

## Was Badu's Nudity for Protest or Publicity?

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People would've bought album without naked publicity stunt

Erykah Badu. Her name is synonymous with good music, alternative thought processes, and now, a naked stunt. Most students can admit to growing up listening to Badu's profound thought provoking music, and hearing about her unusual behavior, for example her unconventional fashion sense, or the fact that she named her first-born son, "Seven," in honor of "the divine number which can't be divided." There's no denying that the woman is a fascinating individual and an extremely talented artist. In a time when the vast majority of musical artists look and sound the same, she stands out as a real talent. After enduring her achingly long hiatus, fans were excited to learn she was releasing her first studio album in years, and even more excited to see what she would decide to film for her first video to "Window Seat," a track off her recently released album. In what she explained to the press after the video's release as a dedication to one of her heroes, John F. Kennedy, Badu walked through Dallas's crowded Dealey Plaza, stripping naked and falling to the ground as if she'd been shot. The five minute video was shot guerilla style, meaning there was no permit, closed set, or warning for the shoppers and bystanders witnessing her strip show.

Initially no one pressed charges for her naked demonstration. But at the persistent urging of Dallas officials, a witness whose two small children witnessed the show decided to go ahead and press charges, on the grounds that Badu's nudity offended her children. Badu has been fined \$500 for her performance.

The controversial video was shot March 13. Her album was released March 30. The press and attention, whether positive or negative, is huge when you strip naked and fall on the ground in the middle of a public shopping area. Everyone from hosts of morning radio shows, to hip-hop gossip bloggers, to national news networks were talking about it.

We're not saying Badu wasn't attempting to prove a point with her naked demonstration. We're just saying that it was perfectly timed to coincide with the release of her first album in two years. People would've bought her album regardless of whether or not she decided to strip in front of innocent pedestrians. It was a blatant publicity stunt; people all over the country who might have never heard her name before this, now know exactly who she is.

She doesn't have to act like she was simply paying homage to one of her heroes. We know she also did it to get some easy public \$500 fine is a small price to pay for the huge amount of attention she's received, and more importantly, potentially higher album sales.

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