

A statement regarding the call to boycott Elsewhere:

Content warning: sexual violence, impunity, ignoring survivors, perpetuating rape culture

On 4/26 we issued a call for allies of rape survivors to boycott **Elsewhere**, a popular nightclub in Bushwick, Brooklyn. Since 2017, Elsewhere has been aware that one of their investors is a serial rapist. Over the past two years, management received several messages which detailed his actions and use of date-rape drugs, to which the club never once responded.

What might a call for justice look like in a world where both interpersonal and legal processes of accountability again and again fail survivors? What happens when a known abuser's investments sit in a space used by our community? We issued the call to move our collective talent and dancing from Elsewhere to somewhere else until the club verifies with concerned community members that it has broken ties with the abuser and that he no longer has financial assets invested in the space.

On 4/17, an employee of Elsewhere (who made it clear that they did not officially represent the venue) admitted that the investor was still involved and fighting to keep his investments in the space with a "if I'm going down, you're going down with me" mentality. Nine days later, only hours after our first public action, Elsewhere released a statement claiming to have "recently" cut financial ties with the abuser. Their statement also claims he has never profited from his investments in the space (presumably this is because the club, which opened in 2016 after a 3 million dollar renovation, is still a couple of years from turning a profit). While this information is welcomed, we still have unanswered questions:

What is the timeline of Elsewhere's engagement with the investor in question? Why hasn't Elsewhere been willing to confirm the details of the alleged termination? If Elsewhere felt legally protected to make a public statement, what excuse do they have for failing to communicate this information (or any information over the past two years) to survivors directly?

What work has Elsewhere done to inform its partners/collaborators/event organizers/musicians about this problem since its knowledge of it in December 2017? How can Elsewhere ensure to us/our community that this investor is not profiting off queer and poc safe spaces? How does Elsewhere reconcile its definition of a safe space with the fact that a known abuser is/was financially involved with the club? What commitment does Elsewhere have to the queer and poc communities beyond hosting events from which it profits?

How can Elsewhere open up a dialogue with the community? How does the management of Elsewhere envision a protocol being established for this kind of accountability process? What would it do differently, were this to come up again?

This call to action is about more than one nightclub and one rapist. Collectively, we can make decisions about where to assemble, buy drinks, dance, and perform. These decisions affect the lives and safety of survivors and the bank accounts of investors. Community wealth should empower and protect the assets of people who are invested in our community's well being. **We encourage all nightclubs to develop a respectful protocol —with engagement and input from the communities they claim to serve— for how to engage with people who have been harmed by abusers invested in their spaces.**

Elsewhere claims to have “respect for all people and art, and a desire to support and grow the community that makes it possible.” But this has not held true: one month after we issued the call, Elsewhere continues to ignore our messages via email and social media. We want transparency from Elsewhere. Until the club's leadership decides to engage in an accountability meeting with us, to share proof of their claims made on 4/26 and to apologize for ignoring survivors, we invite all artists, DJs, performers, party promoters, and dancers to continue to **#DanceAnywhereElse**

Signed,
A Coalition of Concerned Allies
ConcernedAllies@gmail.com
6/6/19

Ps. If you are a band/musician/performer/booker/manager and need resources for how to form part of this action, we have created a [template](#) that can be copy-pasted in an email to pull out of Elsewhere and let the management know that you are aligning yourself with this demand for transparency.

Non-performer allies: The best way to help is to spread the word! Tell your friends, share this link bitly.com/boycottelsewhere, message Elsewhere to demand transparency, write a review on FB or Yelp, and boycott until they meet with the survivors.

AN UPDATE (6/16)

With the solidarity of several [bands](#) who have either pulled out of their shows or demonstrated their support in other ways, in addition to the persistence of survivors and their allies, the club finally released a statement 6/15 saying that it would meet the central demand of the boycott and sit down with survivors and their allies. While this is welcomed news, we still need to continue pressuring the club for continued transparency and accountability in this process, for which we could use your help. In the club's public communications ([here](#) and [here](#)) released since our 6/6 statement and actions, the club continues to perpetuate several misleading,

distracting or false claims (labeled by them as “facts”), corrected here (updated on 6/17 for clarity):

1. Elsewhere refers to our survivors as a singular “victim” and suggests they seek legal services when our call is explicitly for community justice alternatives. This is disrespectful and dismissive of our [statement](#), published on 6/6. Not only are there multiple survivors, but one of these incidents happened in July of 2017, only months before the club opened, while the statement issued by Elsewhere claims that all incidents happened years before the club opened.
2. We are not “a few individuals” who care about this issue. Our statement has been supported and shared by an uncountable number of allies over 1500 times (more if we include sharing on Instagram stories). Several bands have pulled out of the venue and many others have expressed support in other ways. Please see the following [playlist](#) including all of these concerned allies and community members within the music industry.
3. There have been women who have come forward since our e-blasts with stories about their own sexual harassment and assaults at the Elsewhere venue. While our original call for boycott was about the investor and not these stories, we find it revealing that our call for boycott and communications would prompt the sharing of these stories.
4. Elsewhere claims to have put a mutual contact in touch with one of the survivors. However, she was the one who reached out to this contact, who insisted in his communications that his reason for talking to her was because he was “concerned” and that he did not represent the venue.

Given that the management has agreed to a meeting, we are not urging bands to pull out of their shows, however we would appreciate you putting continued pressure on the club for accountability and transparency in this next phase of our organizing. We have felt gaslit, ignored, and slighted in this process due to the communications (or lack thereof) by Elsewhere, and hope that this does not continue.

Measures of solidarity include: 1) contacting the club letting them know you are aware of this issue, stand in solidarity with survivors and hope for accountability and transparency in the meetings, 2) contacting survivors directly (concernedallies@gmail.com) to let us know of your support, and want to be included in our network of allies & [playlist](#), 3) sharing this information on your social media to inform your fan base about this community organizing process.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and if you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact us at concernedallies@gmail.com.

Signed,
A Coalition of Concerned Allies
ConcernedAllies@gmail.com

6/16/19

AN UPDATE (8/29)

Stalled Accountability Process: Elsewhere avoids meeting with CCA

To allies and the music community,

We want to thank those of you who have supported the [call to boycott](#) Elsewhere by the Coalition of Concerned Allies. Due to your active support in the boycott, we were able to enter an accountability process with Elsewhere, facilitated by the New York Peace Institute (NYPI), in June 2019 ([you can find a complete timeline of the actions here](#)). To be transparent and accountable to you, we want to update you with the status of our process with Elsewhere.

Elsewhere made contact with the NYPI in June after establishing our mutual desire for a restorative justice framework, and we agreed to a process with one of their facilitators. After several meetings with the NYPI, we negotiated a date with Elsewhere and expected to meet with the leadership today, Thursday, August 29. We are writing this from a conference room, where Elsewhere did not shown up to meet us.

We began this week in full faith that the meeting would take place as planned. However, starting Monday (8/26) we began to receive confusing phone calls from the facilitator relaying Elsewhere's new conditions of the planned meeting. Below details the new information that we received this week:

1. 8/26: On Monday we found out from the facilitator that Elsewhere needed to discuss the non-financial impacts of our boycott. While we were not against hearing these, we asked for an outline of what Elsewhere planned to bring up, given that we provided a bulleted list on August 5th of the harms we experienced and would address. We never received Elsewhere's outline.
2. 8/28: Elsewhere added that they would not proceed with the meeting without the full names of participants from the CCA, even though we provided first names.
3. 8/28: We received news from the facilitator that Elsewhere wanted to limit the number of participants from the Coalition at the meeting. Elsewhere said they must meet with only four members of our core coalition, demanding us to cut out three members from the process--despite their involvement from the beginning.
4. 8/28: New York Peace Institute cancelled our meeting due to failure to reach mutual conditions. We responded back to Elsewhere reiterating our willingness to meet and providing an alternative meeting place for the agreed upon time.
5. 8/29: Elsewhere added that they must have a lawyer to review confidentiality agreements before the meeting, and requires more time to do this. It was Elsewhere's responsibility to prepare for this meeting well in advance, as we have done.

6. 8/29: Elsewhere did not show up to our alternative meeting space and refused to communicate with us directly going forward.

We have done extensive prep work for this meeting and have not changed our conditions or expectations since we first established contact with Elsewhere. We have abided by NYPI's terms and followed their recommendations. Furthermore, we have not engaged in public communication or direct action since Elsewhere communicated with us, out of respect for and engagement with the accountability process. We consider Elsewhere's lack of preparation and communication as an intentional move to stall this process. Our boycott is still on until Elsewhere addresses the harm they have caused and provides proof of the investor's non-involvement.

In solidarity,
CCA (Coalition of Concerned Allies)
8/29/19

Sign the petition here:

<https://www.change.org/p/elsewhere-accountability-for-elsewhere-bk>