



FIERCE



ORIGIN

*From Creator
Anthony Preston*

"My sophomore year of college, I was brutally, sexually assaulted by a campus police officer.

Despite the obvious trauma, the most difficult part was that I didn't feel I could tell anyone what happened because of my secret - the secret I guarded above all else. I was terrified to disclose the attack because, while being assaulted, I was threatened with the impossible - imagine reality that my proud Omega Psi Phi father would learn his first-born and namesake was gay. And, because I suppressed the trauma of the rape, my life spiraled out of control. Despite my best efforts, my parents would find out soon thereafter.

Typically them, the "Good reverend and First Lady" quickly determined a course of action: they made plans to bring me home and 'fix' me. Unbeknownst to me at the time, this meant that I would be going to a conversion therapy-based treatment using shock therapy and testosterone injections. But, the universe had another plan for me.

The night before my departure, I randomly met a black, trans woman who saved me from myself. I told her my story and she instantly took me to her home after tearing up that bus ticket and I would stay with her for the next few years. From Chicago, this woman was worldly (especially compared to my Southern self having grown up in a small town in East Texas). She knew how to get through life and how to make things happen. She could feed 10 people on 2 bucks. She always found the rent... it was only \$423 back then, but it was hard to come up with for some reason. She kept me out of the clubs and focused on being productive. And, most importantly, she also taught me several life hacks that I later needed to navigate a career in the music industry as a gay, black man during a time where it wasn't "cool" (and, thus enabling me to have some semblance of success).

I don't know where I would be today if I had not met her that one evening outside of a random nightclub.

Fast forward to the present and to the current moment, when trans women of color are still consistently murdered and otherwise violently victimized. Trans women of color are the most subjugated group within the LGBTQIA+ community accounting for over 95% of the communities violence and the most underesourced with trans-related issues "at large" only receiving 4 cents of every \$100 raised within the movement (and, that's BEFORE you factor in systemic racism).

Then I watched the news every day while the Trump administration continued to impose legal restrictions that alienated the LGBTQIA+ community and further marginalized this specific subgroup within our community.

So, I decided I wanted to do something.

The story resonated with me on some level: while I'm grateful for my success, I was still being bullied by the same kids who bullied me in school (we're just all adults now and they can't be openly bigoted... like racism), but I also knew that I was very talented. So, instead of focusing on how I have been forced to climb over fences that were too tall or break through doors that were too thick, I realized that I could use

my gifts to help this group of people within the LGBTQIA+ community who, in some ways, are even worse off than I. With the support of my production partner, Andre Lindal, I founded The FIERCE Project.

WHAT DOES THIS PROJECT MEAN TO ME? More than anything, The FIERCE Project is an opportunity to educate and to inform by merging pop culture and social justice in an easily digestible manner using one of my favorite (and, probably the best) medium: MUSIC! Thankfully, I earned the support of the Rockefeller family thru their Pop Culture Collaborative. They saw my vision early on giving us the seed money and the support we needed to make the project happen. It's been an amazing experience because it has allowed me to learn how to do good with my work, my talent and my art. There's this narrative that says you can't raise money and make money. That's cool, but the reality is there is opportunity for everyone to create a better world through whatever their gifts are. I get to recognize my own privilege despite the oppressions I face in the world. Does everyone have problems? Sure. Everyone does have problems within the universal condition of humanity, but the reality is that we oppress one another in a way that adds to those universal problems. Some of us aren't playing on a level playing field. I want to take that concept and flip it.

This project shows that none of us are too bad off not to think about others who are even more affected by social ills. In this case, black trans women.

I'm extremely grateful to have the incredible house music legend that is Ultra Nate on this project: her being involved shows the unification between trans and cis women in this fight (which, frankly, is specifically targets a message to black, cisgender, heterosexual identifying men - most often the perpetrators of these crimes and usually killing someone so their attraction and, often times, love for these women remains a secret). And Angelica Ross come aboard and help drive this initiative."



WHY THE FIERCE PROJECT? The mission of The FIERCE Project is to raise funds and awareness to help bring an end to the epidemic-level violence against the trans community, with the understanding that trans women of color bear the brunt of this hate.

WHAT IS THE FIERCE PROJECT? The FIERCE Project educates and informs by merging pop culture and social justice into an easily digestible manner. Music and entertainment, especially in the digital era, provide a powerful platform to connect and to inspire the world, and The FIERCE Project capitalizes on this opportunity through the poignant anthem entitled Fierce: which aims to "enlighten, educate, and celebrate the trans community through song". As the song aptly states, "music is a judgment-free zone", where "love conquers all". To that end, The FIERCE Project is all-inclusive and invites everyone without regard to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion or otherwise, to be free to be their FIERCEST selves (like Vogue did years ago). A portion of the proceeds from "FIERCE" will be gifted to the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, The Marsha P. Johnson Institute, and GLAAD's Transgender Media Program.

WHO IS THE FIERCE PROJECT? The FIERCE Project was founded by myself, Anthony Preston, with the support of my production partner Andre Lindal. Together, we are A2 Productions, a producing powerhouse with decades of experience, who have worked with some of the best talent in music including Britney Spears, JLo, JHud, Justin Bieber and more. The duo began writing "FIERCE" with Kee Ingrassio, and then later collaborated with their mentee Henrik Ofeldt on the production side. Little did they know this would be the beginning of a 7-year journey culminating in the creation of this awe-inspiring pop anthem.

"FIERCE" blends the vocals of singer-songwriter Ultra Naté, Pose/American Horror Story actress Angelica Ross, and New York pop star and "artist" Milla Jam, unifying trans and cis women in this fight. We are stronger together and you "better run" because you cannot make us hide... we are all FIERCE.

CALL TO ACTION
#WEAREFIERCE

The FIERCE Project is a judgment-free zone, empowering each and every person (especially trans women of color) to be legendary, necessary, extraordinary and most of all, FIERCE.

www.a2prod.com/fierce