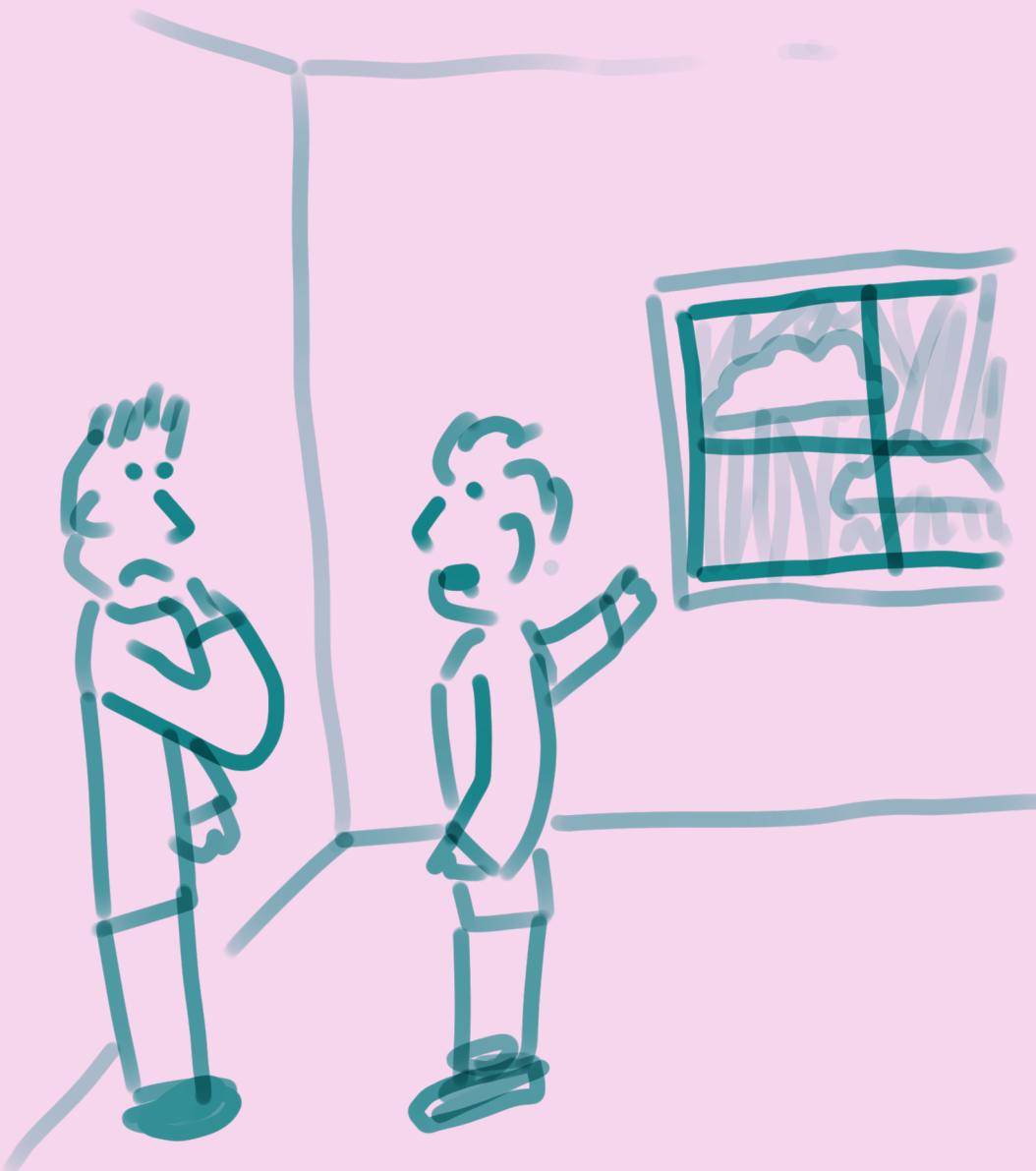


#MeToo

Essay 08 in a Series by Owen Earl

I really hate the way the #metoo movement has gone. It's not that I think we shouldn't have a political or cultural movement that sheds light on how pervasive sexual abuse is in our culture. I am very aware of and disturbed by how violent and broken our sex culture is, and I would love it if we could work towards addressing that. I hate the way the #metoo movement has gone because it's failing to do the thing I want it to, and I think, in its current form, the #metoo movement is actually harmful.

I believe women when they come forward with stories of sexual abuse or misconduct. I think our society and culture is very abusive towards women. Misogynistic thinking is so deeply baked into the fabric of our culture that it's inescapable. Sexual abuse and sexual misconduct and sexual violence are all so common that to doubt someone's story of sexual misconduct is like doubting someone telling you they looked at the sky today. Why would you doubt that? It is genuinely harder to imagine a world



doubting someone
telling you they looked
at the sky today.

where people make that kind of thing up than it is to believe that it's true.

I believe Rose McGowan's claim that the director Alexander Payne had sex with her when she was only 15 and he was in his 20s. That's statutory rape. I believe her because her recollection of the events is vivid and specific. I believe her because she was one of the first people to come forward about Harvey Weinstein and many other women have since corroborated how monstrous he is. I believe her because when she made the accusation she said specifically that she "just want[s] an acknowledgment and an apology" and that she does "not want to destroy" his career or public image. I believe her because we live in a very broken sex culture and I tend to believe anyone who comes forward with stories of sexual misconduct.¹

But she didn't get the acknowledgment and apology she asked for. She didn't

¹ <https://variety.com/2020/biz/news/rose-mcgowan-alexander-payne-sexual-misconduct-allegations-1234737265/>



her recollection of the events
is vivid and specific

get the acknowledgment and apology I think she deserves. Instead, Alexander Payne made a statement denying that it ever could have possibly happened, and now Rose McGowan is very mad at him. "I said I didn't want to destroy, now I do. Why do these men always lie?" she asks.²

I know perfectly well why Alexander Payne lied about committing statutory rape: He wanted to direct *The Holdovers* and men who admit to rape have a difficult time finding work in Hollywood. It's a selfish reason to deny sexual misconduct, but I think anyone can understand the motivation.

And to me this situation is tragic and infuriating. Nobody seems to care that Rose McGowan claims that Alexander Payne committed sexual misconduct. She came out with these accusations five years ago and it's had no discernible effect on his career whatsoever. Just

² <https://variety.com/2020/film/news/alexander-payne-rose-mcgowan-sexual-misconduct-allegations-1234759987/>



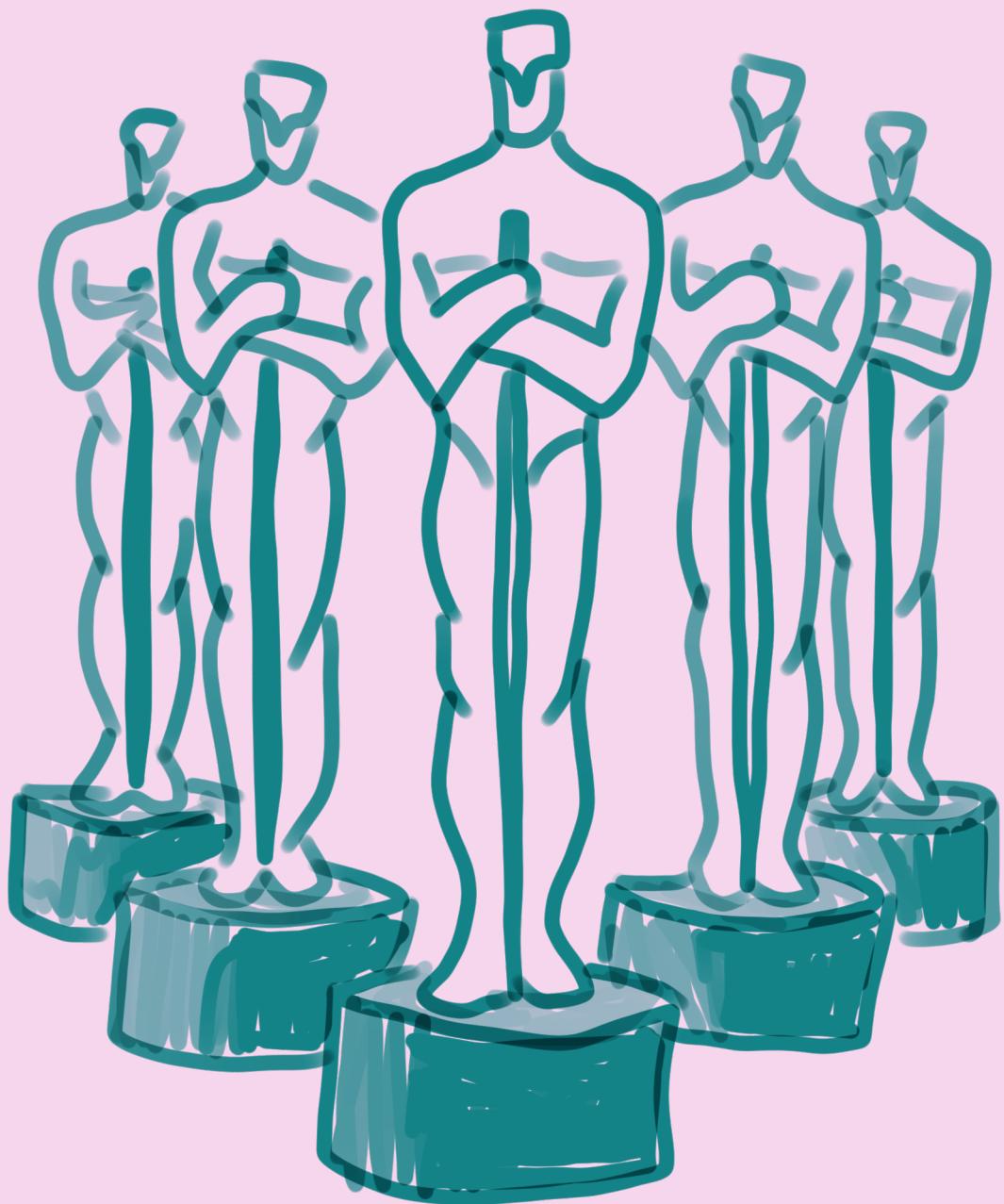
He wanted to direct *The Holdovers* and
men who admit to rape have a difficult
time finding work in Hollywood

last year *The Holdovers* was nominated for five Oscars.

And I liked that movie, and I'm glad that Alexander Payne was able to make it. I'm not mad because I want him to be banished to Europe like Roman Polanski or something, I'm mad because it seems like his ability to continue directing movies has come at the expense of Rose McGowan. Can you imagine being in her position? Helping to expose one of the biggest monsters in Hollywood and getting praise and love for it and then having those same people completely ignore and sweep under the rug your accusation of sexual misconduct against a different person because we like that guy's movies too much?

I would feel unsafe. I would feel betrayed.

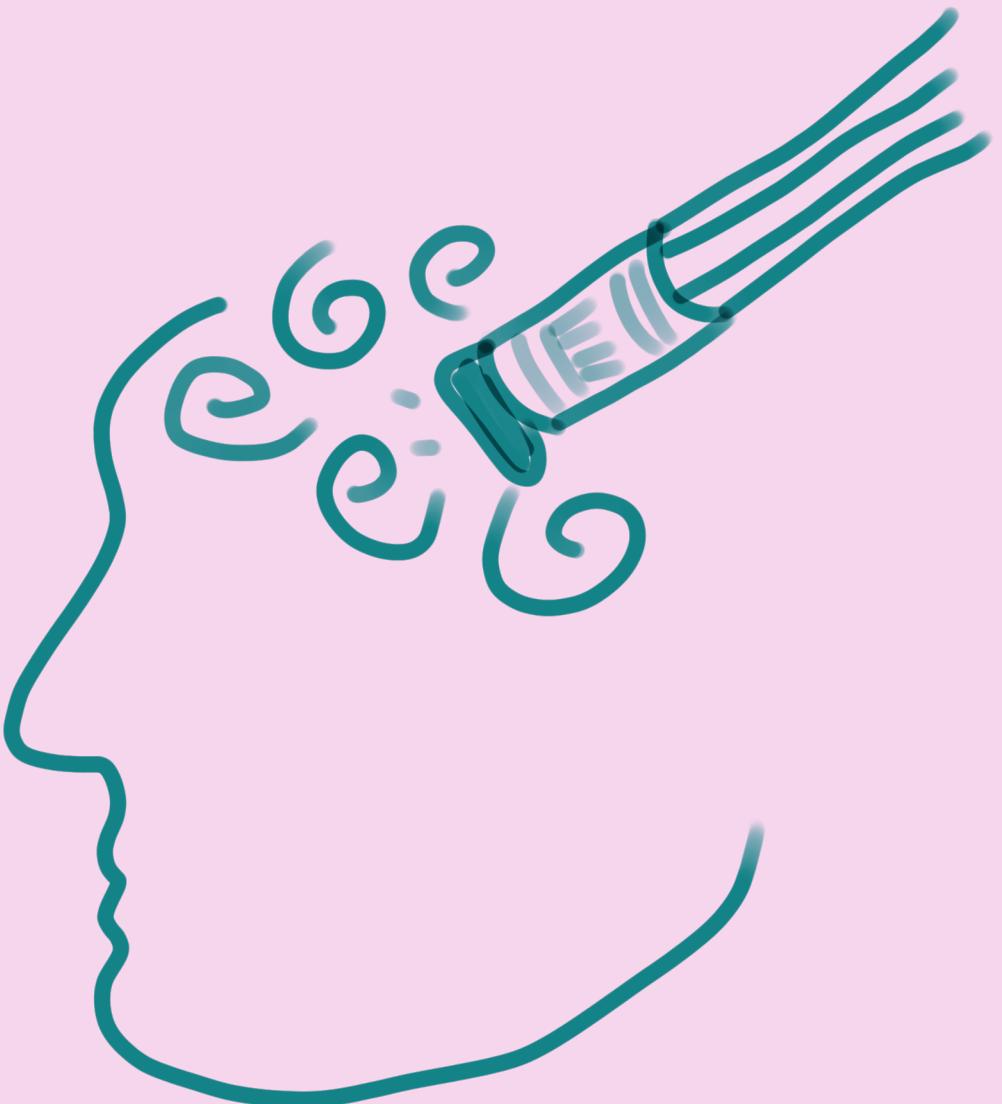
It doesn't have to be like this. What Alexander Payne is accused of doing is forgivable. It would have taken place during the '80s, and his alleged actions seem a lot more like someone



The Holdovers was nominated
for five Oscars

who's learned some harmful ideas from culture and is acting out of ignorance than a willful predator. The fact that no one has come forward with any contemporary accusations suggests that maybe he's unlearned some of those harmful ideas in the last 40 years. I think he's probably someone we can trust with the power and responsibility that comes along with directing movies.

And of course, part of why I don't think he's a big predator is because I'm taking cues from Rose McGowan. She made it very clear that she didn't want to "destroy" him, and I have no reason to doubt her sincerity. She also said that she didn't understand it was wrong at the time. Because it was the '80s and back then it was rare for people to have an awareness around sex and consent that is more common today. She asked for an acknowledgment and an apology and I really think she would have forgiven him if she got what she asked for.



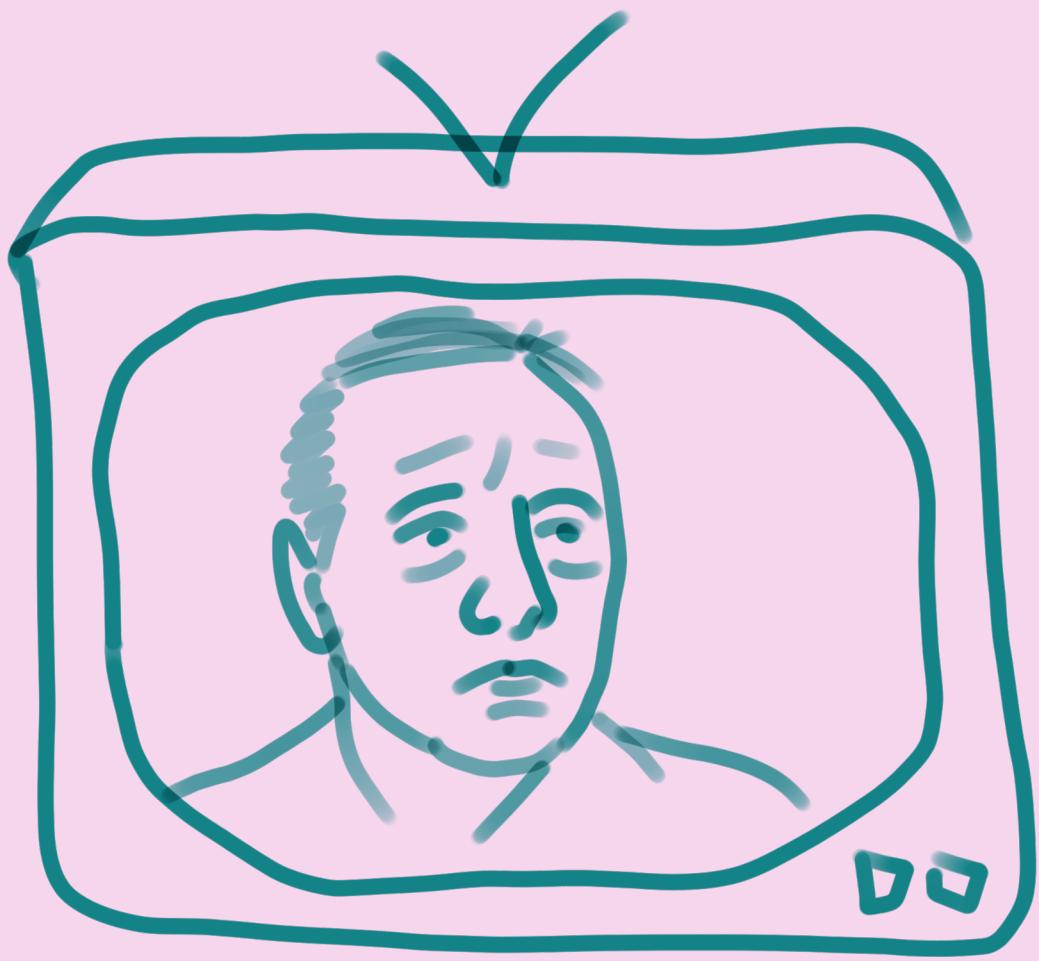
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And it's under those circumstances that I would have preferred to have Alexander Payne direct *The Holdovers*.

But of course that's not going to happen because he has denied meeting her before the '90s. He wrote that he "admired her commitment to activism" but that she is "mistaken."³

I don't think Alexander Payne is irrational for being reluctant to admit to sexual misconduct. Many of the people who got canceled during the #metoo movement have never recovered. Look at Kevin Spacey, Louis C.K., or Harvey Weinstein's IMDB pages. It's very obvious something happened to their careers in 2017 which they've never recovered from. I've heard some people say that cancel culture isn't real, and I've always found that to be a confusing sentiment. If cancel culture isn't real then how come I haven't seen Kevin Spacey in any movies or TV shows since he got

³ <https://deadline.com/2020/09/alexander-payne-denies-rose-mcgowan-underage-allegation-guest-column-1234570984/>

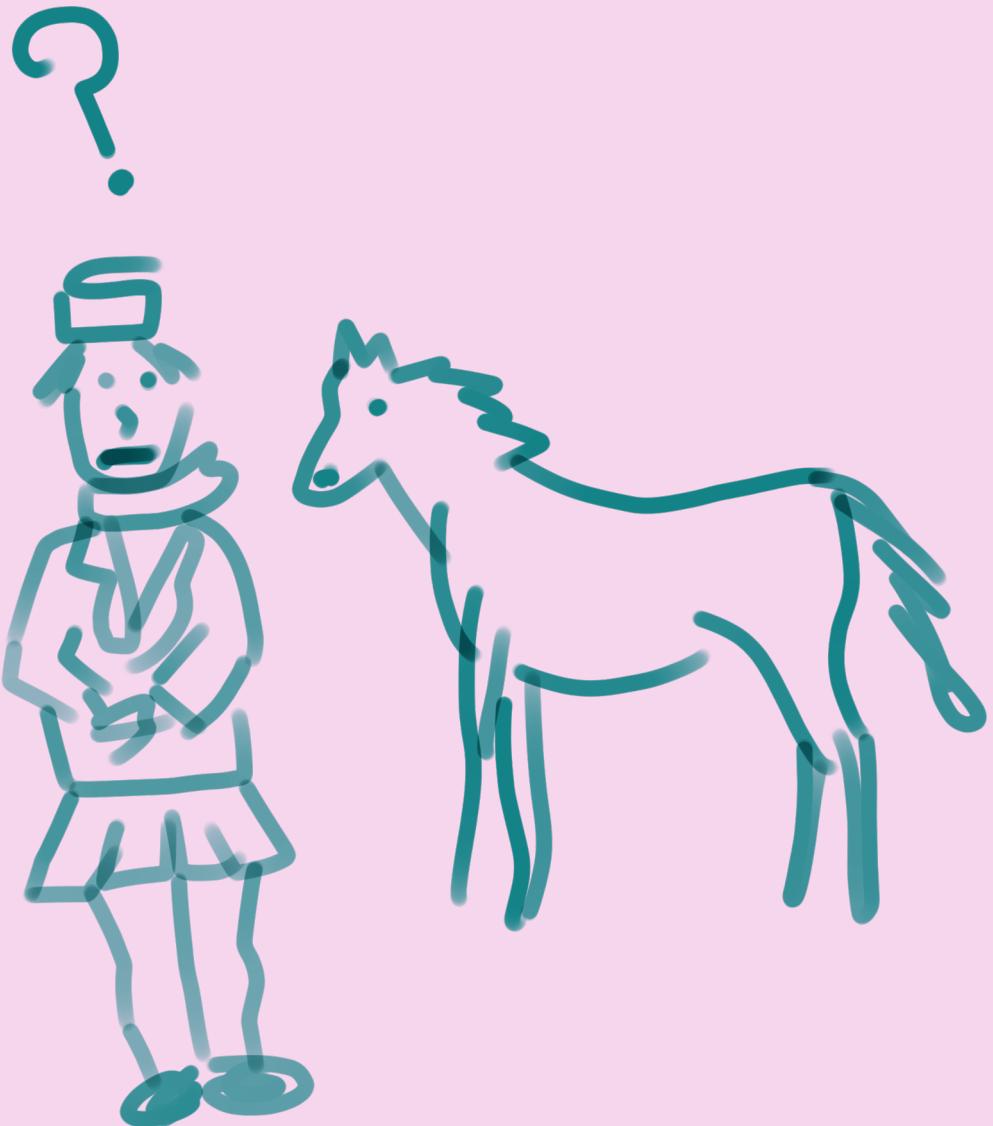


how come I haven't seen
Kevin Spacey in any
movies or TV shows

accused of sexual misconduct in 2017? You expect me to believe that he voluntarily left *House of Cards*?

I think what people are getting at when they say that "cancel culture isn't real" is that there are some people who don't disappear, even after they're accused of heinous crimes. Donald Trump has been accused of rape and other sex crimes by numerous women, and it's easy to believe there's some truth to these accusations on account of him being caught on tape bragging about sexually assaulting people. And Donald Trump is currently the president of the United States. Brett Kavanaugh was also accused of rape, and that didn't stop him from becoming a justice of the supreme court. Elon Musk allegedly showed his penis to a flight attendant and then tried to bribe her with a horse, and I still have to see his ugly face on the news constantly.⁴

⁴ <https://gizmodo.com/elon-musk-penis-horse-spacex-flight-attendant-sexual-misconduct-1848953120>



Elon Musk allegedly showed his penis
to a flight attendant and then
tried to bribe her with a horse

Cancel culture is real. But it never seems to impact the people who I'd actually like to see get canceled. I hate Brett Kavanaugh, Donald Trump, and Elon Musk. I would hate them even if they were never accused of sexual misconduct, because they are evil men with fascistic agendas who are actively making my life and the lives of people I love worse. It would be nice if the fact they're accused of sex crimes made them go away.

How am I expected to not feel angry at this situation? I liked seeing Kevin Spacey in the movies, I liked Louis C.K.'s weird TV show, I thought Pixar was better when John Lasseter was in charge, and *Rick & Morty* was more charming before Justin Roiland was booted. It feels like the #metoo movement is taking something away from me, cutting artists' who I admire careers short. It's like they've died, but in some ways it's even worse. I can still watch old Robin Williams films and feel warm and fuzzy, but it's kind of hard to watch *Annie Hall* these days.



It's like they've died, but
in some ways it's even worse.

It's not that I want sexual predators running around making movies. It's just that I just wish that the powerful and elite would be held to the same standard. The #metoo movement was going after people like Harvey Weinstein and Louis C.K. in 2017. 2019 was the year I learned that Jeffrey Epstein owned a private island where he was allegedly prostituting underage girls out to people like Prince Andrew and Donald Trump, and then the second he got caught he died in a manner some people have characterized as suspicious, and it seems increasingly apparent that people like Bill Clinton and Bill Gates are rich and powerful enough to not only have access to forms of systematic sexual exploitation regular people can only imagine, but access to enough power and influence to avoid ever facing any repercussions whatsoever for their alleged involvement with the aforementioned systematic sex abuse. We will never know what happened on Epstein's private sex abuse island, because, even though he reportedly



Jeffrey Epstein owned
a private island

videotaped many sex crimes, those tapes mysteriously vanished along with his life. And we are left having to speculate as to why someone like Bill Clinton appears on the "Lolita Express" flight logs over 20 times.⁵

I don't believe in trickle-down economics, but I do believe in trickle-down culture. I think the way that people in positions of power and authority act has a profound influence on the way the people beneath them act. Hollywood celebrities have a lot of power and influence and so holding them to account isn't just important on an individual level, but it's important to the culture. It models to the rest of us that we should be careful and intentional with how we engage in sexual dynamics.

And that all made sense back in 2017, but now that we know about the sex abuse island for the rich and powerful something very different is being modeled. Celebrities are actually not

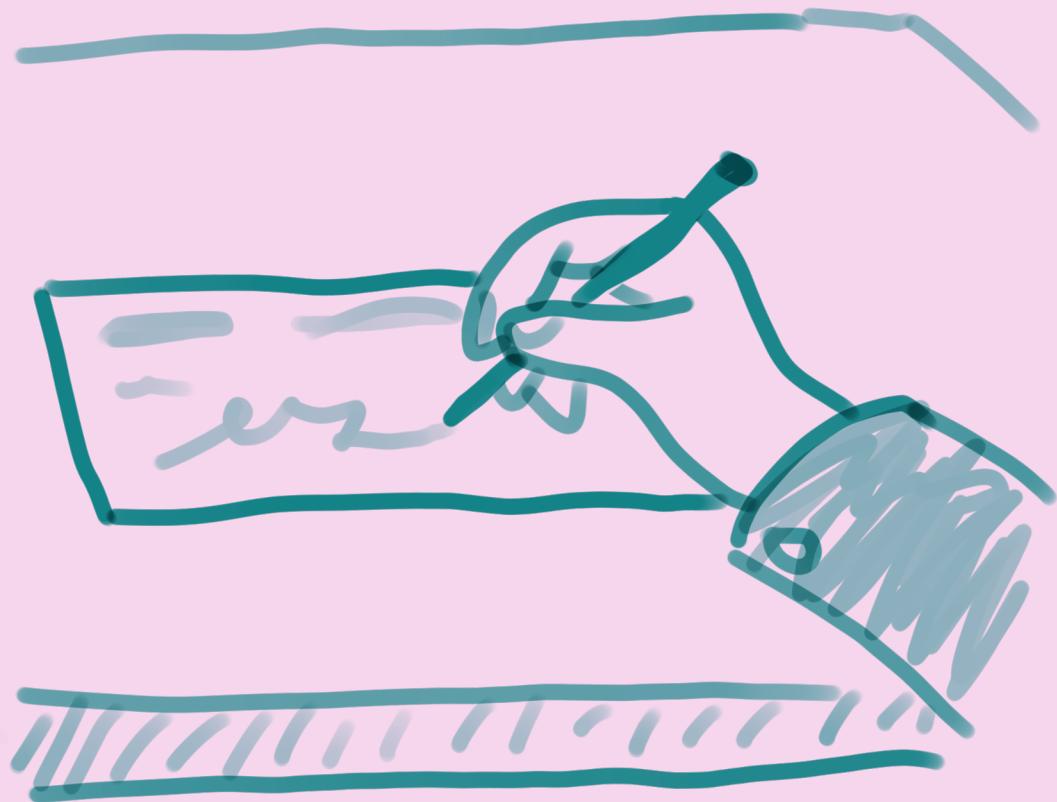
⁵ <https://www.foxnews.com/us/flight-logs-show-bill-clinton-flew-on-sex-offenders-jet-much-more-than-previously-known>



those tapes
mysteriously vanished

all that powerful when compared to billionaires or the political elite. They are in movies and TV shows because people much richer and more powerful than themselves are willing to write their cheques and the second it becomes even slightly inconvenient to keep them in movies and TV shows they get cut loose, and so the thing that's actually being modeled to me is that the people who make art who's impact on my life has been nothing but positive are held to a standard that these ghoulish assholes with money don't even pretend to hold themselves to, and I'm expected to feel grateful when the freaks with money banish the artists and take away their ability to bring me joy because to feel anything but grateful is to endorse the sexual misconduct the artists are accused of.

Sarah Silverman was friends with Louis C.K. before either of them was famous or popular. She claims that he used to ask to masturbate in front of her and she would sometimes say "fuck yeah, I want to see that." She says "it was



people much richer and more
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amazing." And maybe you're someone who doesn't like to watch men masturbate, but Sarah Silverman is not a victim. They were equals, they were friends, it was consensual, and she has made it very clear that she doesn't feel victimized.⁶

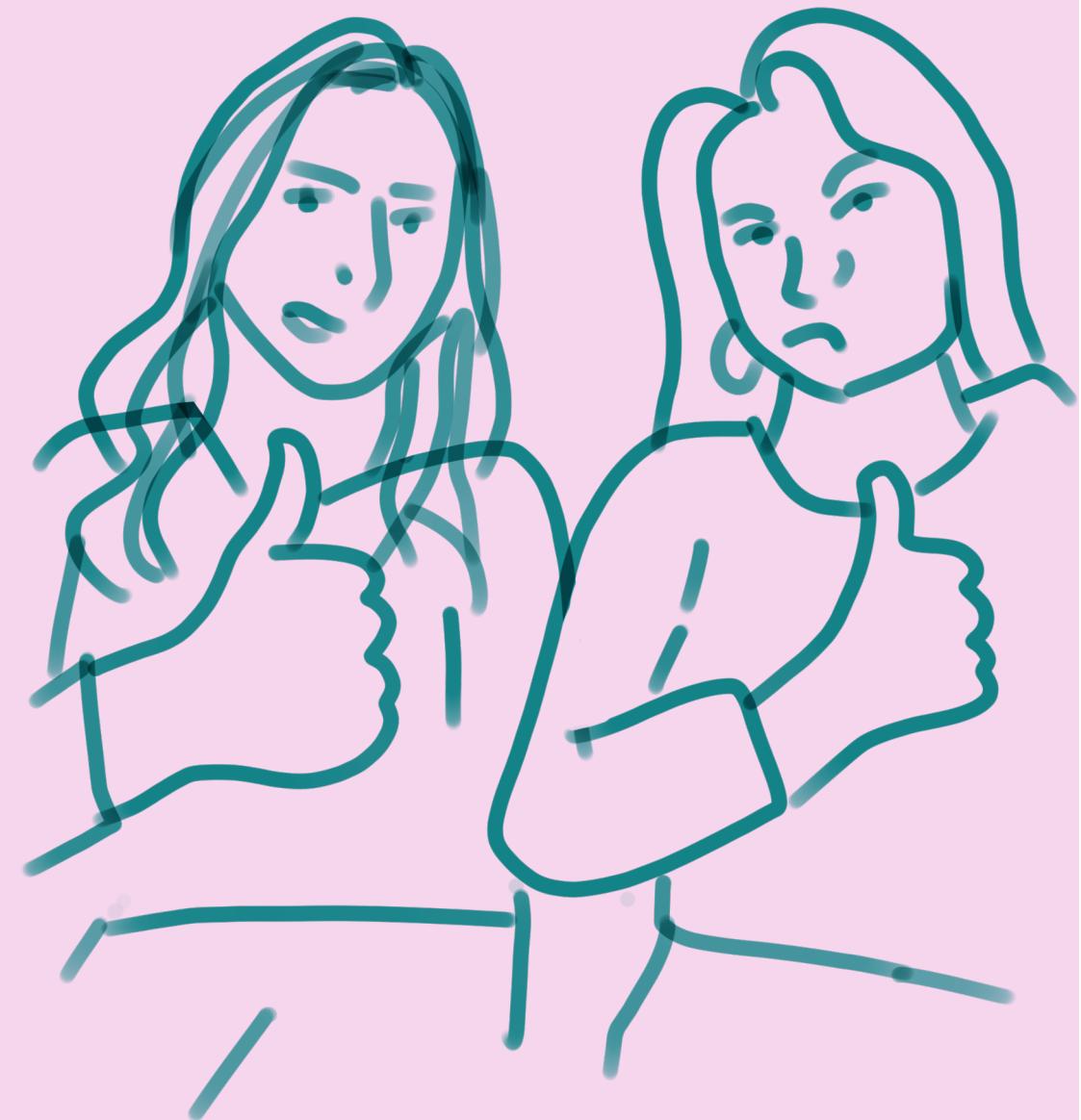
For a while, after Louis C.K. became famous and influential, he continued to ask women to watch him masturbate. When his coworker Rebecca Corry said "no" he respected her answer. When the comedy duo Dana Min Goodman and Julia Wolov gave him a sarcastic thumbs up he took that as a license to get naked and masturbate to orgasm in front of two women he had only just met.^{7,8}

2005 is the last year anyone has accused him any wrong-doing, and in the 2010s he started privately writing women apologies, including an apology to Rebecca Corry, who, again, said "no" and as far as the reporting goes

6 <https://variety.com/2018/tv/news/sarah-silverman-louis-ck-masturbated-1202988208/>

7 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/arts/television/louis-ck-sexual-misconduct.html>

8 <https://www.vox.com/culture/2017/11/9/16629400/louis-ck-allegations-masturbation>



comedy duo Dana Min Goodman
and Julia Wolov gave him
a sarcastic thumbs up

he respected that answer and didn't bring it up again until the apology.

Sarah Silverman says that "he felt like he was the same person, but the dynamic was different and it was not okay." And I'm not saying that what Louis C.K. did was okay or excusable, but I am saying it seems like this guy learned from his mistakes and stopped making women feel incredibly uncomfortable with his sexual antics over ten years before the *New York Times* exposé came out in 2017, and it's hard for me to not relate to this guy a bit because I, too, have on occasion made people feel uncomfortable with my sexual antics and I certainly bear responsibility for my actions, but I'd be lying if I said I don't suspect that in a culture with a less toxic relationship to sex I might have never learned some of the problematic ideas that lead me to be pushy about sex in the first place, and what I'm really trying to say is that in the spring of 2020 Louis C.K. tried to donate \$2,800 to Joe Biden's



in the spring of 2020
Louis C.K. tried to
donate \$2,800 to Joe Biden

presidential campaign and the campaign returned the money.⁹

And it feels like the rich and the powerful are rubbing it in our faces. Because despite the liberal media's attempt to paint the women who accused Joe Biden of forcibly sticking his fingers up her vagina as crazy or politically motivated, I believe her. Because Joe Biden is an 82-year-old white guy who is constantly sniffing people's hair on TV and victims of sexual assault often act in weird and illogical ways, and the same media outlets who were painting Tara Reade as crazy were also telling me Joe Biden was mentally fit for office despite the fact that he often forgot what state he was in and in at least once case what he was campaigning for, and it kind of comes off like the media outlets who were telling me this guy was mentally fit for office were hellbent on getting him elected despite what ever facts arose that inconvenienced that agenda, and I

⁹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200422222518/https://time.com/5825872/joe-biden-donation-louis-ck/>



Joe Biden is an 82-year-old
white guy who is constantly
sniffing people's hair on TV

wouldn't put it past them to be uncharitable in their treatment of Tara Reade.¹⁰

I believe her story is true because doubting someone who has a story of experiencing sexual misconduct is like doubting someone who tells you they looked at the sky today. Why would you doubt that?

And even if you're someone who thinks Joe Biden didn't commit sexual assault, it's pretty rich having him return Louis C.K.'s money when he'll happily accept Bill Clinton's endorsement and trot him out to give a speech during his presidential campaign considering Bill Clinton is probably more known for cheating on his wife with Monica Lewinsky when she was only 22 and he was the most powerful man on earth than he is for anything else he did during his presidency. At least five women have accused Bill Clinton of rape or sexual assault, and, again, he appears on

¹⁰ <https://nypost.com/2020/02/25/joe-biden-says-hes-a-candidate-for-us-senate-in-latest-gaffe/>



Bill Clinton is probably more
known for cheating on his
wife with Monica Lewinsky

Jeffrey Epstein's flight logs over 20 times.^{11,12}

How does refusing to accept a couple thousand dollars from Louis C.K., who isn't even accused of touching anyone inappropriately, helpful to anyone? I hate Joe Biden and I hate Bill Clinton and I hate the fact that these men can be accused of war crimes and sexual assault and then act so morally superior that they can't accept a donation in the fight against Donald Trump, who's also a rapist and war criminal, from a guy who's accused of kind of not fully understanding the nuances of sexual power dynamics in the early 2000s.

My argument is not that we should let Hollywood celebrities off the hook for their sexual misconduct. My argument is that whatever benefit canceling them has culturally is completely undermined by the slew of rich and powerful people who are accused of

11 <https://youtu.be/MdHMwrjsK90>

12 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton_sexual_assault_and_misconduct_allegations



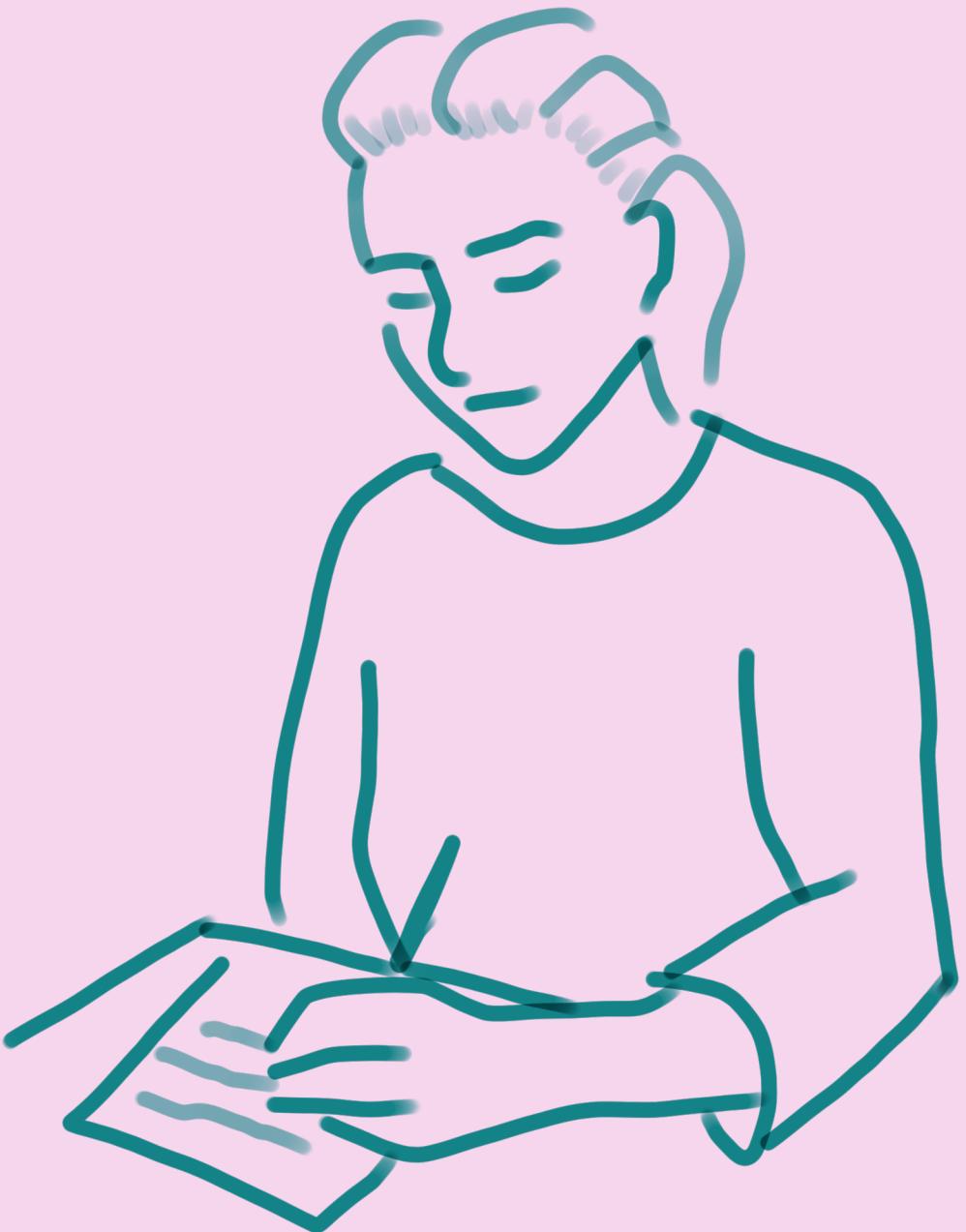
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doing far more heinous and disturbing stuff who are able to walk around facing zero consequences whatsoever. In a post-Jeffrey-Epstein world it's just emotionally difficult for me to take the accusations against someone like Louis C.K. very seriously. The hypocrisy and irony of it all really undermines the movement.

In 2018 Amber Heard wrote an op-ed in the *Washington Post* claiming she was the victim of domestic abuse. She doesn't mention Johnny Depp by name once in the entire article, but that didn't stop him from suing her for defamation the following year. The trial took place in 2022 and I think more than anything it marked a big change in the trajectory of the #metoo movement.¹³

Before Johnny Depp there was a bit of a formula when it came to responding to sexual misconduct accusations. People would release a public

¹³ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ive-seen-how-institutions-protect-men-accused-of-abuse-heres-what-we-can-do/2018/12/18/71fd876a-02ed-11e9-b5df-5d3874f1ac36_story.html



Amber Heard wrote an op-ed
in the *Washington Post*

statement vaguely acknowledging that they've been accused of doing something wrong before saying they were taking time away from the spotlight to reflect and get therapy and get better. These statements almost never acknowledged the wrong-doing with any specificity, most likely to avoid opening up any legal liability, and it's very obvious that in most cases it was just a PR move to do damage control in the hopes that things would blow over in a couple months and they could reemerge and go back to business as usual.

Johnny Depp bucked this trend by not only refusing to even pretend to admit wrong-doing, but by legally and very publicly attacking the person who had accused him of domestic violence. This tactic proved extremely successful. Not only did the jury find Amber Heard legally liable for defamation, but Johnny Depp was vindicated in the, arguably more important, court of public opinion.

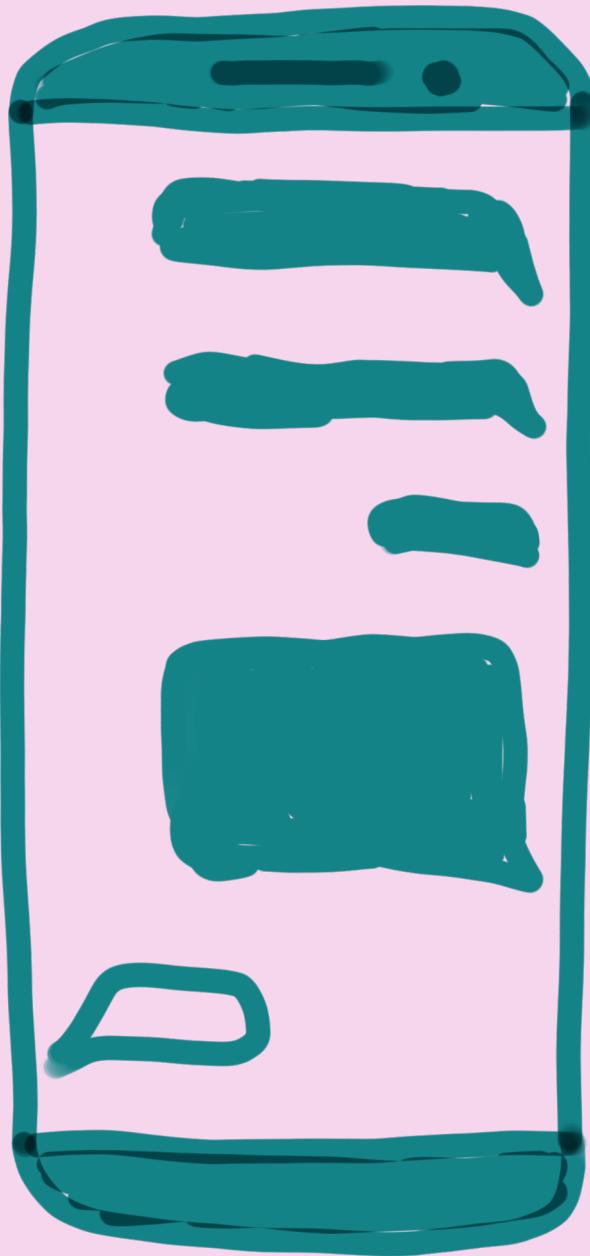


saying they were taking
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to reflect and get therapy

For weeks people were making memes about how Amber Heard was an evil and manipulative woman who was wrongfully attacking Johnny Depp, a poor, innocent victim of a man. Never mind how obvious it is that Johnny Depp has an alcohol problem. Never mind he said "let's burn Amber" in a text message. "Let's drown her before we burn her. I will fuck her burnt corpse afterwards to make sure she's dead" is just the kind of texts normal nonabusive partners send their friends.¹⁴

I'd imagine most people who review the evidence and think about the situation critically would probably come to the same conclusion I have, which is that Johnny Depp probably did abuse Amber Heard when they were together. But it also seems like a very common kind of abusive relationship. He got drunk and assaulted his wife and in at least one case she admitted to hitting him back, and the whole thing seems messy and personal and much more like the kind

¹⁴ <https://news.sky.com/story/johnny-depp-faces-tough-questioning-as-graphic-texts-about-amber-heard-and-bloody-mirror-message-photos-are-shown-in-court-12594467>



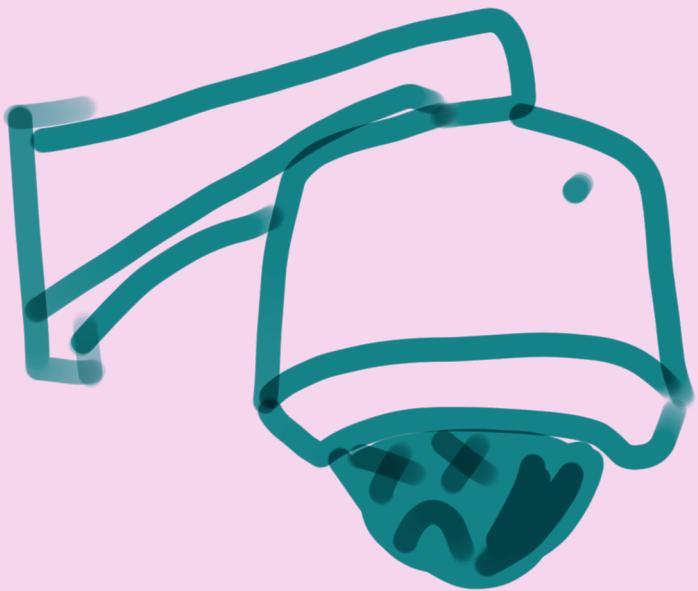
just the kind of texts
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of thing regular people do than attending parties at Epstein's private island.¹⁵

By 2022 I think most people were pretty fed up with having their favorite celebrities canceled over allegations of misconduct, and the Johnny Depp Amber Heard trial was a perfect vehicle to express this frustration.

Cynical people will say that the world just wasn't ready to confront how truly pervasive our broken sex culture is and that a backlash to the #metoo movement in the form of something like what happened to Amber Heard was inevitable. That's probably true, but I also wonder if things would have shaken out that way if it weren't for Jeffrey Epstein mysteriously dying in his cell at the same moment several security cameras in the jail he was being kept at malfunctioned and also the staff didn't do the wellness check they were supposed to three years before the trial started. I can't

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c977de3x007o>



security cameras in
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speak for other people but I can say for myself that I became a bit disillusioned with the #metoo movement after that, and if rich and powerful people I hate don't face consequences for human trafficking and abusing minors, than why should Johnny Depp face consequences for a form of domestic violence that is so common it's almost mundane?

Maybe it's okay to be fed up with the #metoo movement. Maybe it's okay to not want Johnny Depp's career to be ended the way Kevin Spacey's has. But what's not okay is what happened to Amber Heard. All of the frustration and anger about the #metoo movement got focused and projected onto her for the crime of publicly talking about being the victim of domestic abuse. She didn't even say Johnny Depp's name. I really don't think she was trying to hurt his career; she was just trying to talk about what it's like being in an abusive relationship, something that she has every right to speak on, and the fact that she got



All of the frustration and anger
about the #metoo movement got
focused and projected onto her

villainized for it to the degree that she did is truly terrifying.

There is something so cruel and tragic and evil about the fact that an innocent women was turned into a punching bag for everyone to take their frustrations with the #metoo moment out on. Women should feel safe to publicly share their stories of sexual misconduct or domestic violence or anything else they suffer under. We should all feel safe publicly talking about our experiences. Victims, especially, should feel safe and cared for when they come forward.

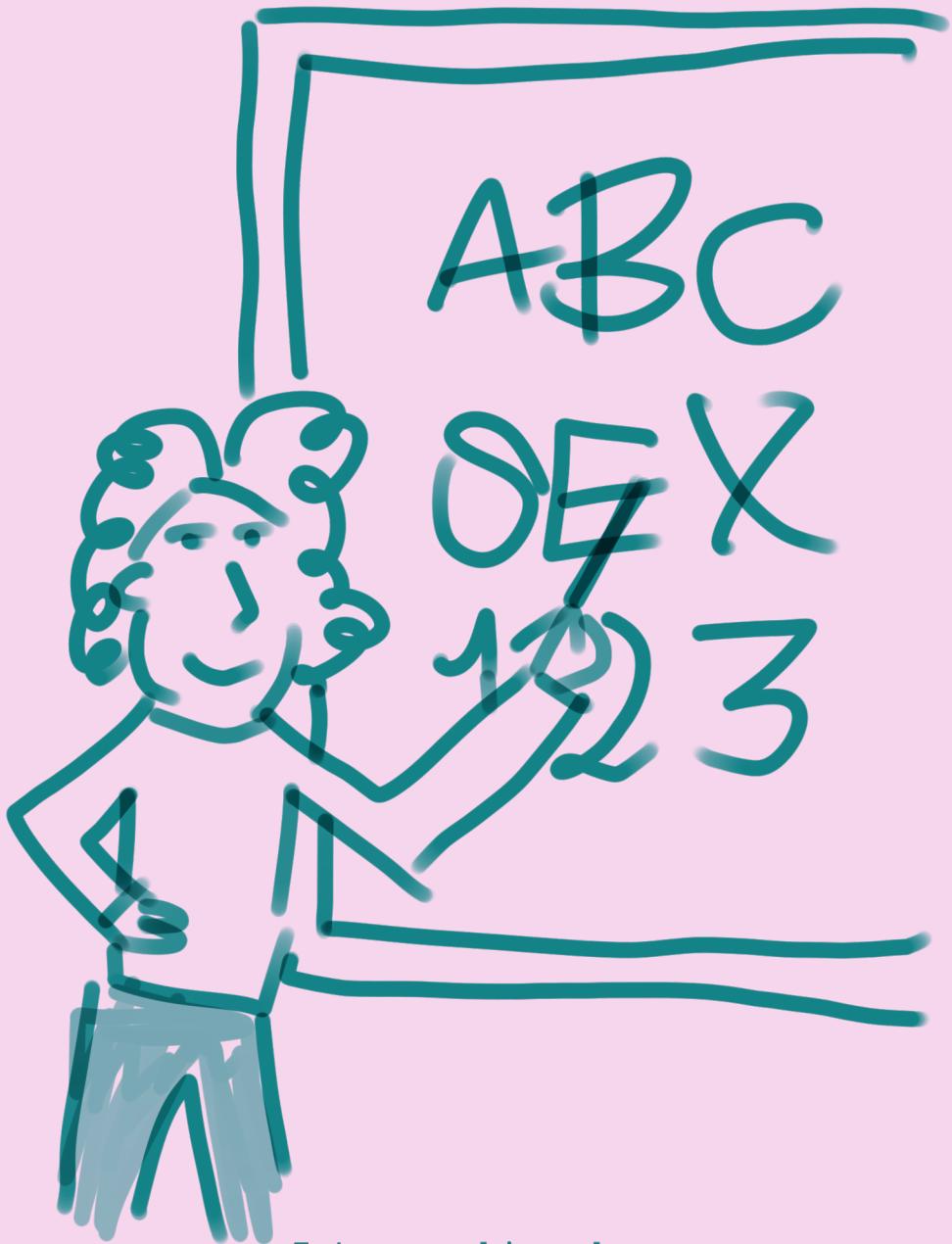
Amber Heard has every right in the world to speak to her experience being in an abusive relationship, and if Johnny Depp's career suffers because of that, blame the Hollywood executives who have stopped signing his cheques. They're the ones who have the power, they're the ones who are making that decision, Amber Heard didn't even accuse Johnny Depp by name.



blame the Hollywood
executives who have stopped
signing his cheques

The truth of the matter is that the #metoo movement was broken all the way back in 2017; it was broken the moment the focus became prosecuting and punishing big name Hollywood men for their transgressions. Sex abuse, as much as this is not fun to admit, is a cultural problem. It's something that is learned and taught. Unhealthy and problematic ideas about sex are so deeply ingrained in our culture that every one of us carries those ideas some degree.

In 2017 Kevin Spacey was accused of assaulting actor Anthony Rapp when Rapp was only 14 years old. Kevin Spacey's father was a white-supremacist neo-Nazi who not only verbally abused his children, but according to Kevin Spacey's brother "raped and beat" him. I am not saying that Kevin Spacey shouldn't be held accountable for assaulting an underage boy, but I do want to point out there's similarities between the culture of the household he grew up in and his problematic behavior. Maybe Kevin Spacey is an evil person, but it



It's something that
is learned and taught

also seems like somebody taught him how to be evil, and getting rid of Kevin Spacey without getting rid of the culture that produced him will not solve this problem.¹⁶

Actress Asia Argento was one of the first women who came forward about her experience being sexually abused by Harvey Weinstein in 2017. She didn't just help by telling her story, she helped share the stories of over 100 women with similar experiences. She used her platform to help make visible to the world just how big of a monster Harvey Weinstein was. And then in 2018 it came out that she, allegedly, had sex with actor Jimmy Bennett when he was still a minor.^{17,18}

I believe Asia Argento committed statutory rape. She apparently gave him alcohol and pushed him back on the bed and started having sex with him when he was just barely seventeen

16 <https://www.distractify.com/p/kevin-spacey-childhood>

17 <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2017/nov/07/harvey-weinstein-sexual-abuse-accusers-list>

18 <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/19/us/asia-argento-assault-jimmy-bennett.html>



she helped share the
stories of over 100 women
with similar experiences

years old and she was ten years his senior, and it does not seem like he wanted it.

And I am not saying that Asia Argento isn't a monster, but I am saying that she was allegedly raped by Harvey Weinstein and went on to have a sexual relationship with him that lasted for years and if for years the sex that you're having is with someone who is a rapist it's possible that maybe you would start to confuse rape for sex and it isn't crazy to think the statutory rape you go on to commit is less a reflection of your evil nature and more a reflection of the evil culture we're all swimming in, and sometimes people are both victims and predators at the same time.

I don't want to think about how messed up and complicated all this is, because I know I'm implicated in that. I know that I have messed up and broken ideas about sex, and I know that I'm capable of bringing that brokenness into my sex life, and hurting people I love. And that is so



a reflection of the
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difficult and painful to look at that I'd rather believe anything else.

And it's very easy and convenient to believe that a few men are born evil and the cause of all things bad. If I recognize some part of myself in them and feel uncomfortable, I can tell myself the discomfort I feel is something they are creating, and it's due to their wickedness. I can project my own brokenness onto them.

I want to round up all these evil men and punish them for what they've done. I want to make them symbols of the evil acts they've committed. I want to take away their money and fame and fortune and I want it to hurt them because they did something bad and maybe if they suffer enough their pain will balance out the pain they've caused and that will be justice.

But we're all implicated in this. And if we banish every person who has broken ideas about sex there will be no one left. And at some point it was



And it's very easy and
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inevitable that we would fatigue of banishing evil people.

I worry that in saying this it sounds like I don't think anyone should ever be held accountable for committing sex crimes. And I'm worried that I come off like some backwards misogynist who is nostalgic for time when "sexual harassment" wasn't even a term that had been invented yet.

I do want people to face consequences for their misconduct, but I want the focus of the consequences to be about promoting a safer sex culture, not punishment. There are people, like Harvey Weinstein, who did evil things and have never really taken accountability for it, and I don't think he should be making movies. I don't trust him to wield that power responsibly, and for me, taking away his power isn't about making him personally suffer, it's about keeping people safe.

But there are also people like Louis C.K. out there. When he was called out



I don't think he should
be making movies

for his sexual misconduct he released a statement that begins "I want to address the stories told to the *New York Times* by five women. [...] These stories are true."¹⁹

I encourage you to read his statement and draw your own conclusions. To me it comes off as someone who is willing to take accountability. Kevin Spacey started his statement by saying he "doesn't remember" what happened, and then pivots by coming out as gay. Harvey Weinstein starts his statement by saying he "came of age in the '60s and '70s, when all the rules [...] were different" and then pivots to saying he's going to give the National Riffle Association his "full attention." Most of the time people's statements are bizarre and vague and leave something to be desired. It is extraordinarily rare for men who are accused of misconduct to admit point-blank that the accusations are true.²⁰

19 <https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/10/entertainment/louis-ck-full-statement/index.html>

20 <https://www.thewrap.com/harvey-weinstein-statement-sexual-misconduct-claims/>



he "came of age in the '60s
and '70s, when all the rules
[...] were different"

And maybe that's not enough, but it's a start.

If I was in Alexander Payne's position, accused of statutory rape, and I looked at how things had gone the past couple of years, I would deny it. Johnny Depp denied committing domestic abuse and now he's the face of a cologne. Joe Biden denied committing sexual assault and he got to be president. Louis C.K. admitted fault and he wasn't even allowed to donate money to the Joe Biden campaign.

I think that maybe people are afraid to critically reexamine the way the #metoo movement went. I think nobody wants to be the guy arguing that "maybe #metoo went too far," or express feelings of anger or frustration about how things have gone. It comes off like you disagree with the intent of the movement, like you don't want to create a safer sex culture, like you don't want to support victims, like you don't want abusers to face consequences.



Johnny Depp denied committing
domestic abuse and now he's
the face of a cologne.

But I worry what we've done instead is much worse. It feels like no one wants to admit they have issues with how the #metoo movement went, but people are still allowing their unhappiness with the movement to motivate their actions. And now what's happening is that when people get called out we all bury our heads in the sand and pretend it's not happening because that seems to be the only way we avoid canceling our favorite celebrities.

Brad Pitt has been accused of domestic violence. Bill Murray and Morgan Freeman have both been accused of sexual misconduct. Alexander Payne's been accused of statutory rape. Are we going to talk about this? Are we going to give the victims space to tell their stories? Or are we just going ignore it and invite Bill Murray on to the SNL 50th anniversary special?

Believe it or not, I didn't always feel bad about the #metoo movement. In fact there was a moment early on in it that is so beautiful and precious to

LA LA LA LA
I CAN'T
HEAR YOU



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in the sand and pretend
it's not happening

me that it's probably worth every thing that's come after.

#metoo has become a verb that men experience. They get "#metooed," but at one point, long ago, it was two words that meant something: me too.

In 2017 Ellen DeGeneres went on her show and said "I will say it out loud right now—me too [...] This is not a male thing or a female thing, this is not a Hollywood thing or a political thing—it is a human thing, and it happens in the workplace, it happens in families, it happens all over the world. And we are all the same—we all want the same thing. We want respect, love, and kindness" and Ellen DeGeneres didn't specify who had done the sexual misconduct, or what the nature of the sexual misconduct was, and who knows why that is, but the point of her sharing that was to let us know how pervasive our broken sex culture is, how many people have been



In 2017 Ellen DeGeneres
went on her show

hurt by it, and to make it safer for others to share their stories.²¹

And my grandmother, who is in her eighties, saw Ellen DeGeneres say "me too" on TV and went onto Facebook and posted "Me too. During my teaching career sexual harassment and sexism. I hope this conversation can change this age old problem."

And my grandmother is in some ways a very repressed person. And my grandmother is in some ways the last person I'd expect to share something like this publicly. And it's so out of character for her that when I brought it up more recently she denied that she had ever done this until I showed her the post on Facebook.

And to me a movement that can make my 82-year-old grandmother feel safe to write "me too" on Facebook is a beautiful and worthwhile movement.

21 <https://www.thewrap.com/ellen-degeneres-joins-metoo-this-is-not-a-male-thing-or-a-female-thing-this-is-a-human-thing-video/>



a movement that can
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I don't hate the #metoo movement. I hate how it went. And I want to get back to a moment in time where the focus was on the victims and their stories. And we believe people when they come forward, and we celebrate people when they come forward, and we don't try and solve the problem by immediately figuring out who to punish, we just try and make space for people to share their stories and we try to understand how big of an issue this is, and how many people it touches.

And for what it's worth, and I know this is 8 years late, but me too.

I was sexually assaulted when I was in middle school. I was beat up in the woods by some kids in the Netherlands who thought I was gay. I was spat on by a stranger in Seattle who called me "faggot." Sexual violence is something that has happened to me too. In the words of my grandmother, "I hope this conversation can change this age old problem."



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