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To: jeevacation@gmail.com, nancy dahl <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Contents of blog
Date: Mon, 27 Aug 2018 01:57:35 +0000

The oft Spotted Groper

Dear Creepy SciComm dude,

This is a letter addressed to you, as there are several things I would like to never see happen again in my life time, after making your acquaintance late last year.

The first would be to never again see you snake your arm over the shoulder of one of my friends, while she is focusing her phone for a celebrity scientist selfie, and clamp your hand over her breast. This blatant grope was at the conference dinner, early in the evening, before entree and before the drinking began in earnest. You did this, despite being at a conference that had a clear non-harassment policy. But hey, maybe you arrived late on the first day and didn't hear the usual announcement of such a policy. That doesn't explain why one of your male academic colleagues had felt compelled to warn me three days before, to watch out for you, as you are well known 'sleaze' in the discipline. This wasn't the 'whispering of women', this was one of your male academic peers, who only interacts with you at discipline specific conferences, not SciComm events.

Clearly, you have a track record for this behaviour which is repeated over many years, revealed by a quick google search of your name and the term 'sexual harassment'. Many, many blog posts about similar behaviour, that have been redacted or removed after threats of litigation. Which explains why I haven't named you here, even though I would like to shame you in this article. (Although I do have someone looking out for a pro bono defamation lawyer based in your country, just in case.)

It irks me that your voice is one of the loudest shouting for the organisers of the Science March on DC, a group previously guilty of downplaying the needs of the most marginalised people in science. You have no right to downplay the lived experience of these people, considering you have caused of significant amount of marginalisation of women personally, as an individual. Although no court in the land has convicted you, due to presumably deep pockets to fund litigious behaviour. You should not be held up as a paragon of pro-science virtue, as you are part of the problem that causes limited diversity in science, not part of the solution.

Why didn't I complain to the organisers of the conference at which I saw you grope my friend? I tried to support my friend at the time and to get her to make a complaint, as she was a victim of your poor behaviour. I tried to get her to give me the incriminating photo that she took of your hand on her breast, but she's decided to hang onto it in case she needs it as evidence in the future. I didn't make an independent complaint to the organisers, of my eyewitness account, as they are enthusiastic volunteers and I did not want to give them the trouble of dealing with such complaint of this nature, of your sexual misconduct.

Why have I decided to write this now, so many months later? It's because of my anger at seeing your name 'in lights' as part of the pro-science movement in the US. It's also due to the fact that I had to answer direct messages on Twitter from a female academic in your country, who had seen my necessarily oblique references to this groping incident on Twitter, asking me how her students could avoid being treated in the same way as you had treated my friend.

Am I going to bother to write to your institution, to complain of the behaviour I witnessed from you? No, as they have a reportedly poor track record in dealing with your behaviour as they tend to look the other way because you add so much value with free advertising for the institution. Which is a pattern which is repeated by institutions hosting people like you, time and time again. A bit of unsolicited groping of women at conferences is okay as long as the celebrity SciComm person brings in media attention and/or grants, right? [insert sarcasm font]

The reports (and possible sound recordings) of you ridiculing our local custom of acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, when you visited another part of the country on that (funded) trip also disgust me. The lack of indigenous scientists in Australia is something we need to work so hard to try and address, so to have a 'celebrity' scientist heckle this most basic act of respect, is a disgrace.

I do not want to see you darken the door of my country ever again. If I had the power to instruct DFAT to refuse your next Visa application, I would. Sadly, I do not have that power. I do however, have a few friends and contacts amongst the TV and radio producers of science and current affair shows in this country. I have asked them to put out the 'word on the street' that you should never be asked to be a 'talking head' on any tax payer funded television shows or radio shows again. The last time I saw you* on my TV, publically commenting on women in science issues, it was to deny that there was an issue. It was refuted at the time by another panel member, a senior advocate for women in science in Australia, who set you straight on your denialism.

So this letter is to let you know that you've dodged a bullet. If I had more evidence of your misconduct, to protect me from inevitable litigation, I would name and shame you, as I find you an odious man, whose behaviour is abhorrent. Your continuing power and your mystifying popularity is a sad indictment to the state of science globally.

Yours in disgust,

That woman you will have forgotten, in a distant land.

(Original version edited to remove references to sexual assault, due to lack of actual bodily harm...replaced with the non criminal act of groping)

*Update: I went back to TV recording for this point, only to find it to be a different old white US based SciComm dude from same discipline (with no alleged history of SH) ...Geez, these guys that deny or marginalise the lived experience of women in STEM all blur into one!

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Sent from my iPhone