

# Social Justice Watch 0226

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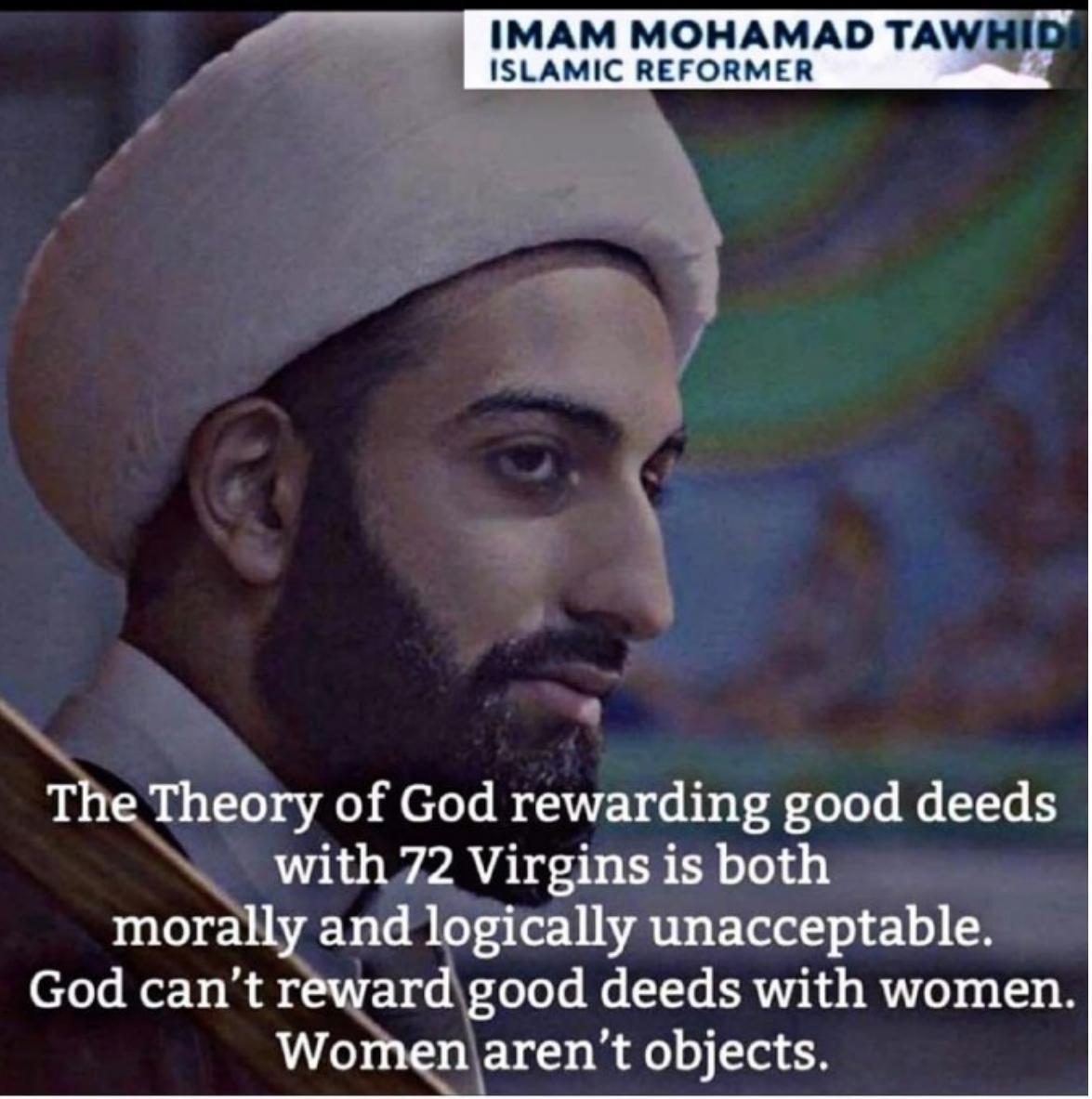
**INSTEAD OF CALLING YOURSELF  
OUT ON YOUR “BULLSHIT” OR  
ADMITTING YOUR MOST “TOXIC  
TRAIT” I WONDER HOW IT  
WOULD FEEL IF YOU SAID:**

*I WENT THROUGH SOME SHIT &  
THIS IS HOW I ADAPTED IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.  
THIS IS HOW I LEARNED TO GET LOVE IN CHILDHOOD.  
THIS IS HOW I LEARNED TO GET MY NEEDS MET.*

*& THEN EXTEND COMPASSION TO THOSE PARTS OF  
YOU. & THANK YOUR SYSTEM FOR DOING EXACTLY  
WHAT IT NEEDED TO DO TO KEEP YOU ALIVE.*

*THE FIRST OPTION CREATES SHAME THAT MAY KEEP  
US REPEATING THE BEHAVIORS. THE SECOND  
ACTUALLY EMPOWERS US TO BEGIN RELEASING  
THEM.*

EMMA ZECK



**IMAM MOHAMAD TAWHID**  
ISLAMIC REFORMER

The Theory of God rewarding good deeds  
with 72 Virgins is both  
morally and logically unacceptable.  
God can't reward good deeds with women.  
Women aren't objects.

The October Sky  
Yesterday at 2:25 AM · 

 Like Page

People like this Imam for a reason.. 



**Heather Del Giudice ▶ So You Want To Raise A Feminist 2.0 - ...  
An Intersectional Feminist Group**

Yesterday at 11:32 AM · 🌎

I learned something today that absolutely shocked me. Apparently in certain states (in this case it was Texas) if a father can prove paternity, then he can legally FORCE a mother to change that child's last name to his own. No matter what he has said or done to the mother, or how much involvement he's had with said child. Does anyone in here have any experience with this?? I am appalled.

24

4 Comments

Like

Comment



**Maryam Bhimji** The entire family court system is patriarchal. Some overt and some covert. One day it will be exposed, but right now there's too much money going into father's rights and the pendulum has swung too much against mothers. But no experience with this personally. In SF they will let you put both names. But not change to just the father's name.

Like · Reply · 1d

1



**Lindsey Zmroczek** When we lived in Tennessee, I remember my husband had to sign an agreement that said I could give my son my last name, instead of his. 😞

Like · Reply · 1d

Aunt: how's your gay phase  
going?  
Me: stronger than your marriage





**#1 Pouch Pediatrician**  
@ZachsCubClinic

▼

Today in one of our med classes we talked about LGBT patients and the professor isn't taking anyone's shit

Student: What if we don't feel comfortable treating someone following that lifestyle?

Professor: Find a different career

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Jason Call for Congress WA-02 🌹 ✅ ▾  
@CallForCongress

If you call off sick you are not leaving  
your co-workers short-handed.

Your boss did that.

They refused to hire enough  
employees.

Didn't make plans to cover sick  
workers' shifts.

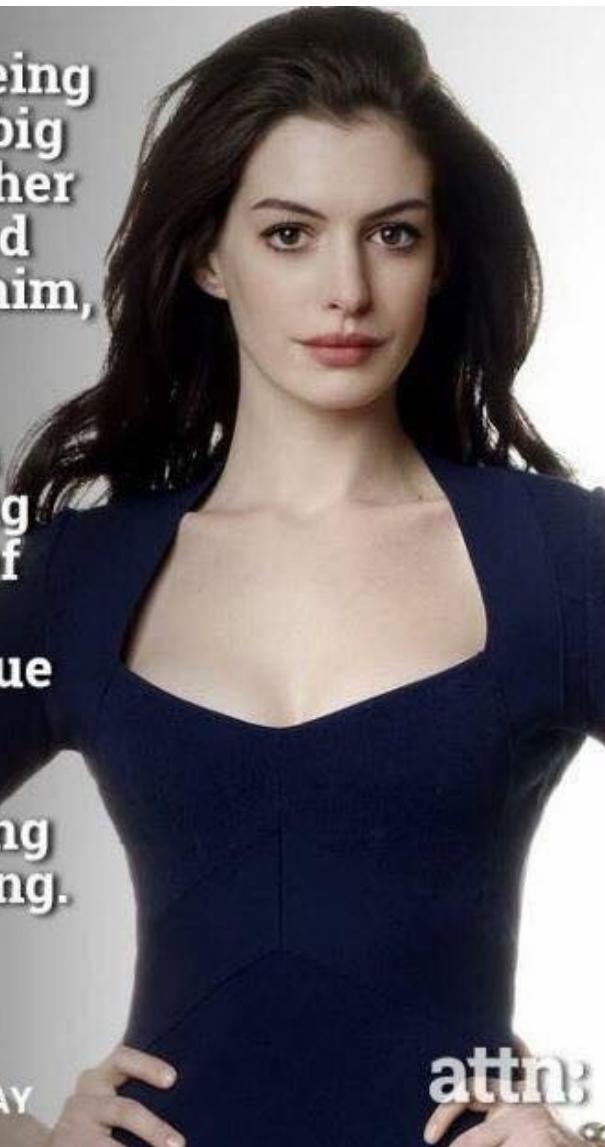
Didn't include your human needs in  
their calculations.

It's not your fault. You deserve sick  
days.

**In my household, being gay was, and is, no big deal. When my brother came out, we hugged him, said we loved him, and that was that...**

**There are people who've said that I'm being brave for being openly supportive of gay marriage, gay adoption. With all due respect, I humbly dissent. I'm not being brave. I'm being a decent human being. Love is a human experience, not a political statement.**

**ANNE HATHAWAY**



**attn:**

**EQUAL RIGHTS  
FOR OTHERS  
DOES NOT MEAN  
LESS RIGHTS  
FOR YOU.  
IT'S NOT PIE.**

*the little market*

A NONPROFIT FOUNDED BY WOMEN TO EMPOWER WOMEN



**Alison Kate**  
@alisonkatebr



To anyone who believes in "unskilled" work:

change 50 double duvet covers in an hour. Alone.

Help a man with Alzheimer's who is afraid of you and everyone to get dressed and take his medication.

And then remember 37 table locations and numbers, and when you went to them all.



Not all men are predators.  
Some are sympathisers and apologists.  
Some are victim-blamers. Some need nonexistent “evidence” to believe a survivor, while others don’t want to ruin a guilty man’s reputation. Many don’t have the courage to confront and alienate the predatory men around them. And the rest? They just don’t care.

Before you say “not all men,” answer this: are you actively holding the predatory men in your life accountable and supporting survivors? No? Then you’re part of the problem.

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# 消息精选

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<https://youtu.be/5i45h76ioHY>

YouTube

Why is there still poverty in America? | The Economist

In America almost 40m people—one eighth of its population—live in poverty.

Why does the richest big country in the world still have so many people living in

...

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<https://www.inkstonenews.com/health/police-letter-tried-keep-chinese-doctor-li-wenliang-warning-coronavirus/article/3049555>

Inkstone

‘Do you understand?’: The police letter that tried to silence coronavirus whistleblower

Chinese people angered by the authorities’ attempt to muzzle Wuhan doctor Li Wenliang have expressed their discontent online by quoting from a police letter reprimanding Li for telling others about the coronavirus outbreak.

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[https://youtu.be/4mCVS20gj\\_8](https://youtu.be/4mCVS20gj_8)

YouTube

China Doesn't Like That I'm a Single Woman, Here's Why | Op-Docs

“Sheng nu” (“leftover women”) is a term used to describe single women who are 27 or older in China. Most of these women live in cities and lead rewarding pro...

---

<https://god.dailydot.com/plane-seat-punch>

God

Woman's Viral Video Of Man Punching Her Reclined Plane Seat Sparks Twitter Debate

Who's the bigger jerk here? I think everyone lol

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# 5 Gender-Neutral Alternatives to ‘Boyfriend’ and ‘Girlfriend’

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Two smiling people embracing, touching their noses and foreheads together, and looking into each other's eyes. Source: Tampa Bay Times

I don't know about you, but I don't feel like declaring and then explaining my sexual identity when it's irrelevant to the conversation.

I'm in love with my best friend. She's a woman. So am I.

Sometimes that information is required, but you'd be surprised how often it really isn't.

If you're a queer person who doesn't feel the need to go into details at the moment or a straight person acting in solidarity with the LGBTQIA+ community, using gender-neutral terms of affection can work in your favor.

If you happen to be bisexual, pansexual, or fluid, but currently in a relationship that appears to be heterosexual, a gender-neutral term can prevent people from asking fun questions like, “Wait, weren't you gay before?”

If you or your partner identify as genderqueer, trans, genderfluid, or otherwise non-binary, taking gender out of the equation can make understanding easier for people less in-the-know.

You are a person dating another person. That's simple enough for anyone to understand, right?

In addition to the benefits to the LGBTQIA+ community, I find that there are gender-neutral words that better describe the nature of your relationship than “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.”

Without further ado, here are some gender-neutral choices to say instead:

## **1. Partner**

I've heard the term “life partner” used ( usually by older, cisgender, long-term gay couples) as well, but that distinction seems a bit antiquated now that more states have legalized same-sex marriage.

I used to really dislike the term “partner” because to me, it evoked cowboys.

Now that I'm older and in a happy relationship, the term has grown on me because I have a partner in crime as well as a lover and monogamous girlfriend

## **2. Lover**

If you have a flair for the dramatic, this is a great word.

As a lesbian, I personally shy away from it because of its often lascivious connotations (and because certain members of my family constantly referred to my college girlfriend as my “Lesbian Lover,” and it was just as weird as it sounds).

However, if you like the sexiness and melodrama, try calling your GF/BF your lover.

## **3. Significant Other**

I love this term because it is neutral in every sense.

It doesn't have the intensity of long-term commitment or overt sexuality implicit in the other gender-neutral terms I've mentioned so far.

But it also makes a point that this person is someone significant in your life, and that's charming.

A variation on this idea is “significant autre,” which means the same thing, but the word “other” is in French. I may have only heard that version on an episode of Will and Grace, though.

## 4. Boo

It's short, sweet, cute, and a gender-neutral and modernized take on the term “beau.” What's not to like?

Also, the early 2000s gave us this gem. You're welcome.

However, if calling someone your “boo” doesn't really fit into your dialect – or, worse, if it sounds like you're mocking African-American Vernacular English when you try using it – skip out.

You run the risk of sounding racist, and I won't be taking credit for that.

## 5. Goyfriend

If I'm not mistaken, “goyfriend” is a mash-up of the words “girlfriend” and “boyfriend.”

I have only heard it used by Ali Stroker in reference to her Glee Project costar and partner Dani Shay, but it's too cute and clever to exclude.

If it applies to you, make it a thing!

\*\*\*

Obviously, this list is far from comprehensive, but you should really talk to your partner and see how they feel about gender neutrality and dating terminology. Don't be surprised if the discussion is new territory for your partner.

A question you may encounter is “Why even bother if saying boyfriend/girlfriend works for my relationship?”

Certain gender-neutral dating words connote a more serious relationship than “boyfriend/girlfriend.”

It’s a sweet way to show the world and my partner that I’m in it for the long haul (but allows me more time to save up for an engagement ring!).

Gender-neutrality can also come across as mature, professional, and easier for others to comprehend.

Also, you don’t want to be that person who rambles on and on, repeating “my girlfriend/boyfriend” ad nauseum.

If you’re like me, you may use different terms in different spaces.

For example, when I speak casually with friends or tell jokes onstage or on Twitter, I usually refer to my partner as my girlfriend.

We’re both relatively feminine-presenting cis women and feel comfortable calling each other girlfriends in spaces where we know we’ll be accepted as a same-sex couple.

However, when I speak with my elders, professional contacts, or the devoutly religious, I use the term “partner.”

I really do not want to start a debate on same-sex marriage or make someone supremely uncomfortable.

If my partner comes up in conversation, we’re usually talking about something minor and irrelevant to my orientation, like the cute bracelet my partner got me for my twentieth birthday.

Using gender-neutral pronouns regularly can also be a helpful example to the other people in your life.

For example, if you identify somewhere under the queer umbrella, some of your family may not feel comfortable referring to your boyfriend or girlfriend as your “boyfriend” or “girlfriend.”

This applies tenfold if you're young.

Your family may refer to your significant other as your “friend,” even when it is clearly not the case.

It can feel alienating and hurtful.

If this sounds like your family, you might want to have a bigger discussion down the line, but gender-neutral dating words might be easier for everyone to stomach.

I'm not saying to excuse blatant homophobia, but champions of LGBTQIA+ rights cannot expect everyone to seamlessly hop on board with any sort of change, especially one regarding gender and sex.

Whatever your reasons may be, I hope this list helps you.

I know it's far from complete, though, so that's where you come in.

Talk to your partners and friends, and see if you can come up with more gender-neutral dating words to add. Let me know in the comments!

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# 5 Popular Companies Helping Fund Trump's 2020 Campaign

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**Equinox and SoulCycle aren't the only companies with financial ties to 45's reelection efforts.**

Equinox and SoulCycle caused quite the uproar earlier this month when it was revealed that their owner (and chairman of The Related Companies) Stephen Ross was hosting a massive fundraiser for the reelection of Donald Trump. Calls for boycotts of the luxury fitness brands were swift, but these two corporate entities are far from the only ones with financial ties to Trump's 2020 campaign.

**If you want to be smarter with your dollar and stop supporting brands that are helping to support a bigoted and hateful administration, here are some popular companies you should know help fund 45's reelection:**

**Marvel Entertainment**



Isaac Perlmutter, chairman and former CEO of Marvel Entertainment, donated a maximum contribution of \$360,000 to Trump Victory in 2019. It's worth noting that Marvel Entertainment handles the comic book and TV side of the Marvel brand, and is separate from the popular film productions of Marvel Studios.

### Estée Lauder



According to the Federal Election Commission, long-standing cosmetics company Estée Lauder's heir Ronald Lauder gave a whopping \$100,000 to the Trump Victory PAC. That really makes you think twice before buying that overpriced makeup.

## **Wendy's**



Their spicy nuggets may be delicious and their social media game is on fire, but the popular fast-food chain is partially owned by Trian Partners, a hedge fund run by CEO Nelson Peltz, a well-known Trump donor. According to Truthout, Pelz has given over \$85,000 to Donald Trump.

## **CVS Pharmacy**



According to a February 2018 report in the Wall Street Journal, the national pharmacy chain donated to \$35,000 to the Trump Victory PAC and is one of the Trump reelection campaign's biggest corporate donors.

### Taco Bell



In a report from Food & Wine, Taco Bell's political action committee (yes, they

have one and it's literally called TACO PAC) gave money (approx. \$5,000) to the Trump campaign.



Check out [GrabYourWallet.org](http://GrabYourWallet.org) for more in-depth information!

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# Delta Shows Rocketman 'Stripped' of Gay Scenes, Including a Kiss

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Rocketman

The biopic of Elton John's life has been degayed for airline audiences.

Elton John fought tooth-and-nail to ensure his biopic, *Rocketman*, was screened around the world with its scenes of gay intimacy intact.

This on-the-ground fight for gay visibility has now taken to the air. According to multiple social media users, Delta is screening a degayed edit of the musical about the life of the world's most famous gay singer.

Shana Krochmal, the digital director of Entertainment Weekly, posted a Twitter thread Tuesday detailing how *Rocketman* was "stripped of almost every gay reference" in the version she viewed on the airline, including a "chaste kiss" between the "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road" singer and his former manager, John Reid.

In the thread, Krochmal pointed out the illogic of allowing scenes of domestic abuse — as well as violence more broadly — to slip through the censors, while depictions of same-sex love are scrubbed.

After Krochmal's posting, other Twitter users responded with similar experiences of viewing a censored version of Rocketman. A Facebook user complained of the censorship to Delta as early as September 13.

This is not the first time Delta has come under fire for queer censorship. Olivia Wilde slammed Delta and other airlines this week for excising a lesbian kiss from a film she directed, Booksmart. In past years, Delta has also streamed degayed versions of Carol and Bad Moms.

In 2017, a Delta spokesperson told The Advocate that the airline does not have the right to edit films; it simply screens the edited versions that are offered by studios.

However, "Delta has committed to not showing a film at all when an edited version is required but goes beyond omitting explicit material to remove scenes that reflect the diversity of our employees and customers," the spokesperson said of the company's policy at the time — a policy that, if followed in 2019, would have prevented a degayed Rocketman from making it to air.

Delta, a frequent sponsor of Pride events, scored an 85 out of 100 in the Human Rights Campaign's 2019 Corporate Equality Index. It lost points for not having "equivalency in same- and different-sex domestic partner medical and soft benefits," plus "exclusions for transition-related care" for transgender employees.

In a June statement, John spoke out against a Russian film company's decision to make similar cuts to his film in a country where "gay propaganda," or the viewing of LGBTQ materials to minors, is against the law.

The excisions were "sad reflection of the divided world we still live in and how it can still be so cruelly unaccepting of the love between two people," the statement said.

"We believe in building bridges and open dialogue, and will continue to push for the breaking down of barriers until all people are heard equally across the world," the statement said.

The Advocate reached out to John and Delta for comment but has not yet heard back.

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# **Hispanic man burned with acid says attacker accused him of invading U.S.**

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Nov 4, 2019 1:45 PM

Milwaukee police arrested a man suspected of throwing battery acid on a Hispanic man who says his attacker asked him, “why did you come here and invade my country?”

Police said Monday they arrested a 61-year-old white man suspected in Friday night’s attack, but they haven’t identified him. Police said they’re investigating the case as a hate crime and charges are expected Tuesday.

Mahud Villalaz suffered second-degree burns to his face after a man confronted him Friday about how he had parked his truck and accused him of being in the country illegally. Villalaz, 42, is a U.S. citizen who immigrated from Peru.

The attack comes amid a spike in hate crimes directed at immigrants that researchers and experts on extremism say is tied to mainstream political rhetoric.

At a news conference on Monday, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett expressed shock at the attack and blamed President Donald Trump for inciting hatred against minorities. The president has repeatedly referred to migrants attempting to cross the U.S.-Mexico border as an “invasion.”

“To single out someone because they’re from a Hispanic origin is simply wrong. And we know what’s happening,” Barrett said. “Everybody knows what’s happening. It’s because the president is talking about it on a daily basis that people feel they have license to go after Hispanic people. And it’s wrong.”

A report issued last year by the Anti-Defamation League said extreme anti-immigrant views have become part of the political mainstream in recent years

through sharp rhetoric by anti-immigration groups and politicians, including Trump.

Surveillance video shows the confrontation but does not include audio.

Villalaz told reporters on Saturday that he was headed into a Mexican restaurant for dinner when a man approached him and told him, “You cannot park here. You are doing something illegal.” He said the man also accused him of invading the country.

He said he ignored the man and moved his truck to another block. But when he returned to the restaurant, the man was waiting for him with an open bottle, Villalaz said.

The man again accused him of being in the U.S. illegally, Villalaz said. He then told the man that he was a citizen and that “everybody came from somewhere else here,” Villalaz said.

That’s when he says the man tossed acid at him. Villalaz turned his head, and the liquid covered the left side of his face.

Villalaz’s sister told The Associated Press on Monday that her brother believes the man was prepared and wanted to attack someone.

“He’s in shock. He says he can’t conceive how someone would be intent on harming someone like that,” Villalaz said in Spanish.

She said her brother is recovering. She said the doctor who treated him said it helped that he immediately washed his face several times inside a restaurant. His family created a GoFundMe page to cover his medical expenses.

Data collected by the FBI showed a 17% increase in hate crimes across the U.S. in 2017, the third annual increase in a row. Anti-Hispanic incidents increased 24%, from 344 in 2016 to 427 in 2017, according to the FBI data. Of crimes motivated by hatred over race, ethnicity or ancestry, nearly half involved African Americans, while about 11% were classified as anti-Hispanic bias.

Brian Levin, director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University-San Bernardino, released a study in July that found a 9% increase in hate crimes reported to police in major U.S. cities in 2018. Levin

found a modest decrease in bias crimes against Hispanic or Latino people — from 103 in 2017 to 100 in 2018 — in 10 major cities, including New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. However, Levin has said the totals likely would have increased last year if not for an unexplained drop in anti-Hispanic bias crimes reported for Phoenix, from 25 in 2017 to 10 in 2018.

Associated Press writers Gretchen Ehlke in Milwaukee and Michael Kunzelman in College Park, Maryland, contributed to this report.

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# If You Want a Marriage of Equals, Then Date as Equals

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Debrocke / ClassicStock / Getty

Heterosexual women of a progressive bent often say they want equal partnerships with men. But dating is a different story entirely. The women I interviewed for a research project and book expected men to ask for, plan, and pay for dates; initiate sex; confirm the exclusivity of a relationship; and propose marriage. After setting all of those precedents, these women then wanted a marriage in which they shared the financial responsibilities, housework, and child care relatively equally. Almost none of my interviewees saw these dating practices as a threat to their feminist credentials or to their desire for egalitarian marriages. But they were wrong.

As a feminist sociologist, I've long been interested in how gender influences our behavior in romantic relationships. I was aware of the research that showed greater gains in gender equality at work than at home. Curious to explore some of the reasons behind these numbers, I spent the past several years talking with

people about their dating lives and what they wanted from their marriages and partnerships. The heterosexual and LGBTQ people I interviewed—more than 100 in total—were highly educated, professional-track young adults who lived in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. This was not a cross section of America, for certain, but I did expect to hear progressive views. Most wanted equal partnerships where they could share both financial and family responsibilities. Almost everyone I interviewed was quite vocal in their support of gender equality and didn't shy away from the feminist label.

Read: What I learned about equal-partnerships by studying dual-income couples

However, I noticed a glaring disconnect between the straight women's views on marriage and their thoughts on dating. Once these women were married, it was difficult to right the ship, so to speak. The same gender stereotypes that they adopted while dating played out in their long-term partnerships.

Three-quarters of Millennials in America support gender equality at work and home and agree that the ideal marriage is an equitable one. Consequently, I expected the young women I interviewed to epitomize feminist liberation. Yet, when they thought of equality among men and women, they focused more on professional opportunities than interpersonal dynamics. Americans with a college education now get married in their early 30s on average, as young adults put their love life on hold while they invest in their education and establish a career. Given the significant time, money, and effort they put into building this career, the women I spoke with expected to partner with people who would support their ambitious professional goals. The men said they desired and respected these independent, high-achieving women and actually saw them as more compatible partners as a result.

And yet in a throwback to an earlier era, many women I spoke with enacted strict dating rules. "It's a deal breaker if a man doesn't pay for a date," one woman, aged 29, told me. A 31-year-old said that if a man doesn't pay, "they just probably don't like you very much." A lot of men, they assumed, were looking for nothing more than a quick hookup, so some of these dating rituals were tests to see whether the man was truly interested in a commitment. A third woman, also 31, told me, "I feel like men need to feel like they are in control, and if you ask them out, you end up looking desperate and it's a turnoff to them."

On dates, the women talked about acting demure, and allowing men to do more of the talking. Women, they said, were more attractive to men when they appeared unattainable, so women preferred for the men to follow up after a date. None of the women considered proposing marriage; that was the man's job. "I know it feels counterintuitive ... I'm a feminist," the first woman said. "But I like to have a guy be chivalrous."

Not all of the heterosexual women I spoke with felt strongly about these dating rules. "Getting married and having kids were probably, if they were even on the list, like number 99 and 100 on the list of 100," one told me. "I think the men I was with knew. It would just be ridiculous if they were on a bended knee offering me a ring." Yet even the few women who fell into this category tended to go along with traditional dating rituals anyway, arguing that the men they dated wanted them and the women "just didn't care enough" to challenge the status quo.

The heterosexual men I interviewed claimed that a woman's assertiveness took the pressure off them. While some liked paying for dates, feeling that the gesture was a nice way to show they cared, others were more resistant. One man told me he splits the cost of a date "Fifty-fifty. That goes right in line with my theory of the person I consider my equal. Just because I carry the penis does not mean that I need to buy your food for you. You're a woman, you're educated or want to be educated, you want to be independent—take your stance."

But as the relationship progressed, the men I spoke with held persistent double standards. They expected women to walk a fine line between enough and too much sexual experience. They admitted to running into conflicts with "strong-willed" women. Men also wanted to be taller, stronger, and more masculine than their partners. And many of the men expected women to take their last names after marriage.

Read: Even breadwinning wives don't get equality at home

When men and women endorsed these traditional gender roles early in a relationship, undoing those views in marriage was difficult. The married men I interviewed often left caregiving and housework to the women, while the husbands considered themselves breadwinners and decision makers. This behavior fell in line with national trends. As American time-use surveys show, women still do about twice as much unpaid labor in the home as men.

One woman said of her husband, “He’ll take our son on bike rides with him. But in the middle of the night, I’m the one getting up. Like for me to be out like this on this interview, I had to make sure there was dinner stuff for him.”

A man expressed his resentment at not having an egalitarian relationship, saying, “That’s not the relationship I want for myself.” Yet he later added that his partner should do more of the household labor, because she was more invested in a clean house.

The LGBTQ people I interviewed offered a different partnership model. They wanted no part of the dating scripts they saw as connected to gender inequality. “We have explicitly said we’re not normal or traditional, so we can write the script ourselves. We don’t have to buy into this belief that the guy is gonna be kinda dopey, but well meaning, and enjoy sports, and the woman is gonna withhold sex and demand to have things paid for,” one woman told me.

Read: [The five years that changed dating](#)

Because many LGBTQ relationships do not rely on well-established ideologies, norms are often considered, questioned, and then rejected, with the aim of making space for egalitarian practices instead. In the process, many of the couples I spoke with incorporated the elements they felt were important to a successful relationship, emphasizing constant communication, evaluation, and negotiation. The goal was greater individuality and equality, and they actively worked to balance their own needs with the needs of their partners. As the woman above said, “Let’s craft our own relationship.”

Just as noteworthy, the LGBTQ interviewees set up the expectations of equality from the outset of dating, not *after* it. This approach shifted their understanding of what was possible for intimate relationships, and they, for the most part, had more equal, long-term relationships as a result.

We want to hear what you think about this article. Submit a letter to the editor or write to [letters@theatlantic.com](mailto:letters@theatlantic.com).

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# Think About What You Want Most

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Adam Bacher

"This country is still the 'shining city on the hill' but the path up is getting steeper," says Ruth Lesser, reflecting on the difficult road she is still traveling to become a permanent resident in the U.S.

Ruth, who uses a pseudonym because her immigration status is still unresolved, was born in southern China in the late 1980s. She grew up an only child, but part of a large extended family.

"I was taught from an early age that I must work hard and succeed at school," she says. "So I'm very competitive and don't like to lose."

Because she excelled in languages, she decided to major in communications in college. She wanted to become an investigative journalist, but China discourages that type of reporting so she applied for graduate school in the U.S.

She was admitted to several colleges but did not receive any financial aid; her parents paid all her expenses. Lesser earned her M.A. in 2012.

As a student she had an F-1 visa, which allows Optional Practical Training (OPT) of a year or two depending on the student's field. After Lesser's OPT, an internship with an event production company, she found a full-time job as a marketing event producer. Her new employer agreed to sponsor her for an H-1B visa, which allows the holder to work temporarily in the U.S.

She had been hired for her language skills, but the job proved disappointing. She worked 10 -12 hours a day, her salary was low, and she was given very little creative independence. She felt exploited but, as she points out, "Without the help from the company I would not have been able to stay in the U.S. So it was not an ideal work situation."

Lesser wanted to stay in the U.S. because she appreciated having the freedom to make her own decisions about work and living situations and enjoyed a less polluted environment. To stay, she needed a Green Card, which would make her a permanent resident.

In 2016 she found another, more congenial job with a company that started the process of sponsoring her for a Green Card. "This officially put me in the queue for permanent residency," Ruth explains. "But it is a long application process with many undefined waiting periods when you can't get any answers about where you stand."

Once in the queue, she was allowed to renew her H-1B visa and her employer began the process of proving that she had such unique skills that her position could not be filled by a U.S. citizen. The government challenged the company's claims, however, requiring extensive paperwork, including detailed background information about Lesser, and about company finances, as well as letters of support from experts.

Because of all this scrutiny, Lesser says, "I have to be very careful and alert about my situation at work at all times. I need to not only prove my legitimacy to the system, but I need to also make sure my employer doesn't decide I am too

much trouble and stop helping me.”

The Immigration Act of 1990 set limits on the number of legal immigrants from each country so that people from countries with the most applicants must wait the longest for their applications to be considered. China, along with Mexico, the Philippines, India, and Vietnam, currently has one of the longest waiting lists. Recent government policy changes are also increasing wait times. New Data Show H-1B Denial Rates Reaching Highest Levels

While she waits, Lesser’s H-1B visa has now been extended for the third time. “But my life is on hold all this time,” she says, explaining that her only trips home have been business trips with short side excursions to see her relatives. “I don’t dare go on any personal trips out of the U.S. for fear of not being allowed to return. I can’t visit my elderly grandparents and my parents can’t leave them to come here so I haven’t seen my family for three years.”

“I used to think that coming to the US was challenging, but worth it,” she comments. “But now, I’m not sure this country is the answer for everyone looking for a better life. My advice to anyone considering immigration anywhere is to think carefully about what you most want. You might find what you’re looking for in a new country but you might just find the life you want in your home country too.”

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