



## Ending Victimisation by #ShoutingBack

In case you've been hidden away, Caroline Criado-Perez of [The Women's Room](#), started a petition and a fund raiser to get the Bank of England (BoE) to Keep a Woman on English Banknotes. Ms Criado-Perez would have taken the BoE to court to enforce their duty under the Equality Act 2010. As it happened, she didn't need to, as they had Jane Austen 'waiting in the wings'. It has certainly opened a can of worms! As a result of this, [Twitter](#) has been rife with misogynistic slurs, rape threats and the inevitable sexist comments about sandwich-making. Hilarious, lads. Like it probably stated on your school report – must try harder.

Lots of commenters have suggested 'don't feed the trolls'. Somehow within all this, trolling – which can be very funny, see [this example](#) about #racistvan – has been [confused](#) with abuse. Being threatened with rape is not trolling. A tweeter threatening to cut off your head is not, under any circumstances, funny.

Why not? Isn't it just 'banter'?

One of the many reasons that these comments aren't funny is that they actually happen to women.

Most women risk assess to a level that men would never consider. We check behind us when we are walking [home](#), we check in the back of our car before we get into it, we are hyper vigilant when we are walking alone, we risk being killed by our partner or ex partner at the rate of [2 per week](#). Many of us will suffer domestic and sexual violence and abuse at the hands of men.

These men – and they are usually men – who threaten women with violence and abuse have no idea of the levels of [risk management](#) that women take. And we have no idea whether they are a rapist, or an abuser – nor whether they may seek us out in 'real life'.

So what do we do about this?

We are supporting #ShoutingBack, because suggesting that we ignore online abuse is victim blaming. It is victim blaming because it tells women to change their behaviour to avoid abuse.

It tells women to shut up, stop talking, stop demanding equality, stop campaigning for the increased visibility of women's achievements, stop talking about men's violence against women. It tells women that we don't want hear about abuse, we want to ignore it and hope it goes away. It does not tell abusers to stop, nor to take responsibility for their actions.

One of the important features of [our campaign](#) is giving survivors the opportunity to shout back.

It may not be to their abuser, but it is shouting to other survivors and supporters, safely and confidentially. It allows survivors to be heard, and to be believed. It gives those who have experienced abuse an opportunity to share their experiences with others, and to know that we are not going to suggest that a survivor could have avoided abuse by questioning: how you



behaved; what you said; what you wore. We believe you, and we know the fault for the abuse is with the abuser who made the choice to behave abusively.

We've been described as one of the [Three Modern Heroines of Third Wave Feminism](#), alongside Caroline Criado-Perez and Laura Bates of the [Everyday Sexism Project](#). We are flattered to be in such illustrious company!

Our campaign has been set up to challenge the culture of institutional disbelief associated with domestic and sexual violence and abuse.

To achieve our aim, we need our voices to be heard.

We need to challenge those who tell us to 'ignore' the online abuse we receive.

We wouldn't tell someone who had experienced domestic or sexual abuse to 'ignore' it. We would listen to them, hear them, support them.

#ShoutingBack is about women's voices being heard, which is why we won't be boycotting Twitter on August 4.

[We](#) will be loudly, and proudly, shouting back.

This post was first published [here](#).