

home, spending much time there and interacting with colleagues. After five months had passed, I began a relationship with a faculty member in the department who I had not known as an undergraduate student. I was 26 at the time, he was in his early 40s and had separated from his wife a few months before we met.

Although neither of us publicized the relationship, I am sure word got out very quickly. After about a month had gone by, two male faculty members began repeatedly teasing me about my relationship with this man, asking me embarrassing questions about what we did when we were alone and not relenting when I blushed and stammered (not surprisingly, they seemed to enjoy it). The more embarrassed I got, the more they continued. Today, as an older and more assertive person, I would probably tell them to 'go to hell', put them quickly in their places, and I imagine they would stop. However, at the time I did not possess the experience or courage to do so.

What made this issue harassment in my mind, was that these men never mentioned the relationship to my male partner and their peer. He was never confronted or teased. When I told him what was happening to me, he told me they would never have the courage to confront him directly and they were getting at him through me. He offered to tell them to leave me alone, but as we talked I concluded this could only make matters worse for me and for him as well. Even so, I knew that as the less powerful party, I was paying the price for being in the relationship. Eventually, the teasing, and the relationship itself, died down. I have stayed friends with the two male colleagues, but I would never fully trust them with a confidence or a sensitive issue.

#21

I write in the present tense. I am chair of a department that has been profoundly damaged by a charge of sexual harassment against one of its members. The charge was filed through campus police. The complainant could have filed a criminal charge. Some of the offending acts, committed in another venue, would be labeled molestation not harassment.

The charge has gone through the college's informal hearing procedure. The perpetrator, my colleague, a man I hired, was given a paid leave of absence while the charge was pending. The charge was investigated and it determined that it was founded. Several witnesses provided written statements. The harasser, advised by an attorney, signed a statement admitting his guilt. He was allowed to return to the classroom on the conditions that (a) he have no further contact with the victim, (b) he do nothing to create an intimidating environment, and (c) he have no social contact with any students on or off campus for one year. He has already violated the last two terms, but the college has taken no action.

The harasser is an untenured instructor who was undergoing review for reappointment at the time of the infraction. Because I am his supervisor I cannot discuss the details of the charge. I have been "gagged".

What I can discuss is my relationship with this young man before the violation and some of the effects of his activity on the social environment of our department. Full of promise this brilliant, charming, and handsome young man came to our college, A.B.D., with spectacular recommendations from a prominent graduate program.

When he first arrived, a male colleague and I had a long talk with him about the conservative character of the college, the relative lack of sophistication of the students, and his vulnerability to 'student crushes'. Projecting a kind of choir-boy innocence, he responded to our warning with a sensitive, "feminist" analysis of the dynamics of the situation.

Nevertheless, his harassing activities began almost immediately. I became attuned to them

shortly after October 11th of his first year, the anniversary of Eleanor Roosevelt's birthday. Another colleague and I were hosting a sparsely attended tea party to mark that occasion. The choir-boy was there, and so was my daughter, then a sophomore, and her roommate. Perhaps it was the way he looked at her? The daughter, not the roommate. Or, the way he tried to relate to both of them as a contemporary?

A few weeks later the first word reached me. From my own daughter! She told me that he had invited her roommate to his apartment while his wife was out-of-town.

My daughter does not lie, but I did not believe it. Her roommate lives life as a soap opera in which she has been cast as the lead. I assumed she had pursued him, and had been rejected. Nevertheless, I told my daughter to advise her roommate to file a complaint. There was no complaint.

I did not, could not, believe that he would do *that*. Simone de Beauvoir described denial as the first principle of patriarchy. I denied. It was implausible. Who in their right mind would make such a move?

Yes, I assumed he was in his right mind. The assumption of rationality: recent work in feminist epistemology suggests it may be the second principle of patriarchy.

I denied, but I no longer trusted. From that point on, I watched him with eye of hawk. It wasn't long before my capacity to deny began to disintegrate. In my gut, I knew but I had no reportable evidence.

His *modus operandi* is to go after "nice girls", pursue them relentlessly, break down their resistance, then drop them cold and watch them suffer. Their suffering is apparently his pay-off. The pursuit usually involves suggestive letters (without signature) and late night telephone calls.

Young women, who were close to me, my best students and advisers, held special appeal. Playing with fire? He'd befriend them, and I'd see less of them. Whenever stories reached me—always second-hand and usually from roommates—I urged reporting. But there was none. After awhile, I began distancing myself from female students. They were safer that way.

This vicious game continued unchecked for two years. During that time, my colleague, the perpetrator, established himself as the darling of the female faculty. He presented himself as the most ardent and vocal supporter of feminist causes. The week he was charged, he had a full-page essay in the student newspaper, a "feminist" analysis of sexual harassment.

When a charge finally came, my first response was relief. This must be how mothers in incestuous families feel: free, at last, of the burden of an unspeakable secret. The aftermath has, however, been much more surreal than I could have anticipated. The classroom and the work place have been completely sexualized. A few male colleagues, with whom I had no more than a nodding acquaintance, have stopped me in hallways or pulled me into corners and, breathlessly, demanded explanations in language that is itself harassing.

The rumor mill has put on a second shift. I am gagged. The harasser and his supporters are not. Unlikely alliances have formed in his defense. Fortunately, the victim's identity has been protected; even the harasser has a vested interest in concealing her name since she is widely respected and thoroughly credible.

Is your department doing a search?

Soon the perpetrator will be on the job market. He will present you with an impressive vitae and impeccable references. There will be nothing in his permanent record. The lawyers have seen to that even though I have discovered that this is the second (possibly third) replay of the story. This young man was previously dismissed from a prestigious graduate school after

completing his master's degree for similar activity. That procedure also protected his record from blemish.

The only telltale indicator on his vita will be the absence of a reference from the department, but we all know of departmental nightmares that necessitate that kind of expediency. Henry Kissinger once said that compared to academic politics, real politics are child's play.

So, why would you think to call me And if you did, what could I say? Will I be able to make my silences speak? Will you be able to hear me chewing on the gag?

He will do a wonderful interview. You will like him. He is charming. Chances are you will hire him. Who in their right mind wouldn't?

#23

This is more of a story about some of the issues and circumstances surrounding sexual harassment than it is a detailed account of harassment. My objective is to use a recent personal experience to raise poignantly some questions about relevant issues.

It may be helpful if I first provide some details to frame the experience. I enjoy academic advising of undergraduates, and I do a great deal of it. Because our department centralized its advising component many years ago, I serve more than 450 communication students, as I am the only faculty member assigned to serve all majors and minors (as a part of my faculty load). A few years ago, I was very honored to receive a Certificate of Merit Award for Academic Advising, an award sponsored by a national association. I am a 49 year old male.

Just prior to the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings, I met routinely with a newly-declared major who is a young, physically attractive woman. As is often the case, a number of students were waiting in a corridor, so, as usual, I closed the door to this corridor in order to provide circumstances for privacy during our meeting; but another office door that leads directly outside of the building was wide open, as usual, to provide fresh air.

As we discussed her schedule of classes, the student mentioned that she was employed. I inquired about the nature of her employment, as I usually do (with male and female advisers). I had three motives for my query: to determine if employment might affect a class schedule; because career preparation is part of a class that I teach; and to demonstrate a personalized interest in students' lives at a university with 30,000 students. The student explained that she was a swimsuit model, and I inquired jokingly if perhaps I had seen her in ads in X publication, which is a very respectable, local one and seems to include many swimsuit ads. She replied "no," not that particular publication. Immediately thereafter I found myself at a very unexpected turn of such a conversation. Her next comment related to something about her competition as a model with women who had breast enhancements. I felt myself gulp and mumbled something—I'm not certain what it was—to turn the conversation in a different direction. We had almost concluded discussion, and, as usual, I told her that if I didn't remember her the next time we met, she should not take the matter personally, as I advise many students. She replied, knowingly, "Oh, I'll remind you that I'm the one that . . . [again, a reference to the awkward portion of our conversation, though, again, I don't recall the precise words]." I think I interrupted her, again mumbling something to change the conversation, and she departed.

After 23 years of full-time teaching, I learned from this episode how vulnerable I was to a charge of sexual harassment. First, with the development of the Thomas-Hill episode, I learned that never again would I close the door to the corridor while advising. But I have to