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Daily OPINION

Stop engaging with campus preachers — they're using you

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Last Tuesday, an Instagram influencer by the name of Sister Cindy parked herself on Fairfield Way just outside the library and proudly began to preach about chastity. "HONOMO" is her slogan, and it means exactly what you think: No more hos, college students or otherwise. Employing three other "former hos" and a guitar, she sang an arrangement of remixed melodies warning against premarital sex and advising celibacy. By the end of her four-hour gathering, she'd cultivated a crowd of over a hundred students.



ILLUSTRATION BY SETH WALLEN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Likely, none of these students were there to support her. Campus preachers like Sister Cindy — influencers that loiter in populated areas of campus looking to preach or debate random controversial issues — attract students not because people support their dramatized, often absurd ideologies, but because people laugh at them. Objectively, Sister Cindy's "HONOMO" slogan is hilarious, as are her anecdotes about the "ho chain" and brutal honesty regarding her intimacy with her late husband. She is a decent performer that knows how to work a crowd, if nothing else. Like a trainwreck, it's hard to look away.

It's important to remember, though, that Sister Cindy is serious. She really believes in "HONOMO" and purity culture. Other campus preachers that specialize in nonsensical political debate are serious about wanting same-sex marriage to be repealed. And regardless of whether you personally are taking them seriously, the effect is the same: They're given a platform to continue spreading hate.

I'm not surprised people continue to show up to these "events." They're funny. You get to feel like a better person for not supporting whatever's being preached and it's a bonus that you get to personally ridicule the person preaching; It's one big inside joke. Except, it's not really "inside" at all — Sister Cindy knows that you don't actually agree with "breaking the ho chain." She knows you're making fun of her. But she is appreciative of that negative attention because all press is good press for campus preachers. They gain notoriety from just your presence and this allows them to fund the rest of their "tours." People find the concept of seeing a viral Instagram lolcow (someone, typically a content creator, whose behavior is mocked, despite them not trying to be funny) with their own eyes too enticing to pass up and the cycle repeats. Despite knowing their intention was to mock, I was irritated seeing so many people interact with Sister Cindy. These hundred students weren't just listening and quietly disapproving — many were actively engaging with her: singing along to her remixes, reciting her teachings and "agreeing" with her about the dangers of promiscuity. The crowd would collectively gasp or groan when she said something ridiculous about the "ho chain"; there were people literally seated in front of her, eagerly answering questions in order to collect a "HONOMO" novelty pin. Meanwhile, next door (as in, across the road), the fraternity Beta Theta Pi was hosting a philanthropic event with NMPD, the National Marrow Donor Program, asking for donations to save children dying of blood cancer. I think they had an impossible time trying to draw people away from the "HONOMO" musical gathering.

People do the same with campus preachers who come to debate, jumping at the chance to get a clip of the debater being "owned," even when the argument is irrational. In some ways, platforming these people can be beneficial; Attention is drawn to needed conversations and because a campus preacher is something of a laughingstock, people automatically disagree with them. Some will even go out of their way to research an issue just to prove them wrong. But what about the people who first learn a perspective through a campus preacher's words and silently agree? What about the future campus preachers who see their success and follow in their footsteps?

Collectively, we need to stop interacting with these people. It's hard, I know — they're funny, and in a town as boring as Storrs, we need bizarre people to liven things up. But even mock support counts as real support for them; as their audience grows, they're enabled to keep traveling around the country spreading hateful racist, homophobic, xenophobic, puritanical ideology. You may think they're harmless, and no one in their right mind would listen to them, but they're targeting college campuses for a reason: young people are impressionable.

So, in hopes of making an impression, I ask you to stop giving these people views. Even if you just show up and listen, you risk giving them a bigger platform than they deserve. Find an influencer worth your time. Sister Cindy isn't a messiah — she's just some bigoted older person.

36 hours without sleep and a blood clot, Doc's orders: PLAY FOOTBALL

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When one is sick, they stay home. When one is injured, they go to the hospital. When one has a blood clot and over 24 hours of no sleep, they suit up to play football.

Jalen Hurts' season, and possibly his career, is over because the National Football League and the Philadelphia Eagles Organization didn't care. They let him suit up to play even if it could have killed him.

ESPN reported on Tuesday that Hurts would be done for the season after doctors discovered bilateral pulmonary emboli, blood clots in both lungs. When the first blood clot was found while the team was in London, he was told to stay awake as a precaution by doctors. He had been awake for nearly 36 hours when he took the field on Oct. 11. In what world does a team have a hospitalized, sleep-deprived player cleared by medical staff to suit up for a game?

The NFL and the Eagles Organization's practices need to be investigated. Both could have stepped in at any time and benched Jalen Hurts. They decided that they would rather lead him to the slaughterhouse than sit him. The Eagles only had a MRI preformed after they flew to London, nearly two days after Hurts sought treatment for his calf. They decided that the diagnosis of deep vein thrombosis was just a scratch, so, he could go out on the field to get thrown around and tackled, and everything would be fine.

The NFL isn't off the hook either. The Eagles put Hurts on the injury list going into the game on Sunday but they didn't think to keep an eye out as this player is going overseas to play. They played with a human's life and livelihood.

The talking heads are also to blame. All they do is bring up takes about players that are out of line. The most recent egregious take about Jalen Hurts' injury came from former player turned analyst Micheal Robinson.

"If I'm Jalen Hurts, or anybody in Jalen Hurts' camp, I'm saying, 'Well if everybody's hurt, I'm hurt too,'" Robinson said on "NFL Gameday Kickoff" Thursday. While he apologized Monday evening, what kind of mindset does it take to make a statement dismissing blood clots when we all have seen the damage they cause? Across professional sports we have seen long recoveries, players returning changed and, worse, careers ended. Chris Bosh is a prime example of a career cut short by blood clots.

Some might ask why couldn't Jalen sit himself out. To that, I say: Because the NFL media would have a field day. Talking heads could say, "Josh Allen doesn't sit out" or "I miss when real men played the sport." Hurts is constantly berated and has his entire game put under a microscope. The NFL fuels this sense of not belonging. Hurts has been to two Super Bowls in his starting career. When he wins, it's because of a "super team"; when he loses, it is because of him.

Philadelphia is a passionate city when it comes to sports. These are the same fans that threw snowballs at Santa, but don't be mistaken; Philly fans do not play when it comes to quarterbacks and injuries. I remember Carson Wentz, who was never really the same after his ACL tear. Now, I hope that even if Jalen Hurts never takes the field in midnight green again, he will always hold a special place in Philly. As for the front office, I want a clean house of the medical staff. Also, Head Coach Nick Sirianni should be in hot water because either he knew Hurts had been awake 36 hours and didn't care or he didn't check on his QB1. I hope the NFL takes a long hard look and changes everything that went wrong in this situation. For a league constantly under fire for player health, this becomes another example of a preventable injury — Another name on the list of injuries because the NFL and Eagles' Front Office were focused on product, not players.

When I say, "GO BIRDS," it is not for the front office. It is for players like Hurts, who win humbly, lose graciously, know how to say the right things and play their heart out.