Good afternoon, my name is BeLinda Berry, and I am a victim of Revenge Porn. Saying that hasn’t become any less weird to admit in a room full of near strangers. In September, 2017 I got a message I never anticipated from Katelyn, my now partner and cofounder of BADASS, whose story you heard/will hear today. My images were from a photoshoot I had done with a local and well respected photographer; no lover, no ex, or friend is responsible for the sharing of my pictures. A stranger was able to access them, and change my life forever. They took my art, took a moment of my feeling exposed, and proud, and brave and put them on the internet to try to shame me, to share that intimate moment in a way that betrays its meaning.

Despite the work I have been doing alongside BADASS since my first exposure this is still a hard conversation to have. I have had to confess to family, friends, my partner and coworkers that this is something that happened to me; but because of the nature of Revenge Porn, this could impact them too. Since September, I have had my pictures re-uploaded to one of these websites a total of 5 times (that we know of). I can usually tell when they resurface as I begin experiencing a flood of friend requests from random men in the area. Image-based violence does not happen in a bubble; the issue is bigger than some nudes on the internet, it has real-life consequences for those being posted. It is not harmless.

Many of us have experienced the dehumanizing effect of having our images shared, and then the flood of judgements where people say to us “Well what did you expect” where people try to paint us with a broad stroke and assume the type of person we must be, but as you’ll see today, we come from all walks of life.

But I have to say, while some of our stories are similar, there is no one story that properly conveys the depth of the problem.

We are more than just the nude images on the internet, we did not deserve this, and we still deserve respect. Without laws in place to protect us, we are at risk of being victimized over and over again without the ability to defend ourselves. This will never be a fair fight, but we still deserve a fighting chance. Thank you for your time.