted with. I was welcome to stay if I stayed silent. So, I left.

Having heard similar testimonies of fellow survivors, it's clear that Liberty has continued to invest itself in silencing victims. The profound lack of humility in this university's response to the articles, podcasts, public outcry, and calls to action regarding its abuses of Title IX and

response to sexual assaults, leadership mishandlings, and silencing of victims has spoken loud and clear. This is the same Liberty that I left sixteen years ago, dejected and without hope. Yet today I have hope. And I hope and pray that current students will continue to apply pressure, as systemic problems like these don't resolve easily, and without a fight. You're doing what my roommate and I could not do alone, sixteen years ago.

Today, I publicly call on you, Liberty administration and board, to show authentic care and concern for sexual assault survivors mishandled in your care, and concern for your present and future student body, through meaningful action. The opportunity to make things right remains with you; not only to create policies, but to self-reflect on your own contributions to the university's persistent abuses of power, to make necessary personnel changes, and to invoke proper checks and balances for the sake of internal accountability. In the name of transparency and restitution, I urge you to invite a third-party investigation into the full systemic culture of abuse including but not limited to silencing and re-victimization, reported Title IX abuses and those that remain hidden.

How can you teach your student body to be a light to the world within and beyond your walls, yet continue to harbor darkness? In the words of Jesus Christ, the truth shall set you free.