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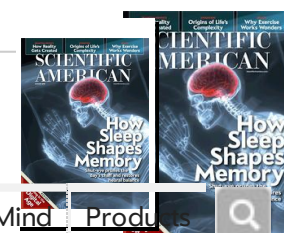
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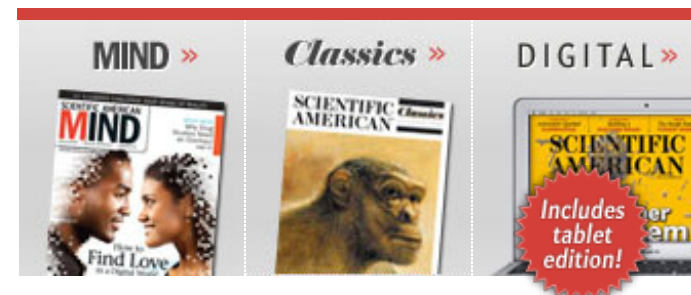
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## "I'm Sick of Talking about Sexual Harassment!"

By [Karen Stollznow](#) | August 6, 2013 | 28

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## Blog Network Highlights

"I was sexually harassed for four years," I admitted to a colleague recently. "That's awful!" he bellowed in outrage and genuine concern, before he promptly changed the subject. Sexual harassment is an uncomfortable topic to discuss with colleagues, especially when you're the victim. You're sharing personal details that they feel they shouldn't know, and would rather not know. When your usual conversation consists of what you watched on TV last night or what you ate for lunch, it's TMI to hear about your workmate's sex life.

On the other hand, we're so swamped with stories of sexism and sexual harassment that some people have become indifferent to them. Take for example the recent "Twitter shaming". Adria Richards was at a conference when she overheard two guys making jokes she found to be sexist. She took a photo of the men and tweeted it, along with the conference's code of conduct that prohibits making "sexist, racist or exclusory jokes." This incident raised awareness about sexism in the tech world but it also resulted in one of the men and Richards being fired by their respective employers. It seemed to many that the whole issue had gone too far.

Sexual harassment is often trivialized. In a three-part story of The Drew Carey Show, Drew receives a fax with an illustration of a near-sighted caterpillar that tries to



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DNLee5 RT @urbandata: @pkananen

have sex with a crinkle cut fry. Tickled by the joke, he attaches it to a staff memo with the innocent intention of giving his workmates a laugh. To his surprise, he is soon reprimanded for offending a female colleague. Drew is insensitive to her reaction, and in defiance he tapes the image to his cubicle wall. He is then sued for creating a hostile work environment. The court is sympathetic to the alleged victim but the overall message is clear: she made a big deal over a simple joke. Moreover, she is a prude.

Sometimes we don’t even know how to identify sexual harassment because its methods are changing. Today, sexual harassment is not always as bold, brazen and blatant as the boss who slaps his secretary’s ass. It doesn’t have to involve leering or groping. It happens in a virtual work environment as much as it happens around the water cooler. More people are telecommuting although physical distance doesn’t prevent staff from being targeted by a harasser. Harassment from afar can include sending unwanted communication of a sexual nature, including emails, texts, instant messages, mail, tweets, phone calls, images, Facebook “pokes”, and stalking on networking sites. Unlike an attempted kiss in the copy room, it can take a long time to establish a record of this kind of sexual harassment. (Just be sure to collect all forms of contact, and never move, update your phone, or experience a hardware crash.)

Confronted with these stereotypes and influenced by the various forces of social conditioning, we often don’t know how to react to sexual harassment anymore. Here are some of the attitudes and opinions expressed to me, both directly and indirectly, when I began speaking out about my situation.

When they didn’t know the details, some people reacted with concern that was tempered with cautiousness. “Could you be overreacting?” or “Maybe you misread him?” There was suspicion over the delay in reporting the incidents, “Why didn’t you



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say something sooner?" and, "Why did you continue to work with him for so long?" Not observing the harassment was a cause for doubt. "I couldn't tell there was anything wrong!" Some were prejudiced by their positive personal experiences with the harasser, "I know him. He's a good guy. He wouldn't do that!" My claims were also dismissed with the old adage that boys will be boys. "It's a guy thing," and, "That's just how men behave." One man offered a backhanded compliment, "Hey, what guy wouldn't be interested in you!?"

As often happens in these situations, the blame is shifted to the victim. Like the woman in The Drew Carey Show, the victim may be labeled a prude or "uptight". She lacks a sense of humor. She's crazy. She may be portrayed as a troublemaker by the accused and his supporters. To undermine her claims, she might be branded a serial complainer, where sexism and sexual harassment are often confused, "You know, she's accused other men of sexism before." The case may be demonized as a witch-hunt, and become a cautionary tale told by those who fear that they too could be branded a "harasser" over the slightest comment or glance. "Watch out, or she'll accuse you too!" I was held up to scrutiny in this way too. According to gossip about me, I gave him mixed-signals, I led him on, I'm flirtatious, and I'm a dirty little slut.

Alternatively, both the accused and accuser are blamed for the situation. Those who didn't know the extent of the harassment reacted as though we simply don't play well together in the sandbox. "Why don't you two just get over it and move on!" The matter was misconstrued as a lover's tiff, or that we were a couple in an on again, off again relationship. Others didn't have time for my problems, "I have my own worries." One person was surprised that I confided in him, saying, "It's none of my business." A number of people commiserated but then moaned, "I'm sick of talking about sexual harassment!"

Some were sympathetic, but from a safe distance. They chose to stay out of it,

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## Image of the Week



because they “hate drama.” I didn’t ask to become involved in a real-life soap either. I feel stigmatized by those who feel too awkward to face the situation, or me. I had a mutual friend who barely contacts me anymore, as he is unable to take a “side”. Some people didn’t say what they think until they knew what others think. They waited for an outcome so they could align themselves with the “victor”, but there are no winners in cases of sexual harassment.

To some people the news didn’t come as much of a surprise. They “knew” there was something wrong, especially with the benefit of hindsight. “I thought something was up when you two stopped working together.” Others felt they could finally admit to me what they think about him. “I never liked him.” “I’ve always thought he was a creepy guy!”, “He’s a weirdo!” and, “I unfriended him on Facebook because of the sexist shit he says and the perverted stuff he posts.” One woman confessed, “No wonder my female friends roll their eyes at me when I tell them he’s single!” Fortunately, I had the support of friends and family who witnessed the harassment over the years, and saw the distress, frustration, fear, and anger that it caused me.

This man is a predator who collects girls of a certain “type”. His targets are chubby, shy, lonely, and insecure, just like I used to be. In the early days I looked up to him and was flattered that he seemed to respect my work. I quickly spotted some red flags but I disregarded them. These became too big to ignore, so I called it all off. The rejection was ego shattering to him at first, and then met with disbelief. This was followed by incessant communication of a sexual nature, including gifts, calls, emails, letters, postcards, and invites to vacation with him in exotic places so we could “get to know each other again”. He wouldn’t leave me alone. This wasn’t love. It was obsession. His desperation only increased when I met another man. He continued his harassment as though my boyfriend (who is now my husband) didn’t even exist.



Baby flamingo

From late 2009 onwards I made repeated requests for his personal communication to cease but these were ignored. He began manipulating the boundaries by contacting me on the pretext of it being work-related. Then came the quid pro quo harassment. He would find opportunities for me within the company and recommend me to television producers, but only if I was nicer to him. One day the company offered me an honorary position that I’d worked hard for, but he warned me that he had the power to thwart that offer. I threatened to complain to his employer, but he bragged that another woman had accused him of sexual harassment previously and her complaints were ignored. According to him, she had been declared “batshit crazy”. Then, he saw me at conferences and took every opportunity to place me in a vulnerable position. This is where the psychological abuse turned physical and he sexually assaulted me on several occasions.

There is an increasing awareness of sexual harassment in some domains. For example, safety at conferences is becoming a concern for organizers. This seems to have been incited by the so-called “Elevorgate” incident. In 2011, skeptic Rebecca Watson attended an atheist conference as a speaker where she discussed sexism and sexual harassment. In the early hours of the morning a stranger approached her alone in an elevator and invited her back to his hotel room for coffee. She declined. During a YouTube video Watson mentioned this in passing as an example of how not to behave at conferences if you want women to feel safe and comfortable, advising, “Guys, don’t do that.” This resulted unexpectedly in an extreme backlash against her, involving threats, abuse and insults from those who thought she was overreacting, seeking attention, or a man-hater.

However, conference organizers don’t always know how to act when they find sexual harassment. They may panic and overreact, especially when they think they discover an incident. A friend confided a story to me that happened at a conference last year. She was talking to a fellow attendee at a bar when she noticed his eyes drop briefly



to her cleavage.

“Hey, my eyes are up here!” she joked to him. Little did anyone know that a plain-clothes security officer had been enlisted to keep an eye on the attendees and he had overheard this tête-à-tête. My friend was taken to a room where the

officer grilled her. What happened? Was she okay? They could remove the brute from the conference if it would make her feel safer.

This melodramatic response affected her far more than the alleged “harassment” and for the rest of the conference she felt like she was being watched. This is not to downplay real incidents of harassment and assault that are far more common than we’d like to think. Another friend came forward with her story of sexual assault at this same conference. I asked if her attacker was the same as mine and she replied, “No, but the depressing thing is that you’re not the only woman who has asked me this same question, and given yet another name.”

Sometimes an organization under-reacts to the claims. This was my experience. Following “Elevatorgate”, the company introduced a “zero tolerance policy for hostile and harassing conduct”. When I approached them with my accusations they appeared to be compassionate initially. I spent many hours explaining my story over

the phone and days submitting evidence. Then they hired an attorney to collect the facts and I had to repeat the process. I provided access to my email account. I also devoted two days to face-to-face discussions about my ordeal. This “fact collector” also collected a lot of hearsay from my harasser, about how I’m a slut and “batshit crazy”. This tactic of the accused is so common it’s known as the “nut and slut” strategy. I soon learned that the attorney was there to protect them, not me.

Five months after I lodged my complaint I received a letter that was riddled with legalese but acknowledged the guilt of this individual. They had found evidence of “inappropriate communications” and “inappropriate” conduct at conferences. However, they greatly reduced the severity of my claims. When I asked for clarification and a copy of the report they treated me like a nuisance. In response to my unanswered phone calls they sent a second letter that refused to allow me to view the report because they couldn’t release it to “the public”. They assured me they were disciplining the harasser but this turned out to be a mere slap on the wrist. He was suspended, while he was on vacation overseas. They offered no apology, that would be an admission of guilt, but they thanked me for bringing this serious matter to their attention. Then they asked me to not discuss this with anyone. This confidentiality served me at first; I wanted to retain my dignity and remain professional. Then I realized that they are trying to silence me, and this silence only keeps up appearances for them and protects the harasser.

The situation has disadvantaged me greatly. I have lost a project I once worked on, I have had to disclose highly personal information to colleagues, and I don’t think that I’ll be offered work anymore from this company. Perhaps that’s for the best considering the way they have treated me. I have since discovered that this company has a history of sexual harassment claims. They also have a track record of disciplining these harassers lightly, and then closing ranks like good ol’ boys. Another colleague assured me this was better than their previous custom of simply



ignoring claims of sexual harassment.

To avoid becoming sick of talking about sexual harassment we need to feel some empathy for the victims. It may be harder to empathize with a colleague or an acquaintance, so think about how you would feel if this harassment was happening to your wife, husband, daughter, son, brother, sister, mother or father? Then we need to remember our broader responsibility to protect people in our workplace, communities and society. Underestimating the dangers of sexual harassment, and downplaying or ignoring claims, only serves to embolden the harassers. If they get away with sexual harassment, or they don’t even recognize their behavior, they are at risk of doing it again. Let’s not be sick of talking about sexual harassment, but be sick of being silent about it.

**Images:** top: [Richard Masoner](#); bottom: [Annie Mole](#)



**About the Author:** Karen Stollznow is a linguist, columnist and the author of *God Bless America*, *Haunting America* and *Language Myths, Mysteries and Magic*. She received her Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of New England, Australia, and she lives in Denver, Colorado. Follow on Twitter [@karenstollznow](#).

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*The views expressed are those of the author and are not necessarily those of Scientific American.*

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## 28 Comments

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**1. dgweaver**

**11:33 am 08/6/2013**

Thank you for this article. I am a high school teacher and very concerned about sexual harassment in the classroom, as are my colleagues. Some boys feel free to make incredibly graphic comments about women's private parts or sex practices loudly in class. I have tried to educate that this makes the classroom feel unsafe for many other students. I turn in offenders to the administration and they do follow up. While this may temporarily quell it in my classroom, I know it goes on undiminished in the hallways or at lunch. When I identify this as sexual harassment, many students make light of it and laugh it off.

[Link to this](#)

**2. rshoff**

**11:44 am 08/6/2013**

We are all harassed. Sexually or otherwise. Kids call it bullying, adults call it harassment. And we all need to stop. We need to

modify our social norms toward bullying and harassment of any kind. There is no such thing as a ‘harasser’ or a ‘bully’. What we are looking at is behavior of otherwise normal folks. It’s a behavior, not an identity. The behavior is nurtured by social psychology for some reason unknown to me. Until we see harassment and bullying as a behavior and not an identity we will not make much progress in overcoming it.

[Link to this](#)

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**3. rshoff**

**11:50 am 08/6/2013**

And a good place to start is with respect. Perhaps we could try to actively show each other a little respect. One technic may be called ‘manners’. It’s useful when in uncharted territory. That is, when you don’t know have the capacity to sincerely show respect. Which most of us lack, and few can constantly maintain. It takes effort.

[Link to this](#)

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**4. rshoff**

**11:55 am 08/6/2013**

...and empathy! Don’t get me started...

[Link to this](#)

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**5. lawwhite**

**1:37 pm 08/6/2013**

To avoid becoming sick of talking about sexual harassment we need to stop talking about it and take action. An obvious point, but this post highlights it well.

[Link to this](#)

## 6. WRQ9

2:24 pm 08/6/2013

I find it extremely hard to address this issue. At the same time I am in support of peoples right not to feel threatened in the workplace and about, and worried about free speech issues and multiple other conditions that are affected by this issue. A man only needs to be unattractive to be "harassing" rather than "flirting".

Will you enter the houses of these people as children, and explain that they are not "sexy enough" to attempt to initiate relations, or even broach the subject? Will all women cease to talk about sexual issues in public in order not to provoke a response that might be termed harassing?

I am an unattractive male in my fifties now, And believe me, I know whereof I speak. I have watched many situations turn into possible harassment suits that would've been non-issues without the initial actions of the woman being "harassed". On the other hand, I am a man, and the conduct, conversation and beliefs of some men horrify even me. Most of those men are considered "more attractive" than me though, so I may have a Unique perspective on the situation. I often imagine the educational and experiential foundations of such beliefs.

I have found, over the years, that with many people conversation is conversation. There are some glaring exceptions though. Sometimes people use the subtleties of environmental circumstances to achieve much more than what is simply implied in overt condition. These people are acting within a new environment which I would term "divisive". This is nowhere near as rare as it used to be. I think it bloomed in the 70's and has been open to all borders ever since.

Another aspect of this topic I find frustrating is more personal. As an unattractive (to women) male, it is often assumed that I

am, or will eventually become a homosexual. I am not, and probably will not. At this stage of my life I don’t think it likely. Somehow the taunting, slandering and innuendo that I’ve faced over the years never made the category of “sexual harassment” or any other kind.

I would be happy to make a bet on the ratio of successful harassment suits brought by sexy vs less sexy plaintiffs. Just a look at those figures in a competitive and vulnerable marketplace might just let you know my sense of it.

[Link to this](#)

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### 7. A. Noyd

3:21 pm 08/6/2013

@WRQ9

You don’t have a “unique perspective”; you have the same damn perspective as every other guy who thinks that a conversation about sexual harassment needs to revolve around himself and how he’s the real victim because women don’t appreciate him enough.

Maybe people don’t like you not because you’re physically unattractive but because you’re the sort of self-centered, ignorant bore who derails threads about real problems to talk at excessive length about his insecurities while insinuating that actual harassment victims either like being harassed so long as it’s by sexy dudes or are turning non-issues into harassment suits.

And part of your justification for that is how what you’ve



experienced “never made the category of ‘sexual harassment’,” as if anything would make the category without the efforts of people like Karen speaking out, sharing their stories, calling things what they are, and demanding better. But rather than thank her for trying to help wipe out the very behavior that you don’t care to face yourself, you go on a narcissistic rant that diminishes her and other women’s experiences.

[Link to this](#)

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#### 8. mekarooch

3:59 pm 08/6/2013

@A. Noyd

All he said was that he has seen the same type of action from more attractive people be received differently from the less attractive.

Everybody has their own take on things, why do you want to silence the opinions of people just because their experience is one you don’t care about?

[Link to this](#)

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#### 9. The Dude

4:57 pm 08/6/2013

Workplace behavior and public behavior are two different things. Flirting in a bar, or on-line, is quite different than using workplace authority in an attempt to get sexual favors. That is why San Diego Mayor Bob Filner is legally culpable and Anthony Weiner is just a creep.

Yes, respect and manners are the cure. These are almost always taught by the parents. However, the lessons are not always

taught and sometimes not learned. Bad parenting, or lack of parenting, is so often the cause of this type of social problem.

Thanks for sharing this with us, Karen.

[Link to this](#)

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**10. A. Noyd**

**5:12 pm 08/6/2013**

@mekarooch

Oh, that’s all that he said in nearly 400 words, was it? Try again.

Here’s the thing: not all “takes” are equal. His opinions are ignorant and skewed by the same sense of entitlement to women’s attentions that causes harassment against women in the first place. It’s a different version of the “women choose jerks not nice guys like me” complaint. His comment serves to focus on him and not the problems brought up in the OP. He’s not being silenced for expressing his opinions, he’s being criticized for how he’s gone about it.

There are many, many other places he could talk about the chip on his shoulder without derailing and diminishing Karen’s post, but he chose to do it here where it’s inappropriate. In fact, his derailing is part of the cultural response that seeks to silence women who speak out by perpetually redirecting the focus of any conversation dealing with men’s mistreatment of women onto men’s problems and/or things women do wrong.

Also typical of this is how he’s trying to bring the conversation down and confine it to the level of what he knows rather than acknowledging his perspective is the one that needs expanding. There’s a lot he could learn from the OP if he cared to do so.

[Link to this](#)

## 11. dadster

6:08 pm 08/6/2013

Legalities wouldn’t stop this behaviour called sexual harassment .Good morals, generally good gentlemanly behaviour, mutual trust among the two genders are the only ways of stemming it to reasonable proportions. So long as the difference between the characteristic instinctive behaviour of XX and XY chromosomes exist to completely wipe it off is just impossible unless massive genetic engineering is resorted to. Its but natural to feel sexually attracted towards the opposite sex and it is quite un-natural if its otherwise .Its a matter of sublimating this attraction to mutually acceptable levels .We are all humans and not unemotional VULCANS of star trek . The women want to feel sexually attractive and the men too want to feel sexually attractive to the females . In casual conversations and on informal occasions in office tea rooms this tendency surfaces . Women normally takes it as complement to be commented on their attractiveness and on their dress or looks . The problem arises when on formal occasions, or on duty, or for official transactions and official interactions these in formalities are continued ; when for promotions and placements etc, sexual favours are expected or demanded and when looks become physical; then that’s sexual harassment. well meant Complements and genuine appreciations should not be construed as harassment . If even the slightest provocations are labelled and treated as

harassment then no one can go ahead with their normal work and, as correctly brought out, who has time and energy for other’s woes which mostly are indistinguishable from imaginations in the absence of physical solid proof like witnesses or a medical certificate. Each of us must learn to survive in the world as it is made; not made to suit our needs, but as it comes to us. It’s the jungle law where animals of prey and predators share the same ground. Generally, “if you don’t bother them they won’t bother you” principle. Natural tendencies cannot be eliminated but only be kept under control so as not to be offensive to others for which some civilized mentality is what’s to be developed which cannot be done by legalese. Civilized mentality and maturity in our look can only save the day for both men and women. Complaining about each other won’t get both anywhere. A stern look from a woman will normally put any man in his place or discourage him from being funny with her unless he is a violent type. Once disinterest is firmly conveyed by looks that’s more effective than any words or any vocal complaints.

Get workplace organized for women too which it is not now. There should not be any private office rooms even for bosses. All transactions must be open to be seen by all. At best the boss can have a transparent glass sealed sound proof room to ensure confidentiality in conversations between him and his employees. Only conferences involving the senior staff members need be in partially strategically closed conference halls most of which must be visually transparent to the rest of the employees too. Nothing is private in office. Everything every meeting between individuals must be kept in full view of others only. That would considerably reduce harassment when

opportunities for it are eliminated in the offices.

[Link to this](#)

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## 12. Holden Cox

6:28 pm 08/6/2013

As a human being, I overhear a good number of boorish utterances from people barely able to complete sentences. As a man, however, I have to let it go unless I’m willing to intrude uninvited on a conversation and argue the point, risking a physical altercation in the process. I am not able, unlike a feminist, to label an action or statement as verboten without some sort of due process and unleash vigilante justice. The author of this article actually suggests that, in this political climate, no one listens to someone charging sexual harassment. Astonishing. The language is strikingly reminiscent of that used by my conspiracy theory gun-nut friends, convinced that the gubment is poised to come take their guns.

I guess what I’m trying to say is that I don’t believe that your heart is in the right place – that you have a sexist agenda. And I have a rule already in place: I don’t say anything that isn’t well-scripted and well-polished within earshot of anybody in a public place. The NSA is listening, and so is every crank with a cause and a vindictive bent.

[Link to this](#)

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## 13. MotherVoltaire

7:02 pm 08/6/2013

What is missing here is due process for the accused.

Presumably you understand this, which is why you didn’t name any names. But predictably a name has already surfaced



elsewhere on the Internet.

Now it has gotten to the point where the accused needs  
some way to defend himself. Skeptics would, I hope, want to  
listen to all sides. Also Scientific American Mind.

On another matter, please consider discuss in an upcoming  
essay how fellow skeptics are made uncomfortable by over-  
the-top public displays of affection during meetings.

[Link to this](#)

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**14. kebil**

9:37 pm 08/6/2013

The Dude;

That is a very useful distinction that you brought to light.  
Certain behaviors and types of attention are just not  
appropriate at work.

[Link to this](#)

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**15. Chasuk**

9:55 pm 08/6/2013

@Karen Stollznow: You write, “Sexual harassment is often  
trivialized.” I agree with you. You then uses an example from a  
story arc on The Drew Carey Show, in which a female colleague  
is offended by an illustration of a near-sighted caterpillar  
trying to have sex with a crinkle cut fry. You write, “The court  
is sympathetic to the alleged victim but the overall message is

clear: she made a big deal over a simple joke. Moreover, she is a prude.” Well, wasn’t this message accurate? Is there any reason that we should accept an illustration of a near-sighted caterpillar and a crinkle cut fry as sexual harassment? Do we really want to live in a world in which our every action must be measured by its capacity to offend someone?

I’m afraid that I agree with Stephen Fry, who wrote, “It’s now very common to hear people say, ‘I’m rather offended by that.’ As if that gives them certain rights. It’s actually nothing more... than a whine.”

I do believe that sexual harassment is an obnoxious evil, and shouldn’t be tolerated. But I also believe that you chose a bad example of trivialization, which trivialized in itself.

[Link to this](#)

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**16. Karl Johanson**  
**10:32 pm 08/6/2013**

“Sexual harassment is often trivialized.”

Listen to any story of a male being sexually harassed & see if you don’t trivialize it yourself.

“In 2011, skeptic Rebecca Watson attended an atheist conference as a speaker where she discussed sexism and sexual harassment. In the early hours of the morning a stranger...”

The story alternates from him being a stranger & him being someone who hung out with her previously for several hours who thus should have known what she wanted, and her being face blind and not being able to recognize the guy.

“...approached her alone in an elevator and invited her back to his hotel room for coffee. She declined.”

And he accepted “no” for an answer. Welcome to civilization.

A friend of mine recently complained that guys at conventions used to be so friendly in elevators & now they’re silent & look at the walls and she wondered why...

[Link to this](#)

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## 17. NateHevens

10:57 pm 08/6/2013

Actually, MotherVoltaire, before the accused was named, not only did multiple people already know ALL of the players involved, but the accused was actually already reprimanded... sort of...

The accused got “due process” before his name went public.

Also, I’m sick of this crap. Welcome to the Court of Public

Opinion, where there is NO SUCH THING as due process.

[Link to this](#)

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**18. rbevins0**

**11:07 pm 08/6/2013**

Karen, I admire that you took a stand and wrote this. I’m glad that his name is out, as it means that it will be harder to groom vulnerable women as targets. You not only did the right thing, you did the heroic thing.

[Link to this](#)

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**19. Chris Clarke**

**12:01 am 08/7/2013**

Karen, thank you. It’s a brave stand you’ve taken. Sad that it had to be brave.

For Karl Johansen, Holden Cox, dadster, and the other men in this comment thread claiming that this behavior is part of normal sexual behavior or somehow hardwired in human genetics, you are insulting a majority of the men I’ve ever met. Most men do not harass women. Which isn’t to say we’re blameless, because too often we let inane and destructive comments like yours pass unremarked upon. Get used to that not happening anymore. You are providing rhetorical cover for the abusers. That is not okay. You do not speak for me or for the men I know.

By the way: the internet and public discussion isn’t a court of law, so the presumption of innocence is irrelevant. If the man

named objects to being so characterized, then he has recourse both in the courts and in the court of public opinion. Of course, truth is a defense in both venues.

[Link to this](#)

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## 20. Stephanie Z

12:02 am 08/7/2013

“And I have a rule already in place: I don’t say anything that isn’t well-scripted and well-polished within earshot of anybody in a public place.”

Aw, Holden, you broke your rule just for us? Really, you shouldn’t have.

“What is missing here is due process for the accused.”

MotherVoltaire, this has already gone through a formal process. The outcome of that was confirmation that what Radford did was not appropriate behavior, but no action to effectively deal with the problem. This is all in the post. Did you read it?

Karen, thank you for saying this out loud. Thank you for stepping up to see this public cross-examination after everything else you’ve dealt with. I wish no one had to, but I’m glad you could. This makes a difference.



[Link to this](#)**21. hjhornbeck****12:03 am 08/7/2013**

Ugh, so much fail.

The Dude @9:

> Workplace behavior and public behavior are two different things. Flirting in a bar, or on-line, is quite different than using workplace authority in an attempt to get sexual favors.

Wait, are you arguing sexual assault should be legal in bars?  
Remember, Stollznaw claims she was sexually assaulted repeatedly.

dadster @11:

> So long as the difference between the characteristic instinctive behaviour of XX and XY chromosomes exist to completely wipe it off is just impossible unless massive genetic engineering is resorted to.

Citation needed. I argue there is no significant difference, and offer this citation to back that: Hyde, Janet Shibley. “The gender similarities hypothesis.” American psychologist 60.6 (2005): 581.

> The women want to feel sexually attractive and the men too

want to feel sexually attractive to the females.

Hence they sexually assault them?

> Each of us must learn to survive in the world as it is made; not made to suit our needs, but as it comes to us. It's the jungle law where animals of prey and predators share the same ground.

Ah, so you're arguing that some men are born rapists, and that we should do nothing about this.

Holden Cox @12:

> I am not able, unlike a feminist, to label an action or statement as verboten without some sort of due process and unleash vigilante justice.

You didn't read the article, did you? Stollznow followed due process by bringing the issue to her superiors and those tasked with keeping a safe environment. Repeatedly. And they did nothing. Repeatedly. What exactly was she supposed to do, shut up and accept her abuse with gratitude?

[Link to this](#)

**22. hjhornbeck****12:37 am 08/7/2013**

Chasuk @15:

> I do believe that sexual harassment is an obnoxious evil, and shouldn't be tolerated. But I also believe that you chose a bad example of trivialization, which trivialized in itself.

So by choosing a bad example to illustrate how we tend to trivialize sexual harassment, Stollznow trivialized sexual harassment? That's a non-sequeter.

Karl Johansen @16:

> Listen to any story of a male being sexually harassed & see if you don't trivialize it yourself.

OK, I'll take that bet. Point me to a story of sexual harassment against a male, and we'll see if I trivialize it.

> The story alternates from him being a stranger & him being someone who hung out with her previously for several hours who thus should have known what she wanted, and her being face blind and not being able to recognize the guy.

I've never heard Watson claim she hung out with the person for several hours. Do you have a source?

> A friend of mine recently complained that guys at conventions used to be so friendly in elevators & now they’re silent & look at the walls and she wondered why...

Because they’ve learned that talking to people who don’t want to carry on a conversation is a bad idea?

Stollznaw:

Thank you for coming forward with this. You have made things much easier for other women in a similar situation, and made it less likely to happen in future. I admire your bravery, and wish I had a mere fraction of it.

[Link to this](#)

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### 23. Chasuk

1:40 am 08/7/2013

@hjhornbeck: You make a good point, although I’m not sure that I’m actually guilty of committing a full-fledged non-sequitur. What I meant, and which I now accept was not clear, is that if the author is likening the fiction of the Drew Carey Show to sexual harassment, then she has equated something very serious to something very trivial. I probably should have said that, in my opinion, this made a poor analogy.

Thank you for your agreeable disagreement.

[Link to this](#)

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**24. A.A.L.****9:11 pm 08/7/2013**

Thank you for writing this. The first time in my life (from 7th grade on) when I didn't have to worry about or deal with sexual harassment was when I worked for a firm where I represented survivors of sex abuse and rape. I know how hard it is to come forward, how hard it is to realize the company/church/organization you've worked hard for doesn't give a shit that you've been violated (and really only cares about covering its tracks) and how (sadly) little others want to know about what's happened because it's so uncomfortable for them just to hear it.

Only brave women telling their stories will bring change.  
Kudos to you.

[Link to this](#)

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**25.****DrKrishnaKumariChalla****11:29 pm 08/7/2013**

Sounds very familiar! These type of things happen everywhere in the world! I am sure several women across the world can relate to these type of situations. We need not 'tolerate' and remain silent anymore. Hats off to your guts to put it on the web! Women, fight, fight, fight and fight back!

[Link to this](#)



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**26. binthere****1:51 am 08/8/2013**

@ Karen Stollznaw Thank you for this obviously very needed article. You did what we have to keep doing over and over until finally more people begin to comprehend: described the behavior and given it a name.

[Link to this](#)

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**27. Blind Labyrinth****12:57 pm 08/8/2013**

We have written and recorded a new song critical of Dr. Stollznaw’s harasser (whose identity has since been made public) and the organization for which they worked. Please check it out and pass it along.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cy5xEipjKQc>

Blind Labyrinth  
(Kenneth Downey and Robert Gross)

[Link to this](#)

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**28. elisaday****1:59 pm 08/8/2013**

Bravo to you! Thank you for coming forward and writing this piece. I can very much relate to what you have written and I am sure many others can, as well.

[Link to this](#)

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