

**APR 28 to MAY 13, 2017**



**CSULB THEATRE ARTS**

# **GOOD BOYS AND TRUE**

By

**Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa**



**DIRECTED BY  
HUGH O'GORMAN**

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# CHARACTER BREAKDOWN



WES MATHISON

## **BRANDON HARDY**

Brandon Hardy is a senior at St. Joseph's Prep and captain of the football team. He lives a privileged life which is threatened after a sex tape is found on campus.

## **ELIZABETH HARDY**

Elizabeth Hardy is Brandon's mother and a doctor. She is forced to face unsettling truths about her son and reflect on her choices she's made throughout her life.



APRIL SIGMAN-MARX



THOMAS TRUDGEON

## **COACH RUSSELL SHEA**

Coach Russell Shea is Brandon's football coach and a friend of the Hardy family. He brings secrets to light that have been buried at St. Joe's for many years.

**MADDY EMERSON**

Maddy Emerson is Elizabeth's sister and a teacher at a public high school. She forces Elizabeth to face the reality of her son's actions.



JENNIFER RICHARDSON



SHANE MONAGHAN

**JUSTIN SIMMONS**

Justin Simmons is Brandon's best friend and also a senior at St. Joe's Prep. He is different from the other boys.



KAYLA MANUEL

**CHERYL MOODY**

Cheryl Moody is a senior at a public high school and is a waitress at a food court in the mall.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa is an American playwright, screenwriter, and comic book writer known for his work at Marvel Comics, *Glee* and *Big Love*. He attended Georgetown University where he studied playwriting, received his Masters Degree from McGill University in English literature and graduated from Yale School of Drama in 2003. His plays have premiered at South Coast Repertory Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, and Manhattan Theatre Club. Currently he is the chief creative officer of Archie Comics and is a series developer for *Riverdale*.<sup>1</sup>

*Good Boys and True* first premiered in 2008 at Steppenwolf Theatre. In an interview with Edward Sobel at Steppenwolf, Aguirre-Sacasa said that his play “is a glimpse of his own experiences at his high school, Georgetown Prep, and that it seeks to question issues surrounding privilege, class, culpability, and inheritance.”<sup>2</sup>

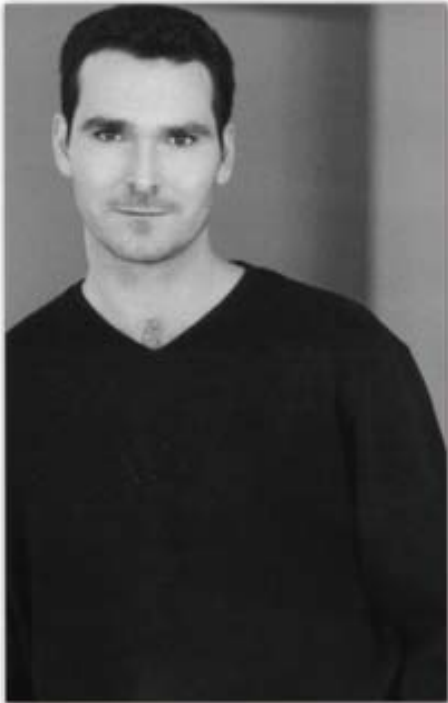
## SYNOPSIS

Brandon Hardy is an intelligent, handsome young man at St. Joseph’s Prep where he is captain of the football team. He comes from a wealthy family and has an Ivy League future ahead of him. One day Coach Russell Shea calls his mother, Elizabeth Hardy into his office to discuss a sex tape that has been circulating around campus. Brandon denies being involved in the scandal while his mother continues to seek the truth. Buried secrets are exposed revealing the power of institutions and cultures surrounding the Hardy family. Elizabeth and Brandon must find a way to take responsibility and break the cycle of burying secrets and dodging responsibility.

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberto\\_Aguirre-Sacasa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roberto_Aguirre-Sacasa)

2. <https://www.steppenwolf.org/articles/edward-sobel-interviews-roberto-aguirre-sacasa/>

# INTERVIEW: DIRECTOR HUGH O’GORMAN



Director Hugh O’Gorman is the Head of Acting at California State University Long Beach. He earned a BA in Psychology from Cornell University and an MFA in Acting from the University of Washington. Since 2003 he has owned The Praxis Acting Studio in Los Angeles, California where he focuses on the work of Russian theatre artists like Michael Chekhov and Constantin Stanislavski. *Good Boys and True* is the first play he will direct at CSULB since 2008’s *The Shape of Things* by Neil LaBute.

WHAT WAS YOUR MOTIVATION TO DIRECT *GOOD BOYS AND TRUE*?

The fact that I have two young daughters is an important aspect of why I wanted to direct this particular play. As a father raising two young women I am very aware of the predatory male behavior imbedded into American society and how ubiquitous and under-reported sexual assault is, especially on campuses, be they high school or university. This play intelligently addresses not only predatory sexual behavior itself but also the cultural, economic and institutional American systems that both foster and protect aggression. Upon first read, the play is an innocuous high school drama. But Roberto, the playwright, is very skilled at baking into the arc of action deeply seeded issues which [all Americans] grapple with. So, as a parent, as a teacher and as a theatre maker this play struck in me a strong impulse to come back to directing.

And the question a director must always answer first before deciding to mount a production of any given dramatic text is “why do this play now?” And there are many reasons why to do this particular play now, some of them stated above. But there are many others as well. Simply look at our current political leadership, the recent case of the Stanford swimmer and the culture of sexual assault at the Fox TV corporation, its president and now Bill O’Reilly. Even though it is set in the late 1980s, this is a timely play.

*GOOD BOYS AND TRUE* IS A PLAY ABOUT RAPE, SEXUALITY, SOCIAL CLASS, RACE, AND MUCH MORE. WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES DURING THE REHEARSAL PROCESS AND HOW DO YOU GUIDE YOUR ACTORS WHEN TACKLING THESE BIG IDEAS?

Both the biggest challenge and strongest motivator have been the topics themselves. These are serious issues and we have been treating them accordingly. The actors have been nothing short of brave and amazing in their seriousness of purpose and commitment to this very difficult material. One real challenge has been to ensure that there is an environment of trust and respect for each other as creative artists. I have to say in this regard our student actors, both graduate and undergraduate, have been nothing short of professional. They have worked with a huge amount of care and sensitivity for each other and the material itself.

# INTERVIEW: WES MATHISON, SHANE MONAGHAN & KAYLA MANUEL

WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE AUDIENCE WILL TAKE AWAY FROM THIS PRODUCTION OF *GOOD BOYS AND TRUE*?

**Mathison:** I hope that the audience will be able to see that these are real human experiences that happen to people all around us. It is about the pressure in society and how it can drive some people to extreme measures in order to defend who they think they should be and the consequences that result from that.

**Manuel:** I want the audience to see how much society hasn't changed from the 80's in terms of social ladders, trust and sexuality, which are a few themes in the play. I want the audience to enjoy the journey of each character and how their lives unfold and how it takes discipline to fight for themselves and for what they really want. Lastly, I just want the audience to have faith and hope in every character and find a relatable trait.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECT WHEN PLAYING YOUR ROLE AND HOW DO YOU OVERCOME IT TO ENSURE AN AUTHENTIC PORTRAYAL OF YOUR CHARACTER?

**Monaghan:** One of the most challenging aspects when playing my role, Justin, is to think that he can only be portrayed a certain way. Justin is a homosexual male going to an all boys' Catholic school, and most likely has pent up frustration. However, Justin cannot be angry and irritated all the time. Justin is blossoming with intelligence, conflict, frustration, shock, interest, and love, just to name a few. Through this process I felt that I needed to overcome the cliché by listening to what the other characters have to say and then responding to that. The best way to lead Justin's life forward I have found is by listening to my fellow actors.

**Manuel:** The most challenging aspect when playing my role of Cheryl Moody, is really putting myself in her shoes. I've never been in an extreme situation such as the one she faced and fully embodying her experience and putting on a new layer of skin is challenging. It's challenging putting what Kayla would do to a perspective of what would Cheryl do? The more I put my ego aside and focus on what my character needs, what I'm fighting for and continue to work with images for myself & character the rest comes naturally.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE RELEVANCE OF THIS PLAY TODAY?

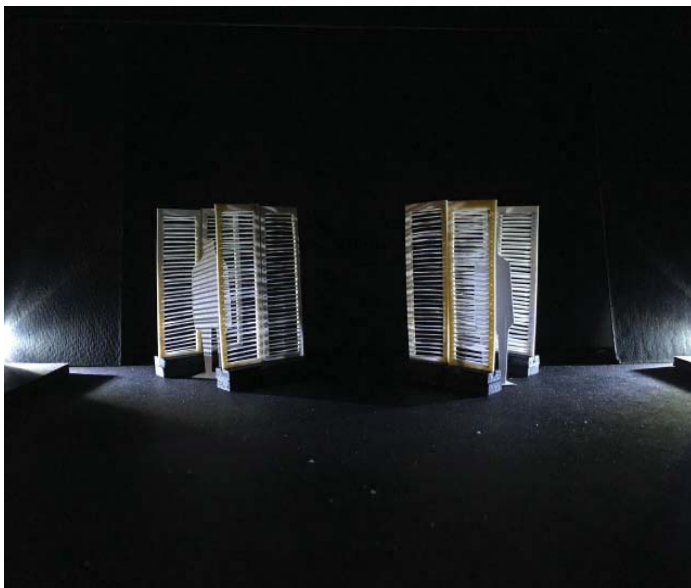
**Mathison:** The relevance is embedded in so many aspects of the play on multiple levels. There are issues the play tackles that we all deal with in many different ways such as relationships, friends, family, identity, status, sexuality, truth, and privilege. Being able to bring these things into the light is so important to show how, when hidden and ignored they can lead to something much worse.

**Monaghan:** I think this play has relevance in today's society because it's all about connections: connections to the past, connections to each other, to the character's hopes and dreams, and even an internal connection about discovering the person(s) they are becoming. This play tackles many different issues and brings to light a lot of the injustices people have towards different groups of people and the insecurities that these characters have just like everyone else. Even though this play takes place in 1988, we can see how parallel it continues to be today's social instability.

# SECRETS & SHADOWS: INTERVIEW WITH LIN XIYU, SCENIC DESIGNER

The Players Theatre is a small space where the audience is able to experience the action up close, which seems perfect for a play that discusses themes such as sexuality, personal responsibility, social class, race, and much more.

Lin Xiyu, scenic designer for *Good Boys and True*, has had a challenging time designing a set with minimal set pieces while still allowing the major themes of the play to resonate through her design. In a simple way, it helps to drive the story forward and enhances the relevant themes in the play.



Scale Model of Scenic Design by Lin Xiyu

CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SET FOR THIS PRODUCTION OF *GOOD BOYS AND TRUE* AND WHAT MOTIVATED THE DESIGN?

The set is composed of several movable structures with blinds and a shower curtain. These can easily be arranged in any particular way depending on the scene. The blinds are from the [time] period, which was an initial starting point for the aesthetic feel of the overall design. What motivated it was the feeling the play gave me that people choose to hide their secrets but the truth will eventually come out. The blinds help hide certain things on stage but the audience is still able to see through them and speculate what is going on.

HOW DOES THE PLAY INFLUENCE YOUR DESIGN? HOW DO YOU INFLUENCE THE PRODUCTION?

Given what is happening in our culture today and to think about our future generations, the story that happens in the play could be the example to adults, teenagers, and society as a whole about sexuality, class and race. The “good boy” got into the trouble and the truth was uncovered in a surprising way. Through my design, I want to create a space where the [creative] team has more possibilities while working through each scene, the director and actors can decide what they hide and reveal to the audience.



SCENIC DESIGN IS ONLY ONE DESIGN ELEMENT IN ANY PRODUCTION. ARE THERE ANY OTHER DESIGN ELEMENTS (I.E. COSTUMES, LIGHTING, SOUND, ETC.) THAT HAVE DIRECTLY AFFECTED YOUR DESIGN IN A WAY THAT ADDS TO THE THEMES YOU ARE PORTRAYING?

Before I designed the set, I collaborated with Lighting Designer, David Barfield. I asked him to bring ideas that would build upon this notion of secrets. With the lighting design and the blinds, we have selected a few scenes to create shadows that will further enhance the secrets that are in the play.



*Scale Model of Scenic Design by Lin Xiyu*



*Scale Model of Scenic Design by Lin Xiyu*

# WHAT IS RAPE?

**RAPE** is a type of sexual assault, usually involving sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration carried out against a person **without their CONSENT**.

**DATE RAPE** is rape in which there has been some sort of romantic or potentially sexual relationship between the two parties.

**STATUTORY RAPE** is sexual activity in which one of the individuals is below the age to legally give consent.

# WHAT IS CONSENT?

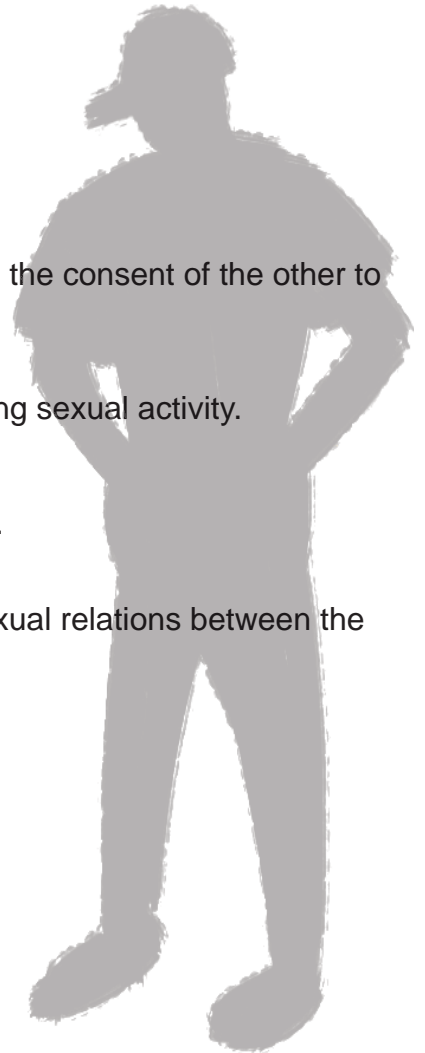
**CONSENT** is affirmative, conscious, voluntary, and revocable.

**CONSENT** is the responsibility of **each** person to ensure they have the consent of the other to engage in the sexual activity.

**CONSENT** must be ongoing and **can be revoked at any time** during sexual activity.

**CONSENT** is NOT the lack of protest, lack of resistance, or silence.

**CONSENT** is NOT the existence of a dating relationship or past sexual relations between the persons involved.



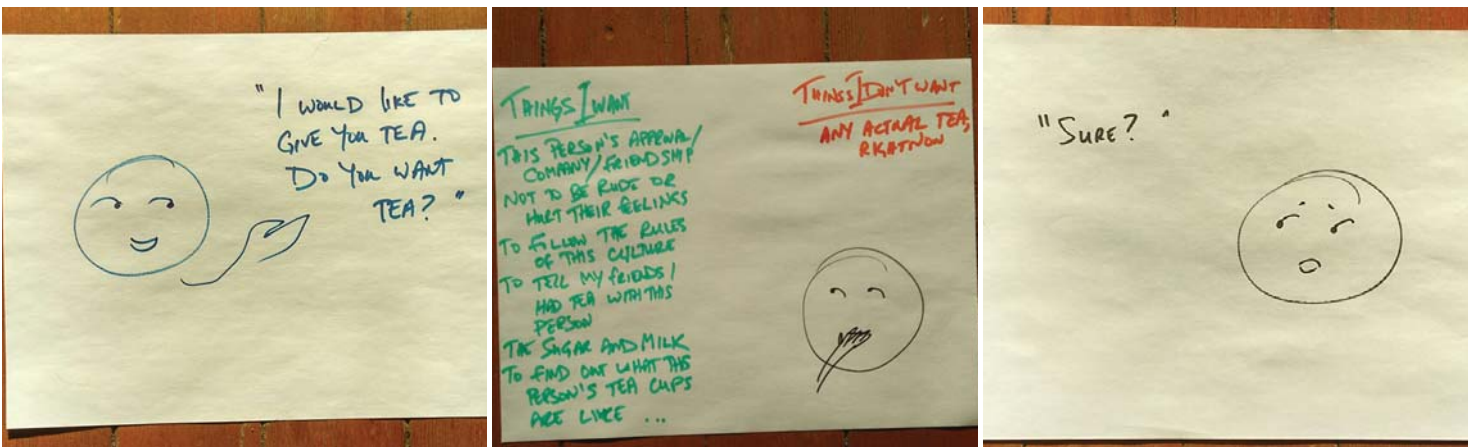
# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

Watch a short video and answer the questions below. Click on the image or visit this link to access the video: <https://vimeo.com/126553913>

## CONSENT

IT'S SIMPLE AS TEA

IS consent "simple as tea?" Check out the post-it note response to the above video -



## QUESTIONS

1. What are your initial thoughts on this analogy of consent? How does this video help get the point across? Is this a good way to prevent sexual violence?
2. Colleges use videos like this one to educate incoming students on consent and sexual violence. What are other ways CSULB engages in educating its students? Should it be required for students to participate in mandated sexual violence prevention training? Do you think there are better way of teaching students about consent?

### Read the full post-it note response here:

*the one reason i haven't shared that tea/consent thing*

<http://www.thedirtynormal.com/blog/2015/05/14/the-one-reason-i-havent-shared-that-teaconsent-thing/>

# TELLING THE STORY OF THE STANFORD RAPE CASE

THE ATLANTIC | MARINA KOREN | JUN 6, 2016

Two letters, one from the victim and one from the offender's father, have pushed a California case to the forefront of a national conversation about sexual assault.

In the days after a 20-year-old former Stanford University student received his jail sentence for sexually assaulting an unconscious woman on the school's campus, two letters related to the case and made public have been widely read: one by the victim, and one by the offender's father.



The victim's letter was published in full by BuzzFeed on Friday, a day after the 23-year-old woman, who has chosen to stay anonymous, read it aloud to Brock Allen Turner during his sentencing hearing. In the 7,244 word-letter, the woman provides a harrowing, detailed account of her attempted rape in January 2015 and the struggle of trying to survive it. At times, she directly addresses Turner, telling him how that night destroyed her life.

The letter was praised for its "powerful" message that encouraged sexual-assault victims to seek justice against their attackers. It also immediately sparked outrage on social media and elsewhere because of the sentence Turner received for the crimes it described: six months in county jail and three years of probation. Turner faced up to 14 years in state prison when he was convicted in March of three felonies—assault with intent to commit rape of an intoxicated woman, sexually penetrating an intoxicated person with a foreign object, and sexually penetrating an unconscious person with a foreign object—and prosecutors had asked for six years. But the judge had ordered much less, saying a harsher sentence would have a "severe impact" on Turner, a star swimmer who could have made it to the Olympics.

Then on Sunday, a letter written by Dan Turner, Brock's father, was made public. In the note, which he read during the sentencing hearing, the elder Turner pleads with the judge for leniency for his son, explaining how that night had destroyed his life.

The note quickly prompted public outcry, too. The words have been described as "despicable" and "impossibly offensive." Dan Turner is being pilloried for saying his son wants to educate other college-age students "about the dangers of alcohol consumption and sexual promiscuity" and for not acknowledging he committed a crime, instead boiling down what happened to "20 minutes of action."

The two letters have thrust the California case to the forefront of a national conversation about sexual-assault, rape culture on college campuses, and racial disparities in sentencing laws for sex crimes. Sexual-assault advocates say the Stanford case shows why so many victims do not report their assaults to police or choose to testify in drawn-out trials that could end in sentences that, in this woman's case, are widely considered a slap on the wrist. Read side by side, they seem to describe two entirely different worlds. In one, the punishment doesn't fit the crime; in the other, there wasn't a crime to begin with.

On January 18, 2015, at about 1 a.m., two male Stanford graduate students were riding their bikes through campus when they spotted a man on top of a woman near a dumpster. The woman did not appear to be moving. The students approached the man, who fled, leaving the woman, unconscious and partially naked, on the ground. One of the students chased him and held him down while the police was called. The man was identified as Brock Turner.

Turner and the woman had attended the same party that night and were intoxicated; Turner's blood-alcohol level was double the legal limit at the time, and the woman's was three times the legal limit. Turner admitted to engaging in sexual contact with the woman, but said she had given consent. The victim testified that she had no memory of the assault, and in her statement last week said she loses sleep "when I think about the way it could have gone if the two guys had never come."

Like his father, Brock's lawyers portrayed the white, blond-haired, blue-eyed student to the jury as a talented athlete with a bright future ahead of him. The headlines following his case described him as an "All-American swimmer" and the victim, as she recalled in her letter, as an "unconscious intoxicated woman, ten syllables, and nothing more than that."

She wrote:

For a while, I believed that that was all I was. I had to force myself to relearn my real name, my identity. To relearn that this is not all that I am. That I am not just a drunk victim at a frat party found behind a dumpster, while you are the All American swimmer at a top university, innocent until proven guilty, with so much at stake. I am a human being who has been irreversibly hurt, my life was put on hold for over a year, waiting to figure out if I was worth something.

My independence, natural joy, gentleness, and steady lifestyle I had been enjoying became distorted beyond recognition. I became closed off, angry, self deprecating, tired, irritable, empty. The isolation at times was unbearable. You cannot give me back the life I had before that night either. While you worry about your shattered reputation, I refrigerated spoons every night so when I woke up, and my eyes were puffy from crying, I would hold the spoons to my eyes to lessen the swelling so that I could see.

In his letter, Dan Brock wrote the verdict had "broken" and "shattered" his son:

He will never be his happy go lucky self with that easy going personality and welcoming smile. His every waking minute is consumed with worry, anxiety, fear, and depression. You can see this in his face, the way he walks, his weakened voice, his lack of appetite. Brock always enjoyed certain types of food and is a very good cook himself. Now he barely consumes any food and eats only to exist. These verdicts have broken and shattered him and our family in so many ways. His life will never be the one that he dreamed about and worked so hard to achieve. That is a steep price to pay for 20 minutes of action out of his 20 plus years of life.

Prosecutors said Brock Turner never accepted responsibility for the assault. His six-month sentence could be reduced to three for good behavior. As part of his sentencing, he will be required to register as a sex offender for the rest of his life.<sup>8</sup>

8. <https://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/06/stanford-sexual-assault-letters/485837/>

# WAS THAT NECESSARY?

**TRIGGER WARNING: Stylized depictions of sexual violence**

In CSULB's production of *Good Boys and True*, we witness on stage an enactment of sexual violence. The staged portrayal was not in the script, so why would the director choose to place it on stage?

## IS DEPICTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE ON STAGE GRATUITOUS?

Much has been written about depicting rape on stage and on screen. Remember the public outcry over rape in *Game of Thrones*?

- Some argue that using rape as a plotline is disrespectful at best, and traumatizing at worst, to victims of sexual assault.
- Some argue that rape and its (often female) victims are used merely as a vessel to further a male character's story.
- Some argue that rape storylines often gloss over, or disregard entirely, the trauma, healing, and life of a victim after the assault.
- Some say that a victim's rape is poor storytelling and an easy excuse for their current suffering.
- And others point out that while using rape as a plotline may not be entirely wrong, the depiction of it is unnecessary. We all know that rape is bad. So why do we need to see it reenacted to confirm that?

## What do YOU think?

How does showing an act of sexual violence advance the story?  
Would the story advance if the violence had happened off stage?

Does it make you dislike the perpetrator more when you see it? Would you dislike them just as much if the action was described to you or if you saw someone else's reaction to "witnessing" it?

Does it make you sympathize with the perpetrator more when you see it? Would you sympathize with him more or less if you had only heard about what he'd done?

Does seeing it help to develop the character of the perpetrator or the victim? If you hadn't witnessed it on stage, would their storylines be more or less believable?

### DEFINE IT

**Gratuitous:** uncalled for;  
lacking good reason;  
unwarranted.

## Read More -

*Game of Thrones Failed, But Many TV Shows Succeed In Portraying Sexual Assault - Here's How*  
<http://www.refinery29.com/2015/06/89148/tv-rape-scenes-game-of-thrones>

*The Progress and Pitfalls of Television's Treatment of Rape*  
<http://variety.com/2016/tv/features/rape-tv-television-sweet-vicious-jessica-jones-game-of-thrones-1201934910/>

*Is there too much rape onstage and TV?*  
<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/is-there-too-much-rape-on-stage-and-tv-8788256.html>

# MORE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. While watching *Good Boys and True* what were your thoughts on Brandon? Can you understand any of his actions? Are they justified? How did St. Joe's, his family and teammates influence Brandon's actions? What role does each play in his behavior?
2. Referring back to "Telling the Story of the Stanford Rape Case," do you see any similarities between Brock's story and Brandon's? Any differences? Between Dan and Elizabeth? Between the Stanford rape survivor and Cheryl?
3. At what point during the sexual encounter between Cheryl and Brandon does it become rape? If she never said "no" or "stop," was it rape? If she didn't give consent to any of the actions or to the recording, was it rape? Was it exploitation? Was it both or neither?
4. In her interview, Kayla Manuel said, "I just want the audience to have faith and hope in every character and find a relatable trait." Did this happen? Do you have faith and hope in every character? What relatable trait did you find with each character?
5. Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa said that this play sought to question issues on privilege and class. How are these two issues manifested in the play and through which characters? Describe how privilege and class play out in our society today.
6. Other than the scenic design, describe one of the design or technical elements in the play that you felt enhanced the themes of *Good Boys and True*. Which theme did it reinforce and how?

## For Further Reflection

1. Are there any characters in *Good Boys and True* who might be helped by an advocate?
2. Who could speak on their behalf? Who would an advocate speak to?
3. What might they say? What would that support look like?

### DEFINE IT

**Advocate:** (*noun*) a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy uncalled for; a person who pleads on someone else's behalf

**Advocate:** (*verb*) to publicly recommend or support

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## ON CAMPUS

**College of Health and Human Services:** Safe Zone includes a database of on-campus allies that have completed Safe Zone Training, and a comprehensive list of resources available to CSULB community members.  
<http://web.csulb.edu/colleges/chhs/safe-zone/index.html>

**Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** assists students meet the personal challenges associated with identifying and accomplishing academic, career, and life goals  
562-985-4001 | <http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/caps/>

**Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Resource Center** promotes full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transexual, intersex, and queer identified individuals and their allies at CSULB.  
562-985-4585 | [http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/sld/student\\_resource\\_centers/lgbtc/](http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/sld/student_resource_centers/lgbtc/)

**Women's & Gender Equity Center** is a safe, comfortable, supportive and inclusive environment that offers services, support, and resources for students.  
562-985-8687 | <http://web.csulb.edu/divisions/students/wrc/>

## LOCAL

**The LGBTQ Center of Long Beach** engages, empowers and advocates to achieve a more equitable society and fosters an ever-improving quality of life for the LGBTQ community  
2017 E. 4th St. Long Beach, CA 90814 | 562-434-4455 | <https://www.centerlb.org/>

**Los Angeles LGBT Center** offers the following services: free HIV/AIDS care and medications for those most in need; housing, food, clothing and support for the homeless, support and advocacy services.  
1625 N. Schrader Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90028 | 323-993-7400 | <https://lalgbtcenter.org/>

**Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Long Beach** Unite people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) with families, friends, and allies, PFLAG is committed to advancing to advancing equality through its mission of support, education and advocacy.  
269 Loma Ave Long Beach, CA 90803 | 562-248-6010 | <http://lbpflag.org/>

**Women Shelter of Long Beach** assists victims and their children by providing shelter and supportive services, 24-hour crisis hotline, counseling, social services support, legal and health advocacy, and more.  
562-437-7233 | <http://www.womenshelterlb.org/>

## NATIONAL

**The Good Men Project** explores the world of men and manhood, tackling the issues and questions that are most relevant to men's lives: fatherhood, family, sex, ethics, war, gender, politics, sports, pornography, and aging. <https://goodmenproject.com/>

**The Trevor Project** is the nation's only 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention lifeline for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning young people ages 13-24  
<http://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

**It Gets Better Project** communicates to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth around the world that it gets better, and to create and inspire the changes needed to make it better for them. <http://www.itgetsbetter.org/>

**The Gay and Lesbian National Hotline** is a non-profit, tax exempt organization dedicated to meeting the needs of the LGBT community and those questioning their sexual orientation or identity. The Hotline offers free and confidential peer-counseling, information, and local resources for cities and town throughout the United States.  
1-888-THE-GLNH | <http://www.glnh.org/index.html>

**RAINN** provides confidential, one-on-one crisis support for women.  
1-800-656-HOPE | <https://hotline.rainn.org/online/terms-of-service.jsp>