

My story of harassment:

In Aug 2017 I was informed of a false allegation that at a private event banquet in 2016 associated with a skeptics group in Australia, during a session of 'selfie' photographs, I had touched a woman's breast. The allegation was made by a third party, not the woman in question, and was not reported at the time to the organization, but was alleged in letters to two Universities with which I am associated, and to BuzzFeed. The report was discredited by investigations at both Universities, but BuzzFeed decided it was good fodder for a story about alleged sexual harassment by a 'prominent atheist scientist', feeding the claim that the atheist and skeptic community is dominated by misogynistic harassers, and supplementing it with the notion that somehow my Universities were protecting me from claims of harassment.

Since that time, for the past 6 months BuzzFeed has continued to harass me, my family, my friends, my colleagues, and former students and postdocs, dredging up discredited internet allegations and confronting us with them along with new false claims, and twice sending me emails threatening to publish them, until I provided evidence that they were false--evidence they could have obtained themselves had they tried.

Nevertheless, undeterred, and having decided in advance on the conclusions they wanted to make, they have continued to try and find or create misleading allegations to defame me, and by extension, the atheist community. The lack of integrity in the methods used to try and coerce statements from sources, often lying to them to try and elicit responses, has been shameful. In any case, I understand that after six months of concerted effort to defame me, BuzzFeed will be producing a story based allegations that a handful of individuals over the past 30 years have complained that they were offended by my language. This is of course disgusting. I believe in speaking freely, and in encouraging those I speak with to speak freely back to me in return. I have never harassed anyone. Quite the contrary. I try support those around me and encourage them to flourish. I have built an environment of open transparent and frank discussion wherever I have worked.

I have no problems offending people's beliefs or viewpoints and am happy to engage in discussions in that regard, in public or in private. Any claims by BuzzFeed that this amounts in any way to harassment are false and nonsensical, and, not surprisingly for a gossip rag, not supported by evidence provided to them by myself and many of my friends and colleagues.