



Talkback Discussion Guide

Kemba, Directed by Kelley Kali, BET+ 2024

Instructions: After viewing the film *Kemba*, use this guide to challenge assumptions, deepen understanding, and foster awareness. The questions are organized by section to offer flexibility as you lead the discussion. You do not need to address every question. Select those that resonate most with your group or setting to help cultivate a community rooted in care, reflection, and accountability.



Film Title: *Kemba*

Event: *See Them, See Us!* Human Trafficking in Plain Sight Virtual Town Hall

Focus: Vulnerability, Exploitation & Challenging Stereotypes of Who Is at Risk

Date Watched: _____

Facilitator: _____



Brief Synopsis

Kemba is based on the true story of Kemba Smith, a college student whose relationship with a drug dealer ultimately led to her entanglement in the drug trade and a harsh federal prison sentence. While Kemba's case was not legally defined as trafficking, the film explores themes of manipulation, love, power, and resilience - - highlighting how young Black women can be vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation in ways not always recognized by law or society.



Opening Reflection

- What were your immediate thoughts or emotions after the film ended?
 - Which scenes or moments stood out the most? Why?
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Themes & Messages

- In what ways did Kemba's sheltered background and desire for independence shape the choices and risks she faced in college?
 - How does *Kemba's* story challenge narrow definitions of exploitation and trafficking?
 - What role did *power*, control, and grooming play in shaping her decisions?
 - How did love, loyalty, and fear influence her and how do those emotions create blind spots to harm?
 - What does the film teach us about how systems often miss or ignore early signs of manipulation or coercion?
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Character & Story Exploration

- How did Kemba's relationship with Khalif evolve? What early warning signs were missed, ignored, or excused?



- In what ways did Kemba's environment - - her campus, community, or social circles - - contribute to her vulnerability?
 - Did you notice any patterns of grooming or emotional manipulation in how Khalif gained Kemba's trust?
 - Did Kemba recognize the manipulation or danger she was in while it was happening?
 - What support systems might have helped interrupt or prevent her entrapment?
 - How does Kemba's experience illustrate how young people, especially women of color, can be exploited and misunderstood rather than seen as needing support?
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Connection to Real Life

- While Kemba's story wasn't classified as trafficking, what elements resemble situations traffickers often exploit?
 - Can you see similar vulnerabilities or patterns happening on college campuses today?
 - What red flags, grooming tactics, or patterns of coercion appeared in Kemba's story?
 - How do traffickers or exploiters use grooming, especially through love or trust, to manipulate young people who may not see themselves as victims?
 - How can we move beyond awareness to advocacy and survivor-centered action?
 - What can families, schools, and peer groups do to create safer environments and support early intervention?
 - How can we move beyond awareness to advocacy and survivor-centered action?
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Quotable Moments

- "I didn't see myself as a victim." What does this quote reveal about how trafficking survivors often experience their own story?
 - Were there other lines that resonated with you or challenged your thinking?
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Next Steps & Takeaways

- What signs of trafficking and coercion should college students be more aware of?
 - How can we better support peers who may be in dangerous or manipulative relationships?
 - How can students be better equipped to recognize grooming behaviors in romantic or social relationships?
 - What actions can HBCU students and allies take to raise awareness and protect one another?
 - How might this film inspire action or dialogue beyond today?
 - What questions or reflections are you carrying forward?
 - Is there something you want to learn more about, do, or discuss further?
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"To see her is to see us." Kemba's story is not just about surviving; it's about recognizing vulnerability in unexpected places, reclaiming agency, and awakening to the ways we protect or fail to protect one another.