

President Donald Trump,

My name is Erin Zerbe, and I'm a 33-year-old Assistant Professor of Art in Adrian, Michigan. As you assume the most powerful and important position in our nation, perhaps even the world, I wanted to send a gift to you along with some words of advice from the perspective of a young woman in this great nation of ours.

Enclosed is a copy of my handmade mini comic called Grab Back. This origami folded single page comic is about the first time I was sexually assaulted at the age of 12...and subsequently about my response to your vile comments on women and your election to the presidency. Please understand, this comic and this letter are in no way intended as an attack on you. Rather, I'm hoping for a moment of honest, sincere conversation about sexual assault in this country, and how in many ways you have contributed to the rape culture that permeates all facets of our lives. I would love an opportunity to discuss this with you. I feel that now, more than ever you are complicit in the constantly evolving hostility towards women and I want you to take a moment to consider what life is like for someone on the other side.

Your position, wealth, fame, race, and gender afford you a level of comfort and safety many of us will never know. I hope you never have to experience the fear associated with being violated sexually. I hope you never have the vivid nightmares that are so real you wake up in a cold sweat, wanting to vomit. I hope you never look at yourself in the mirror and ask "why did this happen to me? What did I do wrong...?" I hope you and no one you love ever spends years of their life equating their self-worth with their sexual appeal. I hope that they never have a full-blown panic attack in the middle of dinner because someone walked in the restaurant that looked like their attacker. I hope you and no one you love ever goes through the truly humiliating process of having to explain your intimacy issues to a new lover or partner. I hope you never have to experience these things, but I DO hope you take the time to consider how many women in this country feel these things or experience these things on a daily basis.

Look I get it, perhaps you truly do not believe your words and actions against the bodies of women have that deep an impact. But I am here to tell you that they do. The things you say and do impact the lives of so many others; and that is amplified now that you hold our highest office. You have an opportunity to

change the course of this nation. You say you want to "Make America Great Again", so I'm challenging you to do it. Wouldn't it be great if women were treated as equals? With the respect they deserve as HUMAN BEINGS, not just objects of sexual desire? Wouldn't it be great if we didn't have to side-eye every group of men we walk past, for fear of being the next statistic? Wouldn't it be great if we didn't have to guard our drinks, hold our keys between our fingers, monitor what we wear, how much we drink, who we go out with for fear of being raped? You want to make this country great...but I wonder who you want it to be great FOR? Don't forget about us. Half of your constituents are women. And 1 in 4 will be a victim of sexual assault. 1 in 4. Imagine 4 women in your life that you love...at least ONE of them has been sexually abused or raped. That is unacceptable.

I don't want to spend the next four years hating you. I don't want hate in my heart or in my life. I have worked hard to overcome the emotional and psychological affects of my assault and the rape and abuse that followed. I am finally learning to be okay. I spent the last few weeks sick to my stomach at the thought of seeing you on the news, hearing you address the nation. I don't want to feel that way.

I want you to prove me wrong. I want you to respond to this message and open a dialogue about sexual assault. I want you to convince me you are worthy of the office you currently hold. Change my mind, and I will gladly admit I was wrong and support you as our president. I'm asking you to be a human being, to show and share some compassion; to have a conversation. I hope you will respond. I can be reached at:

[REDACTED]

Good luck in office sir. Sincerely one "Nasty Woman",

Erin Zerbe