



Tanya Tagaq takes on cyberbullies and stereotypes

Inuk throat singer Tagaq relieved after online harasser's Twitter account shut down

By Connie Walker | June 10, 2014

Tanya Tagaq is breathing a little easier these days.

"It's like my body was covered in boils and now all the boils are gone. That's what it feels like." said Tagaq

It's been a tumultuous year for the Inuk throat singer. Tagaq just released a new album "Animism" that's getting [rave reviews](#). But she generated even more headlines in March, when she joined the #sealfie movement by posting a picture of her infant daughter lying next to a dead seal.

Since posting that photo, Tagaq has been harassed almost daily by anti-seal hunting activists. One of them went as far as posting a photo shopped picture depicting her daughter being skinned online.

Last week, she announced that the Twitter account of one of her harassers was shut down with the help of Brandon police.

"I woke up and I was healed or something. Just to show that man that it's not ok to abuse people, no matter what your stand point is." she said.

Tagaq says she's not sorry for posting the photo but that the internet abuse was taking it's toll.

"I know I'm a good mother so to have a person like that talk about having my kids taken away every day for a couple of months... the first while was alright because I have a pretty thick skin but by the end I didn't feel sorry for him anymore, I just needed him to stop."

The mother of two said the whole ordeal has made her reevaluate how she and her family use the internet

"It does raise a lot of flags for me when it comes to my own children. When someone is attacking you on that level, you have to be very, very sure of yourself and very confident and those aren't things that a lot of children possess."

Tagaq confronts stereotypes through performance

But Tagaq isn't ready to throw out her laptop & smartphone. She says she sees the benefit of having greater access to cultures online.

"It's a terrible thing but it's an amazing thing as well. Not only are kids in Nunavut growing up with access to every culture in the world but we're also emerging from the stereotypes as well."



Tagaq is tackling those stereotypes in her performance of [Nanook of the North](#). She and fellow band mates provide a soundscape to the 1922 black and white documentary depicting Inuit life in Canada's north.

"I'll be exploring the space between the stereotype of an Eskimo in 1922 and the stereotype of an Inuk woman in 2014. And hopefully erasing all the stereotypes through a thoughtful connection."

Tagaq says she's come to love the controversial documentary but still has issues with some of the stereotypes in the film.

"One of the stereotypes that I hate is 'happy Eskimo'. 'Happy Eskimo' is nice but not *simple*, happy Eskimo. The technology today still can't beat the traditional clothing that people wore up there. It wasn't simple."