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HUFFPOST CELEBRITY

In Defense of Justin Bieber

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As a Jewish comedian, it would have been easy to follow the herd in jumping on Justin Bieber's remarks after he visited the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam. Except, unlike other comedians and self appointed pundits, I actually read carefully all of Bieber's words. "Truly inspiring to be able to come here. Anne was a great girl. Hopefully she would have been a belieber."

First, Bieber deserves credit for spending an hour touring the Anne Frank House, a museum that pays tribute not only to a young girl who lost her own life and the lives of most of her family at the hands of the Nazis, but to all who have suffered from acts of mass genocide around the world. And it is widely known that Anne Frank was like most teenagers in her love of movie stars and the pop culture of her time, as the pictures on the wall in her room attest to.

Bieber's comments in the museum guestbook were his way of saying that he connected with the kind of person Anne was, and that if she was a teenager alive today, he hoped his picture would be one of those on her wall. Like all museum guestbook entries, his words were not intended to be parsed by vultures circling above Bieber, primed to take him down. They were quickly written, heartfelt comments by Justin Bieber, not Anton Chekhov. And most significantly, spending time in the museum to learn about Anne Frank, is something most pop stars, especially teenagers, would not have done.

Finally, the most positive aspect of Bieber's visit to the Anne Frank House is that millions of teenage fans who previously had no idea who she was, will now know at least part of the sad, yet inspiring, story of Anne Frank.

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