

# Laura J. Mixon

NOVEMBER 6, 2014 · 2:28 AM

## A Report on Damage Done by One Individual Under Several Names

### 22 Nov 2014 Update:

We are having technical difficulties; the report links have been acting up for a significant number of users over the past couple of days, and some people can't access the report at all. Bear with us while we troubleshoot.

### 18 Nov 2014 Update:

Since release, I have added a read-more tag, removed one target from the list, and modified language in Table 1 to reflect input from Rose Fox. Statistics have not yet been updated. A followup post is planned, with updated statistics and further amendments to this report based on targets' recent input. It'll be a while yet—definitely after Thanksgiving. Check back periodically.

Meanwhile, Tade Thompson has opened a safe space for [non-POC people to talk](#), and Rochita Loenen-Ruiz has guest-posted with a place for [wider discussion of how to build community](#), over at Tade's *Safe*. I urge everyone to have a look and join in the conversation.

### 11 Nov 2014 Update:

Comments have been turned off for this post. A POC safe space has been created at [Tade Thompson's blog, Safe](#). I'll note here further amendments and updates to this report.

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### Introductions



I'm Laura J. Mixon, an American science fiction writer who has published a handful of novels since 1987 and done some design work in games and interactive storytelling, as well as a few short stories. I occasionally blog at [FeralSapient.com](#). My current fiction and blogging comes out under the pseudonym M. J. Locke. I'm married to SF writer and current SFWA president Steven Gould and my friends and engineering associates know me as Laura Mixon-Gould. I'm on the 2014 Philip K. Dick Award jury.

For those of you who don't know me, I'm acquainted with a number of people who have been around for a while, primarily in US SFF publishing and fandom. I have asked my friends and acquaintances to signal-boost this post for me, because something important is going on in the SFF writing and fan community that is not on everybody's radar screens, and I believe it should be.

### Contents

Here are links to the major sections of this report, for those who want to skip ahead or jump around:

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What's this all about?

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Friends, the tl;dr of this very long, comprehensive, analytical report is that up-and-coming John W. Campbell nominee Benjanun Sriduangkaew (who is also rage-blogger Requires Hate, who is also several other internet personalities including Winterfox, pyrofennec, acrackmoon, and others) (oh yes, the list goes on), is VERY BAD NEWS.

Those who have no idea yet what I'm talking about—you've never heard of this person but you heard some buzz and you're curious—go straight to [Linkage: getting up to speed](#), which has some useful background info.

Those who are well aware of the extent of her prior destructive behavior and just want to cut to the chase and find out what I've found in my four-week investigation into her history, go straight to [Throat clearing and report parameters](#).

Otherwise, read on.

Benjanun Sriduangkaew has established herself over the past two years as a well-liked and talented newer writer. As a lesbian Thai woman, she identifies as a member of a highly marginalized community, and there has been quite a bit of excitement in progressive circles around her rise in popularity as a short story writer. She has been publishing SFF since 2012 and is a John W. Campbell nominee for 2014.

In September 2014 she was publicly revealed as Requires Hate, a controversial rage-blogger. Thai blogger Requires Hate appeared on the scene in mid-2011, and has built her reputation primarily by publishing vitriolic reviews of various writers' books. She has ruffled a lot of feathers, but she too has her advocates: progressives (among them people I hold in high regard), who appreciate that—despite her sometimes over-the-top rhetoric—she unapologetically speaks up for people of color and queer/ LGBTQI people, calling out racist, homophobic, misogynist content in many popular SFF novels and stories.

Our genre has always had a soft spot for sharp-tongued souls. The person who speaks embarrassing truths has an honored—if discomfiting—place at the dinner table, in our SFF Island of Misfit Toys. Though some dislike the extreme rhetoric she uses in her reviews and on Twitter, Requires Hate has shown a deft way with words, and has been promoted as a contender for a Hugo award for some of her blog posts.

What has also become clear in recent weeks is that Benjanun, in the roles of Requires Hate and her other known pseudonyms (including Winterfox, acrackmoon, ACM, pyrofennec, Valse De La Lune, valsedelune, and Lesifoere), has a decade-plus history of destructive trolling behavior in online SFF and videogaming communities, going back to at least 2003.

Benjanun/ Requires Hate (hereafter BS/RH) has denied some of the allegations leveled against her. She has also apologized, in both her Requires Hate and Benjanun identities, for the damage she has done. She has asserted that some of the damage was done by an unspecified impostor.

In the latest dust-up over Tricia Sullivan's novel *Shadowboxer*, accusations have flown back and forth about who did what to whom around the revelation of BS/RH's multiple pseudonyms. There's been a lot of smoke and noise around the revelation of the connection between her two identities, with accusations of blackballing and stalking and shunning flying about.

People from non-dominant social groups (POC, women, LGBTQI, the poor, etc.) get accused of being bullies all the time, simply for not being quiet when they're told to. I can't blame her progressive supporters for being skeptical, when they hear rumors that people are stalking her, doxxing her, shunning her, and calling for her to be silenced. It resonates deeply with messages people from marginalized groups have been hearing for centuries in Western culture, when they're harmed by oppression and seek a platform to speak their own truths.

I think of what happened this last August in Ferguson, Missouri. As a mother of two young adults around Mike Brown's age, I break into a cold sweat when I think what his mother must be going through. I feel deeply angry, that in my own country today an unarmed young person can be shot on the street by a uniformed police officer, and months later there is no indictment, no criminal charges, against that man.

People are pissed off about that kind of thing, and rightly so. Context matters. Anger is an appropriate response to abuse of power. It can be a huge relief, when you feel as if your own voice isn't being heard in your community—whether it's a suburb of St. Louis, or a subcommunity of

SFF—for someone to raise their voice above the din on your behalf.

It's easy when a controversy like this occurs to shrug and call it fanwankery, or a tempest in a teapot; or to loftily counsel the participants to stop feeding the energy creature and move on. It's certainly easier to do that than it is to investigate and sort out the actual issues. It's very complicated; there's a lot of he-said-she-said; and it's hard to find direct links for some of the most damning allegations. I've already seen calls for everyone to just move on, let the current ruckus die down, and trust that things will eventually sort themselves out with no help from the rest of us.

Bluntly, I disagree. The SFF community matters to me. So does basic fairness. So does social justice, which should not be reduced to a rock people throw at each other when they want to hit harder. I don't believe we can answer the questions bouncing around about BS/RH, or decide what (if anything) should be done about her, if the community doesn't first get a clearer and more complete picture of what has already been going on.

That's why I've been delving into the matter to find out more, trying to keep an open mind and go where the data led me. This is my report on what I found.

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## **Linkage; getting up to speed**

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If you haven't heard about the most recent flare-up, plenty of information on that is available, for those who want more details. This report has a different focus.

Here are the two most thorough backgrounders I've seen to date, to bring people up to date who haven't been following this.

- [Azarias's BS/RH roundup post](#)
- [Got Quiet's timeline on the current blowup](#)

Here are links to BS/RH's apologies.

- [Requires Hate's apology](#)
- [Benjanun Sriduangkaew's apology](#)

I'll post accounts here from people who have been targeted in the past, as I receive them.

- [Athena Andreadis: "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Wrecker"](#)
- [Rochita Loenen-Ruiz: "Standing up and Speaking Truth"](#)
- [Rachel Manija Brown: "Not a Fun Post to Write"](#)
- [Paul Weimer: "The Passion I Have for Genre Literature"](#)
- [Juliet McKenna: "Requires Hate, a/k/a/ Benjanun Sriduangkaew, is a multiple, serial & proven bully, liar & manipulator."](#)

## **Throat clearing and report parameters**

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Prior to 2 October 2014, I had no idea who either Benjanun Sriduangkaew or Requires Hate was. I have not had, to the best of my knowledge, any interactions with her. I had no more than a cordial acquaintance with some of the parties at the center of the most recent flare-up, on both sides. I have never been involved in a prior dust-up with Requires Hate, nor do I have a business relationship with any of the members of the current or prior conflicts.

Second, this is not an official report, from SFWA or any other professional organization. It is coming from me personally, as a long-time member of our SFF community. I'm doing this as a community service, to provide as many relevant facts as I can, within the timeframe of this report, and—I hope—provide a safe space where people can talk about their experiences and begin to heal.

Third, I'm not a reporter by trade; I'm an engineer and a fiction writer. I've applied what I believe to be reasonable standards to the data I've collected. I'll correct errors and update my results as I receive good information from credible sources, and as time permits. But this has been a month-long, full-time volunteer effort, in the crannies of a full life. I've used my own best professional and personal judgment in determining whom to contact, what to include here, and how to interpret it.

The remainder of this report contains the results of my fact-gathering expedition.

Consider this your only giant trigger warning for all kinds of nastiness along just about every social vector imaginable.

## Executive summary

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It quickly became clear as I began looking into this situation that that Requires Hate/Benjanun Sriduangkaew's treatment of others has been *extremely* destructive, manipulative, and widespread.

To give readers a sense of BS/RH's actions, I'm interspersing a few screencaps from her prior verbal attacks. I think it's important for people to see her own words, in order to avoid the risk of having people elide over just how harmful her words have been.

BS/RH's online attacks against others in the SFF community extend far beyond simply a few youthful indiscretions in her past, foul language, or having posted harsh reviews of some people's books. Her assaults, using multiple identities, are repeated, vicious, and energetic. They have spilled out across the years, well beyond the edges of fannish and writing communities online. BS/RH's attacks have destroyed communities and harmed careers and lives in the real world.

- She has been involved in efforts to *suppress the publication* of fiction and reviews for those works that *in her sole opinion* should not be published.
- She and her associates have pressured con-runners to *disinvite speakers* from panels and readings, constraining their ability to do business.
- She routinely *accuses people* of doing the very harm to her that *she is in fact doing to them*—of stalking, threatening, and harassing—when they have done nothing except try to get as far away from her as they can.
- At least one of her targets was goaded into a *suicide attempt*.
- She has issued *extremely explicit death, rape, and maiming threats* against a wide variety of people across the color, gender, sexual-orientation, and dis/ability spectrum.
- She and her supporters argue that she punches up, but the truth is that she punches in all directions. The bulk of her targets—despite her progressively-slanted rhetoric—have been *women, people of color, and other marginalized or vulnerable people*.
- She has single-handedly *destroyed several online SFF, fanfic, and videogaming communities* with her negative, hostile comments and attacks.
- After an attack, she *deletes her most inflammatory posts and accounts* and departs, leaving her targets reeling and others who come later scratching their heads, unable to find evidence and wondering what all the fuss was about.
- She has *stalked SFF fans online for months and years*, simply for posting that they liked an author's book that she did not, or for speaking up against her when she called their favorite author (often a POC) epithets like "stupid fuck," and calling them "morons" for liking that author.
- She has chased down positive reviews of authors' works, to appear there and frighten reviewers and fans away from promoting the writers' works, *interfering with their ability to get publicity* for their publications. Of the most extreme cases, lasting at least a year, two were launched against *women writers of color*.
- Her attacks *have not diminished over time*; they have simply become more skilled and difficult to deflect. As recently as three weeks ago as I write this, *she was lying to her supporters* to manipulate them into attacking one of her latest victims.
- She excels at *shifting her tone and her strategy*, seeming friendly and helpful one moment and vicious and harsh the next. She has mastered the crafting and dissemination of false narratives that seem persuasive to observers who are not familiar with the harm she has done in the past.

- In light of the harm she has done, *her apologies do not even come close* to addressing the damage she has done, much less undoing it.

I know the above facts to be true either because I directly witnessed it myself; researched the evidence still available from online forums; or received information from people who have been harmed by her, who have entrusted me with evidence (screencaps, copies of incriminating emails, web archives, and witness accounts) of the actions I describe above.

Some reading this will note that few people have come forward with their stories as a result of the recent dust-up, and most of those who have spoken out have done so anonymously.

They have not come forward because they are afraid.

They are afraid they will not be believed. They are afraid that their experiences will be discounted or minimized. That people will make excuses for her, or believe her when she tells the world that *they* are the villains and *she* is the victim. Their run-ins with her were in many cases among the worst experiences in their lives. When they resurface on the web, she often finds them again and re-launches her vitriolic attacks.

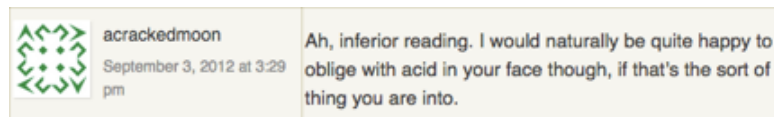
If one person had told me these stories, or two, I might be skeptical, and wonder what their role in the blow-up had been. But I've heard from or discovered the internet traces of far more than two.

Some of BS/RH's targets responded with anger, others with fear. Some managed to shrug it all off and move on with their lives. A few have apparently tried trolling and stalking her back. Her targets' lives were altered, regardless, and not for the better.

I identified 47 candidate cases, chosen at random, and collected links, screencaps, emails, and quotes to confirm BS/RH's attacks. Of those, I was able to confirm 30 cases before I finally decided to stop trying to gather further information (though I suspect that she has many more victims than that). An additional four cases, while they could not be confirmed as BS/RH targets, had enough indicators to list as probable additional targets.

## BS/RH's targets

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*—BS/RH, as acrackedmoon, responding to a commenter on her blog who criticized her for using death threats against writers whose work they like and she does not.*

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From the beginning of my investigation, I have felt reluctant to drag up the specifics from individual cases of BS/RH's online assaults. My primary goal with this effort is to reveal the truth while minimizing harm, and allow people a safe space to heal and tell their stories. But to do that I must expose the wounds she's inflicted. And I'm certain many of her targets would not be thrilled to have the SFF community dredging up the details of her verbal assaults, picking over the visible remnants, passing judgment as to whether the harm done to them was *really* all that bad—with the added risk that at some point BS/RH or some of her followers might show up and start pouring more vitriol into the mix. I can't say I blame them.

My solution was to use my information-management skills to give the community a look from a broader perspective: a more statistical look. I've created a database of the 30 people for whom I found documented evidence of her online abuse, stalking, and harassment.

While her targets' desire for privacy is important, it is also important to help protect future potential victims of her online attacks. People need to see the details of what she has done. Therefore I've included the named list of targets for whom public information is available, along with a headline describing or summarizing the attack, along with links to sources. It is attached at the end of this report.

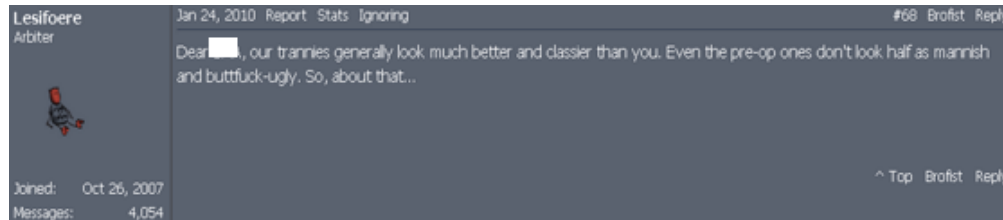
In certain cases, BS/RH's targets may not define themselves as victims. They may have reached an accommodation with her, or have been able to move on in some other fashion. However, the pattern of BS/RH's attacks is consistent and widespread. If public information is available on an attack, I think it's fair to include the information.

For 25 of the 30 targets analyzed in depth, despite her extensive efforts to conceal them, I was able to obtain multiple sources confirming the nature and extent of her attacks. Links are provided in the database; however, in addition to links, in many cases I was also provided email accounts from both the targets themselves and from direct witnesses to the attacks, as well as screencaps, which confirmed targets' statements. The emails will remain private, as they were told to me in confidence. Quotes provided by targets, when confirmed by witnesses, are used in some cases.

Without further ado, here they are.

## Demographic analysis

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*—BS/RH, as Lesifoere, using racially-loaded transphobic insults against a European transwoman who disagreed with her in a gaming forum.*

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In order to show demographics, I used publicly available information on targets:

1. Community Role (Fic Writer, Reader, Reviewer/Blogger, Editor, Gamer, Other/Unknown)
2. Race (White, POC, Other/Unknown)
3. Gender (Man, Woman, Other/Unknown)
4. Sexual Orientation (Straight, LGBTWI, Other/Unknown)

In order to keep the rollups from getting too complicated, I have used deliberately broad categories, which may have resulted in oversimplification of how a person identifies themselves. I also had to make some basic assumptions based on public statements about her targets', e.g., sexual preference, marital information, and race or ethnicity, which may have resulted in mischaracterization.

Lastly, these kinds of details are a matter of personal privacy. Consequently, I have not included the individual demographics in the public version of the table. I welcome opportunities to update and correct these entries. The people listed as targets may query me as to their own demographics and offer corrections, if they so choose, at any time.

Date: 2011-02-08 06:03 pm (UTC)

From: 


Okay.

Just to let you know, I think I'm going to disengage from this discussion with you. It doesn't seem to me that you're interested in have a discussion, but rather in picking a fight.

[Link](#) [Reply](#) [Thread from start](#) [Parent](#) [Thread](#)



Date: 2011-02-08 06:05 pm (UTC)

From:  [pyrofennee](#)

You sound so white.

[Link](#) [Reply](#) [Thread from start](#) [Parent](#) [Thread](#)



Date: 2011-02-08 06:37 pm (UTC)

From: 

I'll have to take back my earlier comment, because here I am commenting again. This is the last one, I swear!


For the record, I am not white. I am Asian and Hispanic.

And that, I swear, is my final comment in this discussion. XD

[Link](#) [Reply](#) [Thread from start](#) [Parent](#) [Thread](#)



Date: 2011-02-08 06:42 pm (UTC)

From:  [pyrofennee](#)

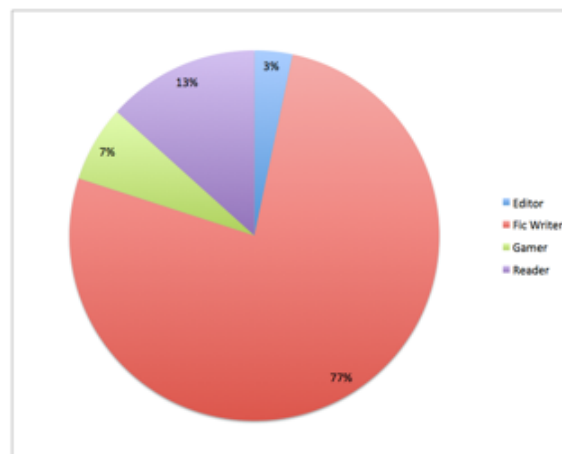
'Kay, Asian-Asian here, as in born and bred in Asia. Do you see why to me "westernized Asian \_\_\_\_" being used as an unironic endorsement sounds shitty.

[Link](#) [Reply](#) [Thread from start](#) [Parent](#)



## Community Roles Analysis

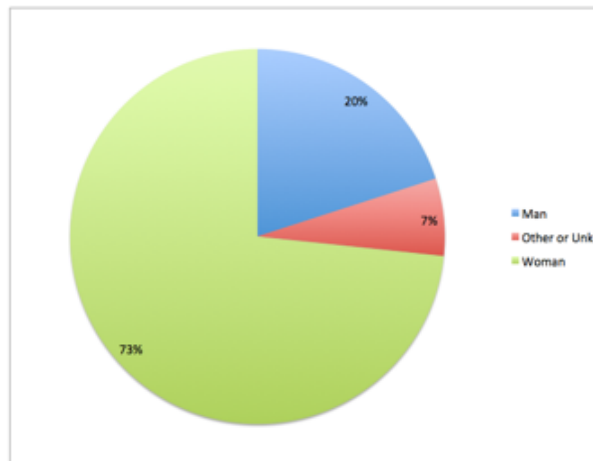
Count of Target Code	
Row Labels	Total
Editor	1
Fic Writer	23
Gamer	2
Reader	4
Grand Total	30



BS/RH's targets, by and large, are her peers. An overwhelming 77% of her attacks have been launched at professional writers. The next largest group in the sample I analyzed, at 12%, were readers who spoke up to defend writers whose works they liked, when BS/RH did not.

## Gender Analysis

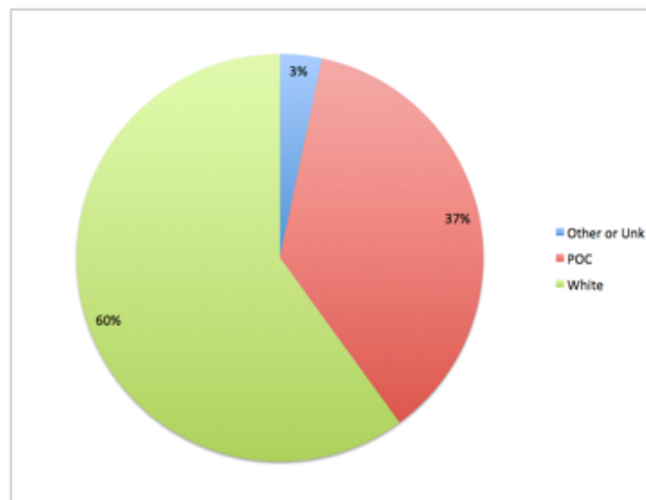
Count of Target Code	
Row Labels	Total
Man	6
Other or Unk	2
Woman	22
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>



A large majority of BS/RH's targets have been women, at between 73 and 81% of the targeted population (two targets provided information anonymously, without clues to their gender).

#### *Race Analysis*

Count of Target Code	
Row Labels	Total
Other or Unk	1
POC	11
White	18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>30</b>



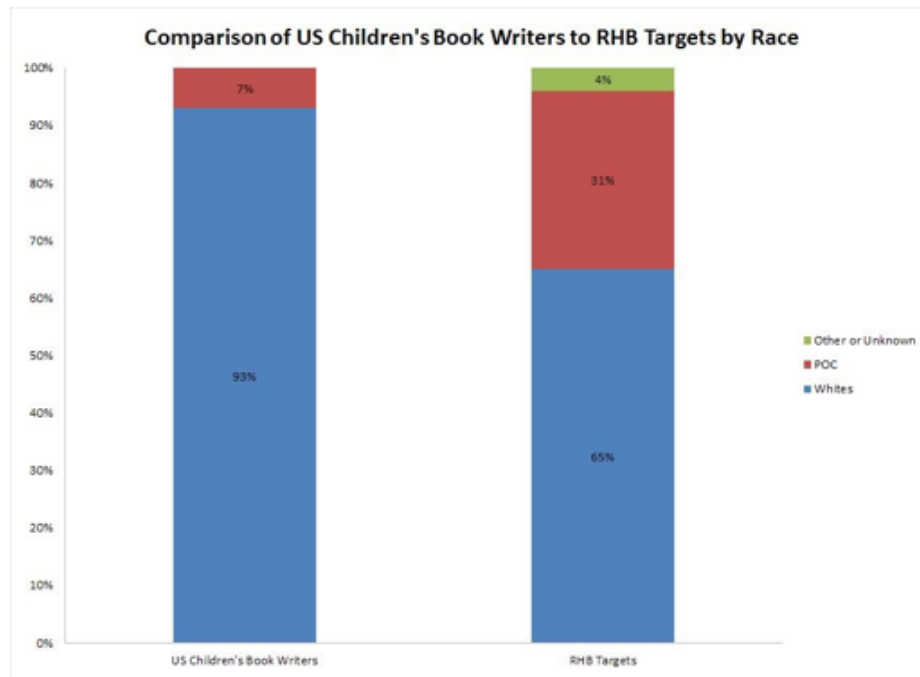
Between 37 and 40% of her targets, or nearly two-fifths, were people of color. Given that the field has been, and still is, predominantly white, this is disproportionately high. In other words, POC are much more likely to be a target of her attacks than whites.

To show this more clearly, it helps to look at the racial breakdown for targeted writers only. Between 26 and 30% in the sample are POC. To tell whether this is disproportionate, we would need to compare it to publication data by race. I was unable to locate statistics on stories and books published in SFF by race; I was, however, able to find [some statistics on children's book writers in the US](#).



If we assume that the rates of publication of POC authors are roughly comparable between the two fields, then approximately 7% of published SFF writers are POC. This means that if Requires Hate were targeting fiction writers at random, only one or two POC fiction writers should have been targeted, not eight. POC writers were *four times more likely* to be attacked than white writers.

Here's a chart showcasing the disparity.

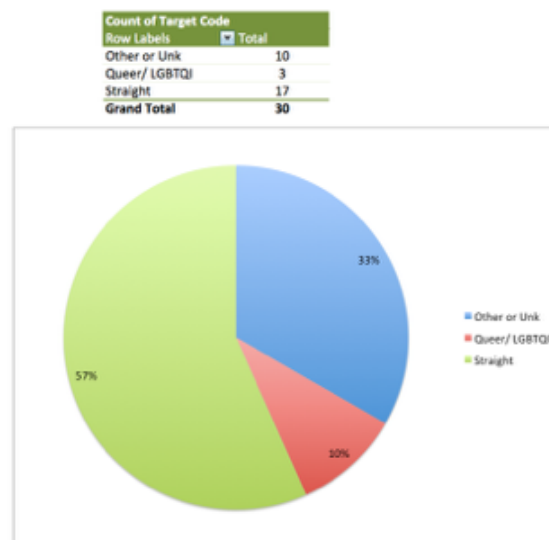


Furthermore, all readers attacked in the sample were POC. (Of the two gamers, one identifies as POC and one as trans.)

I did not further break POC targets into ethnic groups; however, BS/RH showed a clear pattern of targeting specifically (though not only) Asians, Pacific Islanders, and people of Asian descent around the globe.

The proportion of women targeted versus men was about the same for POC as for whites, or possibly somewhat higher (72-79% of POC were women, versus 72% for whites; 7% of POC were anonymous and did not report their gender).

*Sexual Orientation, Dis/Ability, Other Analysis*



Too little public information is available about the target population's sexual orientation to draw substantive conclusions on BS/RH's targeting patterns.

For three of her targets, I found evidence of a pre-existing disability or chronic illness, either physical or mental/emotional.

In addition, I also saw some evidence of a correlation with gathering "buzz" for a number of her targets. In other words, the timing of her attacks often came at the targets who were perceived as up-and-comers or "come-back kids." They had won or been nominated for awards or good reviews or were receiving other industry attention. But I did not have sufficient data available in the timeframe for publication to confirm this.

### *Demographic Analysis – Summary*

The data indicate that BS/RH preferentially targets writers who are POC, women, and people from other marginalized groups, with a particular focus on people of Asian descent.

### **BS/RH attacks and impacts**

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*BS/RH attack methods* – The process goes something like this.

Using one of her pseudonyms, BS/RH begins chatter about a writer or a social-justice topic on her blog, a forum such as LiveJournal, or on Twitter. She uses increasingly obscene and insulting language against her target(s). This is done to goad the target (or their supporters, or a particular community) into responding sharply. In their responses BS/RH finds words or phrases she can re-cast as misogynistic, homophobic, racist, or colonialist (sometimes they actually *are* those things, but for her purposes it doesn't matter).

For instance, rachelmanija, a commenter on the Livejournal community 50 Books POC, told Requires Hate (as Winterfox) that it was inappropriate to call Chinese-American author Cindy Pon a "stupid fuck." Rachelmanija added that the standards at 50 Books POC were different from those of 4chan (a community where anything goes). In response, Requires Hate accused rachelmanija of being racist and implying that Winterfox was a Nazi, because 4chan was a cesspit of Nazis and white supremacists.

Often BS/RH will then begin to pursue the person she has decided to target, issuing multiple vituperative posts or death threats on blogs they frequent, and/or on Twitter, and/or in the online forum where she first targeted them. She then erases—at the very least—the most violent and abusive comments and posts, leaving the target reeling but with no visible proof that the threat occurred. Often, she deletes everything. Therefore not many screenshots of her worst abuses exist.

However, I received numerous screenshots that *had* been recovered by her targets or witnesses, and I was also able to obtain copies of a portion of BS/RH's now-deleted content via The Wayback Machine. In addition, I received independent emails from both targets and witnesses confirming the substance of the death, rape, maiming, and dismemberment threats BS/RH has been accused of.

For some of her targets, she has mounted whisper campaigns, reaching out through her network of followers—prominent among whom is Alex Dally MacFarlane—to con committees, reviewers, and even publishers, pressuring them not to publish or review books she does not approve of, asking them to disinvite or limit the participation of professionals at convention events such as panels and readings.

Working with words, we writers know their power. At the same time, writers work in solitude. It's easy to feel alone—that comes with the

territory anyway. To be pointedly excluded for the crime of disagreeing is an ineffable cruelty.

Rape victims have been hounded and stalked; writers have reported to me that after their encounters with her, they have been unable to write for months on end, out of sheer shock and terror at encountering such violent language directed against them for their work. Readers have been driven away from the field due to the toxicity they've experienced or witnessed.

Here is a sampling of some of the threats she has made about her targets. More are in the database and still more are in the links:

- "If I see \*\*\* being beaten in the street I'll stop to cheer on the attackers and pour some gasoline on him" – "\*\*\*\* is an ignorant, appropriative bag of feces."
- "Spread the word that \*\*\* is a raging racist fuck. Let him be hurt, let him bleed, pound him into the fucking ground. No mercy."
- "Stupid fuck" – "homophobe" – "without any talent whatsoever". To a reader defending her: "Your liking for this pile of verbal diarrhea proves what morons fantasy fans are."
- "rape apologist!" – "her hands should be cut off so she can never write another Asian character."
- "ah, if only I could actually do it in person. with scalpels, not words."

*Community demolition* – Furthermore, BS/RH's repeated attacks have had a chilling effect on our online communities. Once people witness what BS/RH does to others, they become fearful of speaking up, even mildly, against her or in favor of whatever she attacks. They prefer to remain silent, or quietly leave the field.

Here are some commenters describing the effect of BS/RH's insults and threats in 50books\_poc, a LiveJournal forum promoting books by POC:

- "having seen that 'throw acid on them' is a threat for uppity folk not only in my parents' home country but in SFF fandom certainly put me off a career in writing fantasy."
- "She made me afraid to talk about books—books, for crying out loud—because she disliked them and I would be branded a shitstain and worse for disagreeing. She made me feel unsafe in certain communities including those that were created to support people like me. She made me reluctant to express support for certain authors of color. "

This is not the only LiveJournal forum that died out as a result of her hostility. According to targets familiar with LiveJournal, she was also responsible for killing participation in girl\_gamers, another LiveJournal forum for fans. She is known for trolling fanfic and videogaming forums as far back as 2001, by some reports. Targets have reported leaving LiveJournal and Twitter and other SFF gathering places, rather than risk an encounter with her. One or two writers have left online discourse altogether, and report that they now hesitate to have contact with their fans.

*BS/RH's followers* – How is Requires Hate able to cut such a wide swath of destruction? A major part of the reason is that for over a decade BS/RH has been cultivating a sizable cast of followers who respond to her calls to help launch attacks. When one of BS/RH's targets tries to speak up against her, BS/RH publicly positions herself as the victim and accuses her target of doing what she in fact has just done to them, and asks her followers to go on the attack.

Some people who do so are simply *supporters*—those on the sidelines who see someone who has cultivated their friendship, an intelligent young lesbian woman of color, speaking up about a social injustice. They trust her and believe her version of events. It seems apparent that in many cases they are acting in good faith—though their actions still do harm, as BS/RH's targets end up being blasted with hostile or suspicious messages from the community, when they in fact have been the victims of an attack by BS/RH. As a consequence, her targets experience a deep sense of isolation, when many people they admire and respect are amplifying Requires Hate's false narratives about what has happened.

Others are part of BS/RH's *inner circle*. These people actively work in coordination with her to identify and launch attacks against targets. They appear to be mostly progressive women, and many are women of color. I know this because a number of them have reached out privately to me. They feel trapped and want out. They have provided me with details.

BS/RH draws them into her circle with flattery and friendliness, cultivating a mentor-like relationship with them. She provides a supposed safe, private space online for them to vent their frustrations and fears. Gradually BS/RH pulls them in a tight orbit, a world filled with negativity and paranoia where no one is to be trusted but her. She eggs them on in email exchanges or live chats to say intemperate things about their SFF colleagues. In other words, she incites them to help pick targets.

Members of the inner circle receive (initially gentle) correctives if they push back against BS/RH's directives. If they continue to resist, they become targets, themselves—with the added unspoken threat that she can publish their ill-considered emails at any time. They have been her loyal soldiers, and have spoken ill of and acted badly toward other people at her behest.

However, though they are culpable, it is important to remember that someone they thought they could trust is in essence holding them hostage. In a very real sense, they are BS/RH's victims, too.

It is my deepest hope that when they realize that the community knows her game, her inner-circle members who want to escape her control will feel safe enough to step away from her. And I hope that those who have been harmed by former supporters of BS/RH will find it in themselves to forgive those who lashed out at them, hear their stories, and enable them to make amends.

*Social justice hackery* – Reviewing BS/RH's track record in depth makes clear Requires Hate's progressive rhetoric is nothing more than a cynical attempt to coopt it to serve her own ends. If her target is white, they're white supremacists. If they are a POC, they aren't racially-pure enough. (She is notorious for attacking an Asian-Hispanic woman in a LiveJournal forum, for instance, for not being Asian enough in comparison to her—she wasn't "Asian-Asian.")

BS/RH's forum-trolling and destructiveness extends back well before her adoption of social-justice rhetoric (for instance, in one SFF media fan forum early in her career, she savaged other commenters in arguments over SF shows; in gaming forums, she has insulted gamers who disagree with her about videogames).

However, at some point she discovered social-justice-driven rage-speak and found it to be a particularly effective weapon. In this way BS/RH has been doing great harm to the progressive wing of SFF. By hiding behind the language of progressive causes, she taints—she cheapens—one of the primary means at social-equality activists' disposal to help the community-at-large understand a very important series of systemic biases that is harming people every day.

I must add that I don't believe she could have gotten such traction if there weren't a great deal of fear and frustration among younger writers entering the field who are not part of the traditional US and UK white middle class. We are particularly vulnerable to the kinds of attacks Requires Hate has leveled because many newcomers to our community who are marginalized—POC, queer/LGBTQI people, the dis/abled, and older writers, as well as working-class and other marginalized groups—see few opportunities to break in. The SFF social network is still very white, straight, middle-class, able, and male.

It doesn't have to be that way, either. As we expand the diversity of our writer base, we draw more readers in. The field as a whole grows. Readers like reading stories about people like them, but many will go on to read books across a broader scope, as they discover new writers they like. Everyone benefits when we open the doors wider and welcome more perspectives in.

I'd like to take this opportunity to ask my colleagues who are in a position to do so to start thinking and discussing how to help elevate and amplify marginalized writers' voices. There have been some efforts around this already—several anthologies have been created and more are on the way; some influential writers have begun workshops on how to write about characters from races and cultures not their own. I believe more efforts are needed, if we want the SFF field to continue to prosper. I'll be thinking about more ways I can help with this, too.

*BS/RHs identity, denials, apologies, and accusations of banning, blacklisting, or doxxing* – I do believe it's possible Requires Hate has been stalked and trolled. Just because BS/RH has done awful things doesn't mean that others haven't done awful things to her. It doesn't change the reality of the harm she's done.

With regard to the ethics of outing, when someone has demonstrably used numerous multiple identities to assault people without consequences, they have crossed a line. Furthermore, if it weren't enough to look back and survey the harm BS/RH has done over the years—death, rape, and maiming threats; deception; [gaslighting](#) and deletions of incriminating posts; false accusations; terrorizing of fans, rape victims, and people in emotionally or mentally fragile states; and all of these other acts of harm I've showcased here—it's only been in the last few weeks that BS/RH has lied to her supporters about the connection between her Benjanun Sriduangkaew and Requires Hate personae, and to the community-at-large about whether she was actually outed without her permission, by whom, and when.

I have seen evidence with my own eyes of an email she wrote to a former supporter, in which she admits that even "Benjanun Sriduangkaew" is yet another constructed identity. Frankly, I don't know who the person behind these many constructed identities is, or if it's even really just one person.

Unavoidably, given all this, BS/RH's apologies, promises to reform, and everything else she says about herself or her accusers is called into doubt.

I would not support publicly revealing information such as her street address or that of her family members. Nor would I call for people threatening her. I don't call for a ban on publishing her; I can't imagine any publisher is going to pay attention to such a thing anyway, and I wouldn't want them to. That's not my job.

But when harm is done to people and the community does not acknowledge it, the burden of that harm falls on the victim's shoulders, instead of the abuser's. That isn't right. We need to acknowledge, as a community, the serious damage BS/RH has done. We owe it to the people she has harmed.

Writers' reputations have been marred. Their careers were harmed. Readers' right to choose without interference what they read, and to love what they love, has been impugned. Online communities have withered and died.

Discussions about colonialism, racism, sexism, and homophobia in our works may not be an easy conversation for writers to have, but it's necessary, and I welcome that dialog. I want to know where my privilege has blinded me. Stereotypes are bad writing, and they are easy to propagate.

What's *not* OK is to stalk, threaten, and silence people who don't do what you want. No matter who you are or where you live.

And there are *lots* of talented writers out there, including some exciting new voices from around the world whom I've had the delightful opportunity to discover during this research project. I'm personally *much* more interested in using my remaining days on this planet meeting them, promoting them, and reading the stories of people from around the world whose visions and hearts and stories have room for the rest of us.

## Wrapping it up

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*—BS/RH, as winterfox, mistakes a Cambodian-American woman for white when she won't identify her race.*

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For the past month as I've prepared this report, I have read some of the most gut-wrenching and heart-breaking accounts of BS/RH's attacks. Her targets' stories have weighed heavily on me. They have spent years suffering in silence, knowing that no one would believe them without proof. They've also shown great courage in trusting me with the truth of what happened to them.

I believe their stories, and I'm standing up for them.

But I can't do this alone. To put a stop to the harm, we need to stand together, to help protect both current and future prospective members of our community. It is precisely the least connected among us who are the most vulnerable, and I don't believe BS/RH will stop on her own.

A month ago, as the true nature of what had been happening began to unfold before me, I stood at a fork in the road.

Turn toward the ugliness? Face it down, in order to bear witness for those who had been harmed? Knowing the toll it would take—the time and effort, the emotional impact, and the risk that it might open a rift between me and many people whom I respect and admire? The near certainty this will make me a target, too? Or turn away, take the easier path, knowing I was allowing a terrible injustice to continue?

I chose my path. And now that you have read this, it's your turn to choose.

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## What comes next

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*Invitations* – I would like to invite those who have been harmed by Requires Hate in any of her incarnations, or who have witnessed

BS/RH harming others, to tell their stories in the comments below this post. Of course if you prefer to post on your own blogs or forums, I will update this post with links to them. Either post links to your own accounts, or mail me links for inclusion at loudlysingcuckoo at gmail dot com. (Bear in mind, it may take a couple of days for me to respond.)

I would also like to invite the SFF community-at-large to check back here, to read people's stories, and bear witness in the comments. BS/RH's targets need to know that they are heard and believed.

*Comment policy* – Needless to say, this will be a strictly-moderated space, intended solely to provide support and a safe space for people to tell their stories and be heard. I will have no patience for nitpicking, minimizing, and the like. I will also have no patience with racist, ableist, misogynist, transphobic or other hate-filled comments, or with blaming, insulting, or sarcastic language. Not even against Requires Hate. I will delete without hesitation any comment I deem inappropriate. Be gentle with each other. We've had enough hate to last us.

*Trolling policy* – Any insults, threats, or the like coming from Requires Hate or her followers will be immediately screencapped and added to the database, as I have the time and inclination, to document BS/RH's further abuses.

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## APPENDIX A – Rules for Inclusion

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*Rules for screencaps* – I have removed the identifying information for BS/RH's targets and witnesses from the screencaps used in this report, in order to avoid singling out people she has already harmed. In certain cases I pared down screenshots to focus on BS/RH's words, and summarized context below it. Links to the un-redacted screencaps can be found in the links table at the end of the report.

*Rules for database entry* – To be included in my analysis, the following had to be true:

1. Requires Hate in one of her known pseudonyms or aliases launched a sustained and energetic attack on a target (not just an occasional sarcastic remark).

• Attacks include primarily:

- Cyber-stalking (following the target around to different social media or blogs and deriding, insulting, or threatening them).
  - Implicit or explicit death, rape, and/or maiming threats in email, on Twitter, on Facebook, LiveJournal, or other sites.
  - Multiple, vituperative reviews of their books or stories (one review didn't count).
1. All entries have at least one credible source. If at least two sources confirm the target, nature, and extent of the attack in its substantive facts, it is flagged as having 2+ sources confirmed.

• Source types include primarily:

- Online links to the original conflict, or to web archives of it.
- Screencaps from Twitter, Facebook, LiveJournal posts, etc.
- Email accounts and forwarded emails from interactions with others, or copies of comment threads.

1. Other rules of entry:

- I gathered names of targets at random from online sources by searching on BS/RH's pseudonyms and following links and references. I solicited for people to come forward at an anonymous Gmail account, loudlysingcuckoo at gmail dot com. I was also given names by other targets and witnesses. I stopped collecting names at 47, and began researching to obtain evidence of the attack. Thirteen names were removed due to lack of evidence.
- The dates are approximate. In many cases, BS/RH's abuse extended over months and years. I often used a date associated with one of BS/RH's public attacks.
- I reserved, and continue to reserve, the right to use my own judgment with regard to what should be included in the database. I may be willing to update links and correct demonstrable errors of fact, depending on my availability, but not going to have a lot of patience with nitpicking. These are real people's lives. They shouldn't have to prove to the court of the internet that they've been sufficiently harmed, or belong to a sufficiently marginalized status, in order to be believed.

I consider what you were doing on those threads I linked above to be trollish behavior. They have a chilling effect on the comm: I know for a fact that some people have chosen *not* to post about Jemisin, Pon, or any other book that you may in the future review negatively, and that they are doing so *because* of those comment threads. What's more, I don't believe that chilling effect is counter balanced by any benefit to the comm or the issues that the comm has been trying to serve: it's just chilling.

—LJ moderator to BS/RH, regarding her attacks on commenters in 50books\_poc

TABLE 1 – BS/RH TARGETS: DETAILED FINDINGS.

Target Name	Primary Comm Role	Headline	Additional Notes	Incident Date (approx)	2+ sources?
Ahmed, Saladin	Fic Writer	"Throne of the Crescent Moon...that steaming misogynistic turdpile written by same for same" - multiple vitriolic reviews, since deleted		Apr-2012	Yes
Anon, Fanfic Writer	Fic Writer	"Winterfox...derived such fun from bullying and rallying the dogpiling of someone that...[for] a lot of people she lost any credibility for her claims of being so far above any of those lowly little immature fanfic writers." (translated from German)		Aug-2012	Yes
Andreadis, Athena	Editor	Campaign to publicly shun her and pressure con runners to disinvite/limit her participation at a major regional convention around the date of release of her anthology (date approx.). <u>Update 22 Nov 14</u> : The con runner in question, Rose Fox, disputes Andreadis's account, and no direct evidence exists that con decisions about panel content or reading slots were influenced by BS/RH or her supporters. Independent evidence exists, however, of a deliberate campaign to discredit Andreadis around the time of release of her anthology. Multiple members of BS/RH's inner circle, including Alex MacFarlane, were in attendance at the con. I can't preclude the possibility that the efforts of those engaging in the smear campaign on Andreadis, whether directly or indirectly, factored into the con committee's decision making in some fashion.	Knew from the start that BS was RH.	Spring 2013	Yes
Anon, MOC Writer	Fic Writer	"misogynist" – email account		Unk	No
Anon, Not Writing Fantasy	Fic Writer	"having seen that 'throw acid on them' is a threat for uppity folk not only in my parents' home country but in SFF fandom certainly put me off a career in writing fantasy."		Unk	No
Anon, Reviews	Reader	"...that was until I posted a review of a work that she disagreed with, at which point I got abused both in the comm, and on her other platforms, and had her bring it up any time I tried to participate."	"As a WOC I'm used to having my voice dismissed, or being told my opinion is worthless, but I hadn't expected to have it happen in a community that was supposed to be all about supporting the voices of people like me."	Unk	No
Anon, Silenced	Reader	"She made me afraid to talk about books – books, for crying out loud – because she disliked them and I would be branded a shitstain and worse for disagreeing. She made me feel unsafe in certain communities including those that were created to support people like me. She made me		Unk	No

		reluctant to express support for certain authors of color. “			
Anon, Video Gamer	Gamer	“She said, posting as Winterfox not all that long ago, in a posting that has now been deleted in a semi-private venue, that I ought to be raped by dogs.” “it would not take you much work to find her calling various and sundry Asian women ‘not Asian enough.’ (You can do that yourself; it makes me sick to do it for you.) So she has redefined us as ‘white on the inside’.”		Unk	No
Bacigalupi, Paolo	Fic Writer	“As for Bacigalupi, flay him alive slowly, pour salt, pour acid, dismember and keep alive as long As Possible. ” and ” If I see Bacigalupi being beaten in the street I’ll stop to cheer on the Attackers and pour some gasoline on him . “; On blog: “Bacigaluslkgs;lkjhgh is an ignorant, appropriative bag of feces.” “Spread the word that Paolo Bacigalupi is a raging racist fuck. Let him be hurt, let him bleed, pound him into the fucking ground. No mercy.”	“first impressions: Paolo Bacigalupi’s THE WIND-UP GIRL is exotifying, yellow-fever, offensive claptrap”; “the Bacigalupi hateblogging of loathing, spoilers – THE WIND-UP GIRL still stinks”; “despising THE WIND-UP GIRL linkspam: I am not alone!”	Nov-2012	Yes
Bakker, R. Scott	Fic Writer	“a feces-clad-serial-masturbator” “alpha males – paranormal biotruths and rape culture”	multiple vitriolic reviews on Requires Hate blog. “He is sad. Everything about this is a pathetic clusterfuck neck-deep in everything ever wrong with fandom. “	Apr-2012	Yes
Bishop, Anne	Fic Writer	“misogynistic homophobic turd” “relentlessly fucking awful” “irredeemable verbal diarrhea upon which illiterate maggots feast”	multiple vitriolic reviews on Requires Hate blog.	May-2011	Yes
Brown, Rachel Manija	Fic Writer	“AH HA! rape apologist whiteknighter!”	Stalked for nearly 3 years on blogs and Twitter, called racist, homophobic, etc. in vitriolic language	Jun-2011	Yes
Gaither, Chelsea	Fic Writer	Writer who wrote on surviving rape; stalked for 6 months starting in December of 2012. Linked to target’s blog on a near-daily basis for six months, calling her e.g., “illiterate fuck, stupid, hilarious, fun.”	Screen caps of days where blog had 10-15 different twitter referrals all tracing back to RH’s twitter account	Apr/May-2013	Yes
Goldberg, Melissa	Fic Writer	“she’s a fauxgressive liberal dick who believes she’s an enlightened human being, a weeaboo dolt who insists her tedious fetishization equals love and respect. It’s disgusting.”	multiple vitriolic reviews on RH	Feb-2013	Yes
Harris, Charlaïne	Fic Writer	“FROM DEAD TO WORSE pt 2 – Charlaïne Harris a shitbag of bigotry”	multiple vitriolic reviews on RH	Jun-2012	Yes
Hesychasm	Reader	Cambodian-American reader, mistaken by WF as white and schooled on crying “white women’s tears” when she said that personal insults were inappropriate in the thread & refused to reveal her race when WF baited her.	WF deleted her attacks in the link shown, but a commenter following the thread saved them and forwarded me a	Jun-2011	Yes



			copy in email		
Jemisin, NK	Fic Writer	"Easily the most overrated thing ever to come out recently, and I'm going to assume that people who gush over how groundbreaking it all is have only ever read Tolkien and Eragon."	multiple vituperative posts re her works, harassment of her readers for liking them. For at least a year straight, WF searched the internet for positive reviews of her books, then appeared there to abuse the reviewer and fans.	Aug-2010	Yes
Kiernan, Caitlyn	Fic Writer	"rape apologist" "her hands should be cut off so she can never write another Asian character."	multiple vitriolic reviews and threats	Dec-2011	Yes
Kowal, Mary Robinette	Fic Writer	"And suppose that the shit writing...and the racism don't bother you—in which case are you an amoeba?—what you're left with is an insipid take on the already insipid 'fae kidnap a human something true love something' idea. It's a regurgitation done without skill, with an extra dose of racism nobody asked for."	pressured by BS/RH to revise manuscript and publicly apologize for writing about American Indian culture.	Nov-2012	No
Kress, Adrienne	Fic Writer	"Shit plot. Shit prose. Weeaboo maggotry. This book is the epitome of what YA is really about: mass-produced illiterate fiction for illiterate people."		Jan-2013	No
Loenen-Ruiz, Rochita	Fic Writer	Subjected to public and private smear campaigns, maligning of her integrity, and shunning because she refused to submit to pressure to publicly denounce a target/ falsify a review of target's book.		Jul-2014	Yes
Lord, Karen	Fic Writer	"What the fuck is this shit." "If this is an experiment to see how much shitty stuff you can cram into one book, in combination with writing that alternates between fucking tortured and fucking twee, and still get nerds to rub themselves all over it like they're in heat, it's a brilliant one."	multiple vitriolic reviews.	Jul-2013	Yes
Paget, Colum	Fic Writer	"Twitter death threats, stalking. "Behead this person!" vitriolic comments on his blog and RH blog. "futuristic THIRDWORLDIA OF SQUALOR AND POVERTY is always stuck in MORE SQUALOR AND POVERTY and HEY HOOKERS, HEY MISOGYNY."	Targeting likely due to his receipt of a major European award – the attack focused on a year-old blog post, shortly after news of the award broke.	Jun-2012	Yes
Pon, Cindy	Fic Writer	"Stupid fuck" "homophobe" "without any talent whatsoever". "MAYDAY, MAYDAY. BIOCHEMICAL WEAPON TO CINDY PON'S COORDINATES AND MAKE THAT DOUBLE TIME" To reader defending her: insults along the lines of "Your liking for this pile of verbal diarrhea proves what morons fantasy fans are."	As with Jemisin, WF made a concerted attempt to suppress her works. She searched the internet for positive reviews and appeared in those forums to abuse the favorable reviewer and fans.	Jul-2011	Yes
Rothfuss, Patrick	Fic Writer	"Patrick Rothfuss: down him in vomit, set him on fire, or simply take a machete to his dick? You decide!"	Quote unconfirmed. Limited public details found on BS/RH attacks, but multiple sources confirm he was a major target.	Unk	Yes

ScottishMartialArts	Gamer	“Dear SMA, our trannies generally look much better and classier than you. Even the pre-op ones don’t look half as mannish and buttfuck-ugly. So, about that...”	“Helps that they tend to be tall and slender. Next to them, SMA looks... well, chubby. And shabby. No wonder she’s bitter about Thai trannies.”	Dec-2010	Yes
Sperring, Kari	Fic Writer	hounded by Winterfox & followers on Cat Valente’s blog- vitriol leveled at her led to her taking an overdose		May-2012	Yes
Sullivan, Tricia	Fic Writer	pressured to not submit a book set partly in Thailand; when she persisted, a reviewer was pressured to not publish a review, or to make it a negative one		Oct-2012	Yes
Williams, Liz	Fic Writer	“rape victim accused of being a rape apologist	Yes		

**Percent of targets for which confirmation of attack exists from multiple sources: 83%**

TABLE 1A – ADDITIONAL POTENTIAL BS/RH TARGETS.

Other credible attacks; targets not included in rollups due to insufficient evidence					
Anon, Media Fan	Gamer	“As one of the WOC in question, I am quite curious why her anger was justified against me for liking different books, movies, etc. than she did. We were on a more or less equal privilege footing. How was her anger (justified or not) at the world as a whole justification for calling me a worthless piece of shit for having different tastes in media?... (To be clear, and as added irony, she was defending a white epic fantasy author while bashing my preference for a particular piece of Asian media.)”	May be same as Anon, Video Gamer. Links included there.	Unk	No
Anon, Threatened Queer	Othr/Unk	“I am one of the targets of her maybe-satirical!-maybe-not! threats, and as a queer woman I do not have the luxury of just shrugging it off.”	May be same as Anon, Video Gamer. Links included there.	Unk	No
Anon, POC Writer	Fic Writer	“pedophile rapist!”, “I know your masturbatory fantasies now” “rapey, rapey, rapey” “Are you Asian? Are you actually Asian?”	Scathing anonymous Tumblr review appeared shortly after publication of his first story. No direct evidence this was BS/RH so not included in rollups. However, strong circumstantial evidence: (1) attack on Asian SFF writer; (2) insults very much in line with BS/RH rhetoric; (3) gaslighting- verbal assaults swiftly deleted.	Unk	No
McCalmont, Jonathan		insults and mockery from some of BS/RH’s known supporters after he criticized BS/RH- sufficiently intense to cause him to close his Twitter account and issue a statement on his blog not naming BS/RH.	limited public details available but indications of abuse based on his blog post	Oct-14”	No

TABLE 2 BS/RH TARGETS LINKS.

Target Name	Case links
Ahmed, Saladin	<a href="http://web.archive.org/web/20130603194709/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/saladin-ahmeds-throne-of-the-crescent-moon-in-which-we-adventure-in-joss-whedon-feminism/">http://web.archive.org/web/20130603194709/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/04/24/saladin-ahmeds-throne-of-the-crescent-moon-in-which-we-adventure-in-joss-whedon-feminism/</a> <a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/05/04/more-on-throne-of-the-crescent-moon-and-the-omnipresent-male-gaze/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/05/04/more-on-throne-of-the-crescent-moon-and-the-omnipresent-male-gaze/</a> <a href="https://storify.com/PrinceofRazors/on-baggage">https://storify.com/PrinceofRazors/on-baggage</a>
Anon, FanFic Writer	<a href="http://katzenklaue.blogspot.sg/2012/08/die-fallstricke-einer-verfehlten.html">http://katzenklaue.blogspot.sg/2012/08/die-fallstricke-einer-verfehlten.html</a>
Anon, Fiction Editor & Writer	n/a – credible email accounts with screencaps
Anon, Not Writing	

Fantasy	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96156120#t96156120">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96156120#t96156120</a>
Anon, Reviews	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96261080#t96261080">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96261080#t96261080</a>
Anon, Silenced	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96127448#t96127448">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96127448#t96127448</a>
Anon, Video Gamer	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96109016#t96109016">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96109016#t96109016</a>
	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96129240#t96129240">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96129240#t96129240</a>
	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96179416#t96179416">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96179416#t96179416</a>
	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96117976#t96117976">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96117976#t96117976</a>
	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96125656#t96125656">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96125656#t96125656</a>
	<a href="http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96104664#t96104664">http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96104664#t96104664</a>
Bacigalupi, Paolo	<a href="http://web.archive.org/web/20120217114125/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/paolo-bacigalupi-is-a-turd/">http://web.archive.org/web/20120217114125/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/paolo-bacigalupi-is-a-turd/</a>
	<a href="http://inverarity.livejournal.com/159794.html">http://inverarity.livejournal.com/159794.html</a>
	<a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/38277.html?thread=172275845#t172275845">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/38277.html?thread=172275845#t172275845</a>
	<a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/37932.html?thread=171769644">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/37932.html?thread=171769644</a>
Bakker, R. Scott	<a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/35341.html?thread=163995405">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/35341.html?thread=163995405</a>
	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/12/13/alpha-males-paranormal-biotruths-and-rape-culture/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/12/13/alpha-males-paranormal-biotruths-and-rape-culture/</a>
	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/04/17/r-scott-bakker-neuropath-of-misogyny/#more-2777">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/04/17/r-scott-bakker-neuropath-of-misogyny/#more-2777</a>
	<a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20120425093838/http://rsbakker.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/so-this-one-time-at-hate-camp/">https://web.archive.org/web/20120425093838/http://rsbakker.wordpress.com/2012/04/23/so-this-one-time-at-hate-camp/</a>
Bishop, Anne	<a href="http://worldsf.wordpress.com/2012/02/22/editorial-season-of-silly">http://worldsf.wordpress.com/2012/02/22/editorial-season-of-silly</a>
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Brown, Rachel Manija	<a href="http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html?thread=1336432#t1336432">http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html?thread=1336432#t1336432</a>
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Gaither, Chelsea	<a href="http://creativetwobledipper.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/cerulean-sins-chapter-47-triggers.html">http://creativetwobledipper.blogspot.co.uk/2013/05/cerulean-sins-chapter-47-triggers.html</a>
	<a href="http://creativetwobledipper.blogspot.ca/2012/12/narcissus-in-chains-chapter-12.html">http://creativetwobledipper.blogspot.ca/2012/12/narcissus-in-chains-chapter-12.html</a>
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Goldberg, Melissa	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/02/18/hybrid-child-by-melissa-goldberg-pt-2-plus-racism/#more-4803">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/02/18/hybrid-child-by-melissa-goldberg-pt-2-plus-racism/#more-4803</a>
	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/07/15/self-publishing-lulz-hybrid-child-by-melissa-goldberg-pt-1/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/07/15/self-publishing-lulz-hybrid-child-by-melissa-goldberg-pt-1/</a>
Harris, Charlaine	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/19/from-dead-to-worse-pt-4-charlaine-harris-goes-gorean-the-us-is-a-disease/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/19/from-dead-to-worse-pt-4-charlaine-harris-goes-gorean-the-us-is-a-disease/</a>
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	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/14/from-dead-to-worse-pt-2-charlaine-harris-a-shitbag-of-bigotry/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/14/from-dead-to-worse-pt-2-charlaine-harris-a-shitbag-of-bigotry/</a>
	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/11/from-dead-to-worse-pt-1-charlaine-harris-still-disgusting-racist/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/11/from-dead-to-worse-pt-1-charlaine-harris-still-disgusting-racist/</a>

	<a href="https://twitter.com/acrackedmoon/status/216677686268014594">https://twitter.com/acrackedmoon/status/216677686268014594</a>
Hesychasm	<a href="http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html">http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html</a>
Jemisin, NK	<a href="http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html?thread=1336432#t1336432">http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/373872.html?thread=1336432#t1336432</a> <a href="http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/304575.html">http://50books-poc.livejournal.com/304575.html</a> <a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/28649.html?thread=127446505#t127446505">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/28649.html?thread=127446505#t127446505</a> <a href="http://failfandomanonwiki.pbworks.com/w/page/46349159/Winterfox">http://failfandomanonwiki.pbworks.com/w/page/46349159/Winterfox</a> <a href="http://www.donotlink.com/cbi1">http://www.donotlink.com/cbi1</a>
Kiernan, Caitlyn	<a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20120416112810/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2011/12/29/caitlin-kiernans-silk-in-which-a-novel-reads-like-a-story-arc-from-the-dreaming/">https://web.archive.org/web/20120416112810/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2011/12/29/caitlin-kiernans-silk-in-which-a-novel-reads-like-a-story-arc-from-the-dreaming/</a> <a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/37932.html?thread=171572524">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/37932.html?thread=171572524</a>
Kowal, Mary Robinette	<a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20130502222327/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/11/14/mary-robinette-kowal-and-the-half-breed-choke/">https://web.archive.org/web/20130502222327/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/11/14/mary-robinette-kowal-and-the-half-breed-choke/</a>
Kress, Adrienne	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/01/14/the-friday-society-adrienne-kess-is-an-illiterate-fuck/">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/01/14/the-friday-society-adrienne-kess-is-an-illiterate-fuck/</a>
Loenen-Ruiz, Rochita	<a href="http://triciasullivan.com/2014/10/20/a-few-words-about-rochita-loenen-ruiz/">http://triciasullivan.com/2014/10/20/a-few-words-about-rochita-loenen-ruiz/</a> <a href="https://storify.com/charlesatan/rochita-loenen-ruiz-on">https://storify.com/charlesatan/rochita-loenen-ruiz-on</a>
Lord, Karen	<a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/04/15/karen-lord-the-best-of-all-possible-worlds/#more-4866">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/04/15/karen-lord-the-best-of-all-possible-worlds/#more-4866</a> <a href="https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/sff-fans-are-fucking-stupid-or-the-best-eugenics-ever/#more-5038">https://requireshate.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/sff-fans-are-fucking-stupid-or-the-best-eugenics-ever/#more-5038</a>
ScottishMartialArts	<a href="http://www.rpgcodex.net/forums/index.php?threads/worst-thread-ever-general-gaming-sjw-dumping-ground-currently-airing-gamergate.90469/page-344">http://www.rpgcodex.net/forums/index.php?threads/worst-thread-ever-general-gaming-sjw-dumping-ground-currently-airing-gamergate.90469/page-344</a> <a href="http://i.imgur.com/f3mtuSF.png">http://i.imgur.com/f3mtuSF.png</a>
Paget, Colum	<a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20130126013102/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/colum-paget/">https://web.archive.org/web/20130126013102/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/colum-paget/</a> <a href="https://web.archive.org/web/20130126012158/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/13/james-white-award-and-colum-paget-the-unbearable-whiteness-of-being/#more-2695">https://web.archive.org/web/20130126012158/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2012/06/13/james-white-award-and-colum-paget-the-unbearable-whiteness-of-being/#more-2695</a> <a href="https://storify.com/requireshate/colum-paget-and-the-whiteness-of-being">https://storify.com/requireshate/colum-paget-and-the-whiteness-of-being</a> <a href="http://blog.polenthblake.com/2014/10/requires-only-that-you-trust.html?showComment=1413198269798#c2695530724951214236">http://blog.polenthblake.com/2014/10/requires-only-that-you-trust.html?showComment=1413198269798#c2695530724951214236</a>
Pon, Cindy	
Rothfuss, Patrick	<p>credible email accounts. quotes come from failfandomwiki, here:</p> <a href="http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/38277.html?thread=172275845#t172275845">http://fail-fandomanon.livejournal.com/38277.html?thread=172275845#t172275845</a>
Sperring, Kari	<a href="http://catvalente.livejournal.com/677154.html">http://catvalente.livejournal.com/677154.html</a>
Sullivan, Tricia	<a href="http://triciasullivan.com/2014/10/03/toxicity-and-me/">http://triciasullivan.com/2014/10/03/toxicity-and-me/</a>
Williams, Liz	

#### NOTES:

1. My analysis does not rely solely on links, but also on personal accounts, with copies of forwarded emails and screencaps, provided to me confidentially by several of her targets. It is my hope that those targeted by her will be willing to step forward, but if they do not, I will keep their information confidential. Theirs should be the final decision about whether to go public with their stories.

2. In some cases, BS/RH has deleted content within her control to do so, or may delete further content in the future. I've included the links anyway, as the headers provide some information. Further deleted content from her blog can be found using The Wayback Machine. Here is one useful archive of tags, which can be used for further research:  
[https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/](https://web.archive.org/web/*/https://requireshate.wordpress.com/tag/)
3. There are many more links available for these and other targets. I will continue to expand and make corrections to the database as time permits.

## 462 Responses to *A Report on Damage Done by One Individual Under Several Names*

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Pingback: [Astrogator's Logs » Blog Archive » Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Wrecker](#)

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### Athena Andreadis

November 6, 2014 at 11:23 am

Laura, thank you for this amazing, agonizing but necessary work. I just published my own connected story: [Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Wrecker](#). Here are its concluding words:

"...any human group that wants to remain human cannot allow people to be treated as prey for sport and profit – or because some people are deemed more important than others.

Repairing the fabric of the world is neither glamorous nor rewarding. It's ceaseless toil – not jargon-laden purer-than-thou trumpeting.

We have work to do."

---

### Jennifer

November 6, 2014 at 11:46 am

If this person's true identity remains in question, why assume he or she actually is either female or Asian? Because s/he says so?

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### Laurie Mann

November 6, 2014 at 11:57 am

Thanks, Laura, for the research. I've managed not to run into this person, but I suspect I'd be blocking and moving on pretty quickly if I ever did.

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Pingback: [Online Bullying](#)

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### Susan Jett

November 6, 2014 at 1:03 pm

Thank you for compiling this and laying it out in such a logical manner. Thank you for shining some light on this subject for those of us who have not been personally involved & have been wondering what the entire story is. Athena, as you say – we have work to do, indeed!

---

### Michael Harper

November 6, 2014 at 1:13 pm

Thanks, Laura. I had no idea this evil creature was out here. Some of the people she's attacked are my friends. I'll keep an eye out. Are we even sure this vile woman is really a woman? The speech patterns read like an old-school Alabama cracker racist. This is awful, no matter who it is.

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Pingback: [Standing Up and Speaking Truth | From the Beloved Country](#)

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 2:08 pm

Michael, a quick moderator's note. As angry as people understandably are, I really want this to be a safe space. Please try to avoid dehumanizing language like "evil creature." RHB is as human as the rest of us. We are all capable of doing terrible things to each other.

That said, I agree with you, what she has done has been really awful—and no, we don't know much about who the person behind the personae is.

Thanks for posting, and for keeping an eye out.

-l.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 2:10 pm

Athena, I really appreciate your speaking out. Your post is powerful and moving, and it took a lot of courage to go public. I'll update my report to reflect it.

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Pingback: [On Becoming What You Hate, Redux | Kameron Hurley](#)

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## **Claire Houck (Nina Waters)**

November 6, 2014 at 2:52 pm

Thank you for sharing this. Those of us who are hang around the fringes of the society often don't know what's going on further in, and we can easily be targeted by a charlatan (I know you're trying to avoid negative language, but based on what you've written I thought that term would be appropriate without being derogatory or inaccurate) who says the "right" things. But seeing it in these terms, so black and white, with the evidence to back it up (and, in my personal case, seeing names of people I'm acquainted with and like on the list of those who have been targeted)...well, we can't fight back if we don't know it's going on.

So thanks for wading in to this and writing it up so eloquently and clearly. I wish more trolls could get exposed this well!

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 2:55 pm

I think charlatan is a very accurate description, Claire. Thanks for sharing.

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## **ND**

November 6, 2014 at 3:22 pm

On the one hand, I'm happy to see this come to light.

On the other hand, I find myself a bit irritated by the surprise expressed here and elsewhere about this whole affair.

Are we supposed to be shocked that someone who publicly, in the guise that /everyone knew about/ (RH), was extremely abusive.... turned out to be extremely abusive? The pie charts here kind of sum it all up for me; what we're shocked about is that someone who we knew abused Acceptable Targets (by the standards of the progressive SFF community: men, white women, anyone less marginalized in society at large than the speaker) also did quite a bit of abusing Unacceptable Targets.

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Pingback: [The Passion I have for Genre Literature | Blog, Jvstin Style](#)

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 3:43 pm

To be fair, ND, I don't think everyone knew, or knows exactly what RHB was doing. I certainly didn't. And I do think a case can be made for marginalized people's right to punch up. I do think POC and people who live in the developing world have a much harder time being heard. Also, though her reviews left a bad taste in my mouth, I saw most of them as within bounds. It was the persistent and energetic behavior to silence individuals—stalking, death threats, and other behavior that was clearly intended to silence people whose points of view she disagreed with—that went over the line for me. At the end of the day, we may live in a system with lots of power imbalances that aren't fair, but it's not right for anyone to go after other people the way she has.

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## **Your Glorious Leader ®**

November 6, 2014 at 3:45 pm

I am genuinely shocked and amazed.

**Shocked at the lengths someone will go to in order to spread unhappiness and abuse online to people they may not have even met, simply because they hold a differing view.**

**Amazed** at the level of dedication and work that Laura has invested in making the community a better safer place through this piece. **She deserves a round of applause.**

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## **Alice K.**

November 6, 2014 at 3:46 pm

I have a really mild story, by comparison, but I did follow Requires Hate for a while, and had a friend who warned me about swallowing anything she said wholesale. So I took a measured response: I wasn't willing to fight on her behalf, but I considered the perspective she was coming from. I mentioned on Twitter one day that, while I was on her side, it was because she made me consider things I needed to, not because I agreed entirely with her.

Shortly after that, she went through my tiny writing/review blog, looking for things to pick on. I didn't think anything of it; some of the things I published on the blog WERE ill-considered. But then I made a really innocuous RT, borne of despair over my upcoming divorce. She aggressively went after me for it, and I blocked her. I wondered sometimes if I'd overreacted. It's something of a relief to see I didn't.

---

## **Anonymous**

November 6, 2014 at 3:52 pm

I've wondered this too.

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## **Yoon Ha Lee**

November 6, 2014 at 3:54 pm

I have not (to my knowledge) had interactions with RHB, but I wish to express my sympathy and support for RHB's victims, and to thank those who were able to speak up.

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## **sologdin**

November 6, 2014 at 3:55 pm

thanks for the useful summation. i'd draw a distinction, however, between coarse 'interpretation' of texts and coarse allegations about authors, and, within statements about authors, between mere ad hominem argument and violent rhetoric and/or bona fide threats. the ROH persona often fell into the intentional fallacy, identifying racist (or whatever) language in a text and then imputing it directly to the author. for texts that she admittedly had not read (such as mark lawrence or scott bakker), it's almost as though the imputations went the other direction: you've written about sexual violence as a male person so therefore it is sexism or rape apologia, or so, and you are accordingly a rape apologist sexist.

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## **MSL**

November 6, 2014 at 3:56 pm

Thank you for compiling this report. It's clear I wasn't aware of everything either (and still continue to be somewhat unaware, as this report has shown). I do have a question concerning the database, and I hope this is within bounds: where have you found RH's other reviews concerning Adrienne Kress? I'm only aware of (and have only found, upon Googling) the one on the RH blog.

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Pingback: [Laura J. Mixon on Requires Hate](#)

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## **Anonymous**

November 6, 2014 at 3:58 pm

Laura Mixon, thank you for this thorough report. It's a very strange case and I would still like to see some facts as to how the different personae were revealed to be linked. One rumor had it that BS was revealed to be RH to promote an anthology in which a BS story was featured? I can't offer substantiation as I can't remember where I read that.

There is a weird, nebulous quality to the whole story\* and I keep wondering if RHB will ever appear in person anywhere.

\*I don't mean that to sound like I'm questioning whether these attacks occurred; I only heard about all this recently as well, but it became clear pretty quickly what the pattern was. Trying hard to describe what happened while avoiding calling anybody bad names, here 😊

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## **John Hedtke**

November 6, 2014 at 4:01 pm

I have run into this kind of thing in the past in the pagan community with one particular person who accumulated a coterie of low-grade people who have no self-respect (that, I found, was the key to his ability to attract people). It was most educational, though thoroughly unpleasant. (BTW, that person just croaked recently. I saw the obits and all I could think was "Good!")

Insofar as what I and many others in that community had to go through at the time was parallel, I wanted to say that you're doing *exactly* the right thing to deal with this. This is miiiiiighty toxic and psycho behavior and the best way to neutralize the attacks is to bring as much into the light for public scrutiny as possible. Comparing notes and identifying the pattern of behavior—and there almost certainly is; these kinds of people usually have a repeating pattern to their attacks that becomes fairly predictable—is the best way to warn everyone who hasn't been through the mill.

---

## **John Hedtke**



November 6, 2014 at 4:10 pm

Alice: One of the things I found with a similar person was that you cannot cross them on \*anything\*. It's always completely black and white: "if you're not for me, you're against me, and if you're against me, you're a mortal threat." In fact, it's a good test for this behavior: if they don't have the latitude to have you disagree with them, you're seeing some variant of this kind of thing... though rarely to this level of manifestation, thank goodness! 😊

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## Muccamukk

November 6, 2014 at 4:15 pm

I appreciate having this all in one place with as much evidence as may be gathered.

I'm curious as to why you deleted the comment asking for citations regarding Alex Dally MacFarlane. I don't know either the commenter or MacFarlane, but it didn't seem like an unreasonable request.

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## Anonymous

November 6, 2014 at 4:20 pm

^^Some new links have appeared since I posted the above, with more info as to how BS was outed as RH, so thank you!

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## UrsulaV

November 6, 2014 at 4:21 pm

I will second this—the online SF community is a big place with many small communities and my circle only brushed against RHB's once or twice. I saw a tweet or two, filed them mentally as "another vitriolic person on the internet" which was undoubtedly myopic of me, but if you don't know any of the people involved, or those you know aren't talking about it (for obvious reasons!) because they don't want to attract attention...well, there's a lot of vitriolic people on the internet. (I didn't know who Beale was until he ran for SFWA prez either.)

Speaking only for myself, my SF involvement doesn't usually involve book review sites or book bloggers—I may be weird in that!—and RHB didn't come up talking art or webcomics, where I was active at the time that apparently RHB was in full-swing. So this is all new information for me, and I'm grateful to Laura for putting it together.

Is there anything concrete we can do to help any of the people targeted by RHB?

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## Rachel Manija Brown

November 6, 2014 at 4:24 pm

Requires Hate harassed me for about three years, in 2011-2013.

I first encountered her (under the name of Winterfox) on 50 Books POC, a community for reviewing books by people of color. The community, founded in 2007, had thrived until Winterfox joined it in 2011. Every time someone reviewed a book by certain authors of color, she verbally abused not only the reviewer, but everyone who commented to the post. Her intent seemed to be to intimidate readers out of reviewing books by those authors: in particular, African-American author N. K. Jemisin and Chinese-American author Cindy Pon.

Posting to the community dropped off noticeably. Several people privately told me that they had left the community due to Winterfox's abuse. After Winterfox posted a book review in which she called Cindy Pon a "stupid fuck," I asked Winterfox to stop using personal insults. The ensuing blow-up resulted in the destruction of the community.

I only exchanged about five or six comments with Winterfox, all during the span of a few days. That was the last direct contact I had with her, and I never posted about her. But she commented on me, on blogs and on Twitter, for the next three years.

She said the same sort of things about me that she said about a lot of people – that I was racist, homophobic, sexist, misogynistic, a rape

apologist, stupid, despicable, and worthless. All this was expressed with intense rage and vicious profanity. She didn't say that she wished I could be shot in the head or have acid thrown on me, or make any other threat of violence. But I saw her say those things about other people whom she also accused of being homophobic, sexist, racist, and so forth. I was clearly categorized in her mind as the sort of person who ought to be mutilated and killed.

This is why people found her so frightening, and why so many of the stories about her are only told anonymously. It's not because she told everyone that they should be raped by dogs or have their hands broken with a hammer. It's because she made those kinds of threats frequently enough, and was so vicious in general, that they became the subtext of everything she said. Another thing that frightened people was her tendency to harass people for months or years after a single encounter, pursuing them from platform to platform, long after ordinary trolls would have gotten bored and moved on. Her sheer relentlessness was creepy, disturbing, and obsessive.

Her harassment of me followed a pattern. Every time I posted on LGBTQ issues and sometimes when I reviewed a book with queer content, she would launch a wave of harassment. Sometimes she'd quote from my post and abuse or mock me, and sometimes her abuse would be on an unrelated topic. But whenever I mentioned queer issues, the harassment would start. Her intent was clear: to intimidate me out of speaking on queer-related topics and rights. That is an issue of great importance to me. I do fundraising for LGBTQ causes. Once I and two other women ran an online auction that raised \$50,000 for marriage equality. That is the sort of activism that Requires Hate spent three years trying to suppress.

There were times when I didn't post on LGBTQ issues, or posted only under lock, because I didn't feel up to facing yet another onslaught of verbal abuse. So Requires Hate succeeded, to some small extent: she got me to shut up about queer rights a couple times. This is the person whose bullying is defended as being in the service of the greater good. Whose greater good did that serve?

I am not going to post my personal credentials of oppression to argue that my disability, religion, or sexual orientation made it wrong for her to harass me. (Though I will mention that Requires Hate knew exactly how I was a minority, because she obviously read my blog carefully and consistently for three years.) Harassment is wrong. Period. Using intimidation to suppress civil rights activism is wrong. Period. If I was a straight white able-bodied Christian man, it would still be wrong.

I can't prove any of this. Requires Hate deleted everything she wrote about me, and I didn't take screenshots of the abuse she directed at me. At the time it was happening, I wasn't thinking of getting revenge on her or proving her misdeeds in the future, and I didn't want copies of her abuse on my computer. So you can believe me, or not. You can think her harassment was justified, or not. That part is up to you. All I can do is tell you what happened.

Requires Hate/Benjanun Sriduangkaew recently put up a pair of apologies, one for each persona. She has never apologized to me, though she has had four years to do so. However, I don't need or want an apology. We have all seen how words can be faked. But actions, whatever their motivation, are real.

Requires Hate, if you are genuinely remorseful and honestly intend to change, here's what I want from you: I want to have no contact with you ever again, and I want you to have nothing whatsoever to do with me. That means that you never contact me in any way, online or offline. It means that you never discuss me or even mention me online, in any persona and for any reason, whether directly or in veiled references. It means you never link to anything I post. It means you don't harass me, and you don't send your friends to abuse or harass me.

If you are willing to agree to this, please copy the paragraph above and post it on both of your blogs, attributing it to me under my full name and promising to abide by its conditions. And then never say anything else to me or about me again.

I was hesitant to make this post, as Requires Hate has a long history of retaliating against those who speak up about her. This statement is far more likely to prompt her to start harassing me again, as herself or in some new persona or via friends, than it is to make her leave me alone. I am also concerned that signing my name to this statement will spark attempts to damage my career, the spreading of malicious lies about me, or other forms of retaliation. And I can only hope that I don't need to be concerned about physical violence.

But I don't want to leave all the rest of the people she targeted standing alone. So here's my story, in solidarity. To those of you who named yourselves, and to those who remain anonymous: I believe you, and I stand with you. What was done to you was unjustified and wrong. And I really hope that none of us will have to go through this again.

---

**laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 4:26 pm

Hi, Muccamukk, I'm going to approve this comment so I can answer it. I've set up this thread to focus on supporting the people who've been targeted and want to tell their stories, so discussions on standards of evidence and so forth are off topic. I think it's a useful conversation to have, but I don't want it happening here.

I'm pondering the best way I can support that conversation, too, in a way that will generate more light than heat. Give me some time to get out from under my to-do list and I'll let folks know.

---

## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 4:35 pm

Rachel, thanks so much for coming forward. That took real courage. I hope your example will inspire others who've been harmed to come forward as well.

I also think your concept of an open letter to RHB on how she can make real amends has merit. Other people who've been targeted might want to use this thread to do something along those lines, too.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 4:37 pm

Thanks for the words of support. They mean a lot.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 4:37 pm

Thanks, Yoon.

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## **Steven Brust**

November 6, 2014 at 4:39 pm

I had no idea this was going on. I hate that it is. I'm glad you're working to stop it.

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## **Muccamukk**

November 6, 2014 at 4:49 pm

Thank you very much for answering. I understand now.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 6, 2014 at 4:55 pm

Everyone who has posted here shows a degree of bravery that I aspire to. I don't know how to express how much admiration I have for all of you, and how sorry I am that you have been cut off, shut out, and isolated for the crime of thinking independently.

---

## **Janis Ian**

November 6, 2014 at 5:15 pm

I stand with Yoon Ha Lee. In my own profession (music/entertainment), this happens occasionally – more so now that online anonymity is

available. But in general, it's hard to be anonymous when the entertainment industry is so very public. I find it frightening and worrisome that in a matter of seconds, a person can publish the most vitriolic, senseless ravings and feel powerful because of it. (At least, that's what I suppose they feel. Otherwise, why make these kinds of comments?) But that kind of power is illusory, and karma will out. Sorry for the folks going through this, kudos to those who are coming forward.

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Pingback: » [Blog Archive](#) » [The following is an open letter to my friends and colleagues who are established members of the science fiction and fantasy community.](#)

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## staubundsterne

November 6, 2014 at 5:16 pm

I remember what happened on 50books\_poc and I can only imagine how she harassed you (I left 50bookspoc after the incident you described). I'm sorry this happened to you. I hear you, I believe you.

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## Perfringes

November 6, 2014 at 5:34 pm

Another set of data points for you, Laura — RHB attacking Peter Watts and his blog commentators for Watts' defense of R. Scott Bakker:

<http://www.rifters.com/crawl/?p=2787>

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## Had Enough

November 6, 2014 at 5:36 pm

I need to practice self-care right now, so I won't give my real name, but I will tell you that RH reviewed one of my stories. She hated it, which is fine. Reviews are about stories, and stories are not their authors. But I saw how she (and another blogger) went after people whom they didn't consider authentic enough. Diaspora might as well be white people to her—we have no right to the stories and culture of our parents and grandparents. Which is absolute nonsense, but I saw how vicious RH and her troupe were, and I did not want to invite their hate down onto me.

I repeat: I almost stopped writing. And I am not the only one.

Bullying is not okay. Shutting down already marginalized voices is not okay. My voice as a brown person in America is vital. It makes no difference whether I was born and raised in the country of my ancestors or not. My experiences have been shaped by my appearance and my faith and my name. My voice needs to be heard, and being made to fear speaking is horrible. That's how we maintain the status quo, by only letting "approved" people have their say. That is how RH wins.

---

## LauraB

November 6, 2014 at 5:43 pm

I don't recall from whence I had the impression that Requires Hate was also Winterfox, but I did have that firm mental association from several years back. I did not know about any other online personas and I definitely didn't know about the stalking and harassment. I distinctly remember finding her offputting in the sf\_with\_bite community, but like Ursula, chalked it up to one more abrasive jerk in a community not exactly short on the commodity. I also think she was quite successful at adopting the social-justice rhetoric; I remember thinking that the handle RequiresHate was a sort of clever flippancy to the sort of vitriol minorities often face. I certainly didn't realize how literal the moniker apparently was.

Personally, I will be looking into reading the books of the affected, where I haven't already. I'm pretty surprised to see a lot of authors I like and respect on the list. 😞

---

## Nalo Hopkinson

November 6, 2014 at 5:44 pm

I knew about the reviews. Found them, well, hate-filled; but I also didn't get how this was different than your average internet nastiness until I learned about orchestrated campaigns of back-channel bullying, threats and defamation that have resulted in some pretty awful harm to members of our community. That crosses the line from righteous ire into something way more sinister. To Laura and the people who are speaking up; thank you. So much. What you're doing is a labour of love. And to the victims who don't find themselves able to come forth, whatever the reason; I completely understand.

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Pingback: [Icky Icky](#)

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## Pat Cadigan

November 6, 2014 at 5:48 pm

This is a powerful statement. I hope people pay attention to it.

I have been talking about starting a mentoring program specifically meant to keep marginalised writers from being isolated and shut out. I'm talking about a program probsbly through SFWA, costing the writers nothing.

If we want a community, we have to be proactive.

---

## Jackie M.

November 6, 2014 at 5:53 pm

Laura, sincerely, thank you for going through the work of compiling the full case with links and documentation and pie charts (pie charts!) and everything. I was upset about the doxxing of RH, and I know a lot of people who have argued both ways, that RHB is the victim or that RHB is the perpetrator. It was hard to track down all of the threads, it was not pleasant work, and it was clearly a LOT of work.

But it was clearly necessary work. Thank you for doing it.

---

## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 6, 2014 at 5:54 pm

Michael Harper, Jennifer: When someone has a history of sockpuppetry and identity abuse this intricate, dating back this many years, you have to accept the possibility that the river hasn't yet been tracked to its source.

Whether RHB is Asian is potentially a very complicated question. "Asian" is both a geographic and ethnographic designation, so it gets used to describe both people who live in Asia but aren't ethnically Asian, and ethnic Asians who don't live in Asia. Thus, "Asian" might mean you live there, or you were born there, or your family lives there, or your family has lived there for thousands of years. It might mean that you belong to a native-to-Asia ethnic group, or that your family follows the customs and speaks the language of that group, or that you were raised speaking that language. (Alternately, it could mean you're ethnically Korean, your family assimilated generations ago, and you grew up in Montauk.) Finally, "Asian" could mean you hail from Istanbul, Tashkent, Vladivostok, East Timor, or Mumbai — it's a big place.

I'm sure of one thing: there'll be more episodes to come.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 5:57 pm

Thanks so much, everyone who has posted in support of those targeted.

And thank you, Nalo, for also posting in support of those who aren't ready to speak up, or aren't in a position that they can, for whatever reason. This is not easy.

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## **Jennifer**

November 6, 2014 at 5:58 pm

Don't some states in the US have legislation against this kind of online behavior? I believe I've heard you can even do jail time for physical threats. Maybe part of the recourse appropriate to at least some of these offenses should be legal.

And Laura, I commented earlier shortly after you posted this report; I'd like to add my belated thanks now for the work you put into this.

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## **Jennifer**

November 6, 2014 at 6:09 pm

Yes, T., that's quite evident. My intent was to cast doubt on any and all claims this individual makes or has made regarding his or her identity.

BS self-"identifies" (to use the term loosely) as "Asian-Asian" (Asian from Asia). I believe this individual could every bit as easily be a white guy in his forties with a fetish. In fact, that's the impression I get from the behavior: a sociopath with a fetish s/he very probably detests her/himself for, of which s/he is deeply ashamed.

---

## **Caren**

November 6, 2014 at 6:19 pm

I hope this talented young lady finds help. She's obviously ill to lash out like that.

I hope those receiving her toxic comments can heal, too.

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## **Alice K.**

November 6, 2014 at 6:23 pm

Indeed. I feel like I got off easy, all things considered. It was really puzzling and upsetting at the time, but, in the context of what's been churned up in the last few days, it makes a lot of sense.

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## **T. Nielsen Hayden**

November 6, 2014 at 6:32 pm

Jennifer, all I can see is the text.

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## **Rachel Manija Brown**

November 6, 2014 at 6:41 pm

Thank you. I really appreciate it.

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## **Rachel Manija Brown**

November 6, 2014 at 6:42 pm

Thanks, Laura. I guess we'll see what happens.

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## Jennifer

November 6, 2014 at 6:45 pm

T.: I see a pattern of hostile abuse. I see a selectivity of targets in a narrow pattern of behavior repeating many years.

Looks like invidious obsession to me.

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## Christopher Rose

November 6, 2014 at 6:45 pm

What I get out of this is why on earth do sites allow these kinds of remark to be published?

Every online community needs a moderator or comments editor to prevent this kind of thing occurring and protect useful communities.

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Pingback: [May I draw your attention to the posts of Elizabeth Bear, Laura J. Mixon, and Rochita Loenen Ruiz | Tobias Buckell](#)

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## Helen Hall

November 6, 2014 at 6:49 pm

Thank you for this very thorough and balanced round up of everything that Requires Hate has done over the years. I first became aware of her and her followers back in 2012 in the LJ comments to Cat Valente's post about visiting Scotland. I was one of the commenters in that thread and in the follow up discussion on Liz Williams' LJ. I was horrified by RH's behaviour and by her total lack of understanding or empathy. My opinion of her was further reinforced when I looked at what she was posting on Twitter. Unfortunately, RH drew in well-meaning people who were keen to demonstrate their SJW cred and who failed to see how damaging her behaviour was, both to the authors, reviewers and readers that she attacked and to the cause she claimed to support.

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## One of the "within bounds" reviewed authors

November 6, 2014 at 6:54 pm

A lot of people say this, that while she had a nasty tone her reviews were still okay because she made decent points and were "within bounds" as you say. But I know for a fact that she lied in reviews. Manipulated facts, left out crucial chapters in books, quoted things out of context, in order to make her thesis about a person being racist or sexist or homophobic etc. So forget the tone of her arguments which were brutal and hurtful, the supposed intelligent prose she wrote was just plain manipulated. Oh yes, on occasion she struck a real and fair point, but she also was a master manipulator.

But sure, her reviews were "within bounds". I guess we have come to a point where so long as a person isn't stalking or harassing someone, their reviews are acceptable. Is there no such thing as a review that goes outside the bounds? Is lying in a review still okay because everyone is allowed an opinion on the internet, be they honest or not? I think this is a larger conversation really, about the brave new world of internet democratization, where experts no longer are respected, and everyone should be allowed to say whatever they want and be considered with the exact same level of respect.

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## Em

November 6, 2014 at 7:01 pm

Something about the syntax and formatting of the RH posts just reminds me STRONGLY of, for example, Gamergate troll language. I'm not going to speculate about motive; I'm just going to say that it's not hard to find other examples of a really dedicated, intelligent, conscience-deficient person picking up enough in-group vocabulary to blag their way into a community and wreak whatever kind of havoc suits their purposes. (See: every con movie ever.) Doesn't always work long-term, doesn't always need to.

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And ask whether anyone's started IP tracing.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 6, 2014 at 7:01 pm

My connection with *Requires Hate* was brief. She came to my attention in the summer of 2012 after her unacceptable harassment of a friend; I had not heard of her before this. After looking at her site, I considered her to be sociopathic, a view which I still hold, and I don't engage with sociopaths beyond an initial calling-out. I did so in this case with a LJ post which collected a number of sock puppets, all of whom were abusive. I've encountered a number of people on the sociopathic scale and all of them have behaved pretty much like this: they seek suitable prey, groom them, and ensure that the prey will do or say anything to excuse their appalling behaviour while they pull the strings.

RH shut up after the usual torrent of bile. I have not heard from her, or much about her, since. I don't fit the profile of RH's victims, and have recently learned that she considers me to be 'terrifying' – apparently because I have no qualms about going to the police. She has stated in her 'apology' that she felt the need to be 'tough': I saw her as primarily pathetic, but, as with many weak people, the possibility of being dangerous if they went over the edge.

Nor do I engage with reviewers, especially if their reviews are based on the blurb on the back of the book and something someone has told them rather than the actual content of the novel. I have had perhaps a handful of discussions regarding her since, but since a large section of the genre world has still never heard of *Requires Hate*, such conversations have been brief.

I had not heard of Benjanun Sriduangkaew before August. My father has been seriously ill, my parents have moved in with us, resulting in a house clearing project, and my only contact with the world of newly published SFF has been through the WFC judging. I had not come across Sriduangkaew or her work (if any of it was sent to me, I did not receive it). In August, her identity began to be discussed in a limited and private way, and not among editors, because of the possibility of a mistake: derailing a young woman's career over an identity error would have been unforgivable. I wrote to Charles Stross on 14th September and made this comment:

I haven't gone public because I don't have enough hard evidence, just trust – for me that's sufficient to take action up to a point, but mileage varies. What's stopping me: protecting [redacted], and the possibility, however faint, that some ghastly error may have been made and Benjanun is innocent.

BS was then outed on a thread of James N's post and by this time – mid September, possibly earlier – it was an open secret. I wrote to my former editor at Prime:

Apologies for contacting you out of the blue. There is a shit-storm brewing – if you don't know already, Thai writer Benjanun Sriduangkaew has now admitted to being *Requires Hate*. I think you've published her so you might want a heads-up.

We had a brief correspondence, which I will make public if necessary. At no point did I ask Prime not to publish BS, and at no point did my editor suggest withdrawing her work. I would point out that warning professionals about loose cannons is standard practice, and that writers are in fact allowed to contact their own colleagues without running it past the entire internet first.

I have contacted one other editor about this; he already knew the situation.

Anyone who suggests that I have engaged in a whispering campaign throughout 2014 is lying, and I would invite them to prove their claims by producing names, emails and/or a paper trail. You cannot conduct a campaign against someone of whose existence you are unaware, nor would I do so. Neither Tricia Sullivan nor myself has any history of conducting campaigns against younger female authors, because it simply has never occurred to us: we want to support our successors, not silence them. They are part of our literary heritage; our daughters of the word, and we celebrate them.

Sean Wallace passed this correspondence on to Nick Mamatas, who as we know, outed Benjanun again. I do not know if Sean's colleague gave their permission for this to happen. Nick's motives remain opaque but are probably concerned with attention-seeking. His comments about jealousy from 'has beens' are somewhat ironic, given that they come from someone who has never 'been' in the first place. He was also apparently terrified that Paula Guran at Prime would find out that he knew about RH=BS, so may have been trying to wrest some control over the situation.

Caitlin Kiernan heard about the situation from me. She did not know previously and has explicitly stated on her blog that readers are not to



discontinue buying publications in which BS features, a view that is shared by myself. Although I hold none of his political views, I was not opposed, for instance, to Vox Day's appearance on the Hugo ballot: if his readers voted for him in sufficient numbers, he was entitled to feature. Similarly with Benjanun; if we rule out problematic individuals from literary consideration, we strike out a large swathe of 20th Century literature. Just look at William Burroughs.

Please note: I have already contacted the UK police about the issue, and they have seen fit to begin an investigation. You may draw your own conclusions from this actuality.

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## Colum Paget

November 6, 2014 at 7:05 pm

# I believe this individual could every bit as easily be a white guy in his forties with a fetish. In fact, thats the  
# impression I get from the behavior: a sociopath with a fetish s/he  
# very probably detests her/himself for, of which s/he is deeply ashamed.

I was always suspicious that RH might not be all they claimed to be, but as a white guy in my forties I suddenly feel the need to push this away and point out that there's \*no\* evidence that RH is one of us 😊

But being serious for a moment, the that I didn't believe RH was really what they claimed, was that I didnt believe the politics RH was pushing was real. I thought I knew where the left stood, and seeing someone using the same language I'd expect to hear from neo-nazis, but now aimed at whites, struck me as obviously being a false flag operation to discredit the left. Unfortunately I've become disabused of this position, the politics is real, and it's provided the environment that RH was able to thrive in.

RH is not the only person who plays the game of projecting interpretations onto things people say and then denouncing them from the bully pulpit of a blog, though most are much milder. The problem here is much bigger than one blogger.

Ultimately it doesn't matter one whit who RH was. The question we should be asking is "how were they able to get away with this for so long?" We'll likely never understand what the RH's problem was, but we should be asking ourselves what our problem is, as a community, that this can happen under our noses and with widespread support.

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## J.M. Frey

November 6, 2014 at 7:06 pm

Hi, Laura. Thank you for compiling this. I looked up her four blog posts on my work and they all seem to have been deleted. I never screencapped them, though I still have several emails that passed between me and my then-agent, and me and some of my friends, about the impact of her vitriolic posts that I would be happy to forward to you for inclusion.

—J

(Lord, I'm shaking again now. This has brought it all up again.)

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## Dolorosa

November 6, 2014 at 7:11 pm

I wasn't involved in 50 Books PoC, but I was a member of another LJ comm about books in which Requires Hate, in her Winterfox persona, wreaked havoc. I was afraid of her, even though she never did anything to me personally. But the atmosphere she created was toxic. It killed conversation and made people afraid of posting in case the book they reviewed happened to be one she hated. I think some people in that comm had seen what was happening in 50 Books PoC and were worried it would spread.

All this is by way of saying that I believe you, and I am so grateful to you for speaking up.

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## An author she reviewed

November 6, 2014 at 7:14 pm

I posted this in response to someone else on this thread, but it deserves its own point. I think the one thing that might seem marginal to discuss in light of her other more egregious offences but still incredibly important, is simply the way she lied and manipulated her reviews. She manipulated facts, left out crucial chapters in books, quoted things out of context, in order to make her thesis about a person being racist or sexist or homophobic etc true. Further, I can't tell if she just doesn't have a sense of humour or this is also part of the manipulation, but she has reviewed more than one satirical book as if it was being serious (so when, for example, writers used stereotypes in order to either subvert them or mock them, she assumed the writer was just another idiot who wrote stereotypes). She seemed to only respect the more straightforward classic elegant prose of a certain kind of adult fiction writing and never understood that there were other ways to play with words and that those ways didn't necessarily make one a bad writer. In general she read books looking for confirmation bias.

So even forgetting the tone of her arguments which were brutal and hurtful (btw, while I appreciate this report, seeing the things she has said about me again – things I have avoided looking at for years – is deeply traumatic and I've been sobbing now for the last half hour), the supposed intelligent prose she wrote that people still give her props for was just plain lying. Oh yes, on occasion she struck a real and fair point, but she also was a master manipulator. The fact that she does not cop to any of this in any of her apologies leads me to think she isn't nearly as sorry as she says she is.

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## Deborah J. Ross

November 6, 2014 at 7:20 pm

I am filled with admiration for the courage displayed here, and also the compassion for not only the many victims but the perpetrator. As far as I know, I have not been a target, but many of my friends and colleagues have been.

I know something about recovering from violence, whether it be verbal or physical. I'm the child of a pogrom survivor, and also the daughter of a murder/rape victim. The kind of threats BS/RH makes are not empty words, regardless of whether s/he intended them as such. We all have the right to live without fear that such threats might actually translate into actions. It does not matter what our color, race, religion, gender, etc. – all people deserve this. A community in which we can tell our stories, air our fears, and feel protected by one another, is a powerful tool for moving beyond those fears and whatever damage we have suffered.

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## Jennifer

November 6, 2014 at 7:23 pm

IP tracing, yes. Email also will be useful if some evidence/posts no longer exist (as RH often deletes parts of digital trails).

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## Jordan

November 6, 2014 at 7:29 pm

I was an active member of 50 Books POC and participated in the posts where everything came to a head with Winterfox, or whatever name she goes by now. Bystanders looking at those screenshots may ask: Where were the 50 Books POC mods? Why didn't they just ban this person for trolling and be done with it?

It was because of the tactic you highlighted here: "hiding behind the language of progressive causes". Every time she viciously insulted an author or a fellow community member, she framed it as bravely speaking out against racism and other injustices. No matter what anyone said, Winterfox found a way to twist it into them being a racist pig and herself being the only one standing up for what's right. If she could not immediately find anything in a person's comments to twist and misconstrue, she would simply accuse them of being white. If they responded that they were not white, she would accuse them of being mixed race or no longer living in the country of their ancestors. Only she was an authentic person of color, and only she could judge what was racist and what was not, which books were good and which were bad, and what language was acceptable to use.

The mods did say something eventually, but in their posts they said that they were worried that by telling Winterfox she couldn't do this stuff anymore, they would be silencing a person of color who had a right to be angry about injustice. They eventually put up an "Insults Policy" post explaining that you couldn't insult community members for no reason, but that it was okay to "snarkily" call them out for being racist, sexist, etc.

Basically, they swallowed Winterfox's social justice posturing hook, line, and sinker. She successfully created enough doubt in people's minds as to whether she was trolling or whether she was trolling FOR JUSTICE that they were afraid it would be supporting the kyriarchy and succumbing to "the tone argument" just to say "hey, quit calling people stupid fucks whenever they post about books you hate".

This person is a master manipulator, and I am angry that she took advantage of the mods' good intentions and their willingness to take her words in good faith. Before she arrived, 50 Books POC was a vibrant and diverse discussion community that was a pleasure to belong to. When we disagreed, we talked about it. When we had different perspectives, we listened to each other. Boy, we must have looked like easy meat to her!

Trolls are always annoying, but this is more than an annoyance. Abusing the language and concepts of anti-racism to do what she does is destructive to communities that are genuinely trying to come together against injustice, and it makes it harder for marginalized people to express honest anger about things that are wrong in the world.

Thank you for calling this person's behavior to wider attention. I wish it weren't necessary, but it clearly is.

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## Jennifer

November 6, 2014 at 7:31 pm

No offense, Colum! 😊 I only meant to offer a random 180-degree turnabout to the image RH deliberately cultivates.

So many layers of misdirection.

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## EmergingAnon

November 6, 2014 at 7:36 pm

Laura, thank you so much for compiling this.

To those she targeted:

1. You are not what she said you are. The thing about abusers is that they target the vulnerable, they exploit the weakness they see, which is generally the part of you that's most compassionate, the part of you that is self-examining, the part of you that's trying to do good. The thing you are most afraid to be, and work so hard to not be, is exactly what they then accuse you of. Which is why it hurts so badly. But you're not that. You don't have to believe her. Don't believe her.

2. She robbed you of something very real, which was the joy in your accomplishment and pride in your work. I think that's probably something that's hard to articulate, when on the outside it looks like just a bad review. She stole your ability to enjoy any of the fruits of your years of work, because she made you feel like a bad person for it. You have a right to be angry about that. I'm angry about it, and I don't even know most of you. But she stole it from someone I do know and care about, making what should have been the best time of their life one of the very worst instead. They didn't deserve that, and neither did you.

My deepest sympathies to those who have suffered or are suffering. And again, Laura, thank you for the work you did in putting this together.

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## Judith Tarr

November 6, 2014 at 7:42 pm

I would be willing to help with that, Pat--speaking as an older woman with several disabilities. If you've got a little list, please put me on it.

Huge dark-chocolate kudos to Laura for doing this amazing and extensive work. I've never been targeted for the full hate campaign, but I learned years ago to walk a wide circle around the aliases that I knew (RH and winterfox being the main ones). She/he/it helped with a minor red-dogging in LJ comments, but I left that LJ and wasn't followed. So my position is primarily as observer of her/his/its persistent pattern of stalking, harassment, and abuse.

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## Had Enough

November 6, 2014 at 7:45 pm

Think it's worth trying to reboot the community? (I was there, too.)

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## Pat Cadigan

November 6, 2014 at 7:46 pm

Your reaction to having revisit this unpleasantness (if you'll pardon the understatement) is not at all atypical. Many people who have been on the sharp end have been having similar reactions.

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## Liz Williams

November 6, 2014 at 8:06 pm

I used to look at it and not contribute, but there were some great recs on there. I'd suggest giving it a go if people were up for it; too good an idea to let someone ruin it.

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## MacAllister Stone

November 6, 2014 at 8:12 pm

I used to follow the 50 books POC community pretty regularly, as well, though I didn't post. There were terrific recommendations, and some fascinating and worthwhile discussions. I learned a great deal, found some amazing writers and books, and would love to see a reboot.

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## An author she reviewed

November 6, 2014 at 8:14 pm

Thank you. Not that I wish these feelings on anyone, and I hate that we are all going through this, but it is good to know that my reaction isn't over the top or too emotional or whathaveyou. I appreciate it 😊.

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## Lee

November 6, 2014 at 8:15 pm

I had the same thought. Do we even know that it's a single person running all those aliases? How can we be sure that the person who wrote the stories (several of which I have read and liked) is the same person who was writing the reviews and the Twitter posts? Has anyone actually *met* this person (in any of their various personae), or has it all been online interactions? So many uncertainties...

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## Martin McGrath

November 6, 2014 at 8:18 pm

I am the administrator of the James White Award, the award that Colum won.

One thing that struck me about Requires Hate's initial attacks on Colum's story was that they could only have been based on a 500 word excerpt that had been published on the James White Award website (it would be six months or so before Interzone published the story in full) and so the vitriol was based on nothing but assumption and spite.

I did not follow what happened next and was unaware that Colum had suffered a continued campaign of attacks. I feel somewhat disheartened to learn what should have been a moment of happiness was soured for him.

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## ModeratorY

November 6, 2014 at 8:21 pm

It's generally considered a gesture of respect for one's humanity to attempt to honor how people self-identify, until proven wrong.

Since RHB's humanity is certainly not in question, until there's evidence to the contrary, it only seems appropriate to attempt to honor how she self-identifies, as well.

That said, while I know it's deeply tempting to go down a rabbit-hole and start looking for evidence to the contrary, [Laura has requested](#) that this primarily be a place where RHB's many targets are safe to share their stories, find support and belief, and perhaps share some comfort and healing. Let's please try to honor that, lest anyone's very natural anger and curiosity derail the blog owner's intent.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 8:21 pm

Thanks, Perfringes.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 8:22 pm

Judith, thanks.

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## An author she reviewed

November 6, 2014 at 8:26 pm

Oh my goodness. I don't know why, pragmatically all this I'm been aware of. But the way you phrased this you've just made me feel so much better . . . thank you so so so so so much. You've hit on exactly my fears, to be able to articulate so precisely my internal dialogue during all this proves to me that this was something strategic and not personal. May I share this on my Facebook wall? I think it's so important in general for others to read this too. Thank you again, from the bottom of my heart.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 8:26 pm

Yes, please feel free to send me whatever you have, J.M. Thanks for coming forward.

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## Simon Bradshaw

November 6, 2014 at 8:27 pm

I think we need to avoid abuse of the term 'Social Justice Warrior' here.

RH/BS was not, and is not, a Social Justice Warrior. She was and is a venomous bully, and it's very telling that Laura's analysis shows that her victims were in fact disproportionately female PoC.

But just as importantly, I'd argue that her acolytes weren't and aren't Social Justice Warriors either, whatever they might like to think. They are something else entirely: **Social Justice Outrage Junkies**. Being as charitable as I can to them, it appears that they jumped aboard RH's bandwagon of abuse for the pleasure of joining in with a succession of dog-piles aimed at those RH told them were socially legitimate targets. Again, the irony is that in doing so many of them have ended up attacking exactly the sort of person they surely thought they were standing up for.

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## **EMoon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:29 pm

I absolutely agree, and thank you for your powerful statement. The entirety of one's genetic and cultural background exists whether or not one lives in the original location or not, whether or not more than one "origin" is involved. We all have a right to the stories and cultures we inherit, including the ones that may have been buried under assimilation for a generation or two, or concealed for not being acceptable. All the voices should be heard. All the stories should be told. Bullying, threatening, claiming someone else's background isn't authentic because they're not [whatever] enough is not okay. Your voice as a brown person...someone else's voice as a black person, or whatever other less-heard group (disabilities, sexualities, etc.)....every voice is vital.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:29 pm

Liz, I appreciate your stepping forward, and your detailed recap of events.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:31 pm

Thank you for speaking up and making an important point. I am so very sorry that I have had to dredge all this up again for you. That for me has been one of the most difficult aspects of all this.

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## **EmergingAnon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:33 pm

Absolutely. \*hugs\*

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## **EMoon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:34 pm

Laura, thanks for the work you've put into this. I had heard "something" quite awhile back, last year I think it was, but didn't follow up...was in another internet thing involving scientists & science journalism. This is as bad as (though not worse than) some of what I was wading through in another field. Sickening & disgusting & infuriating, and so very harmful to the targets in all cases.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 8:34 pm

Thanks for speaking up, Emerging.

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## **ModeratorY**

November 6, 2014 at 8:40 pm

Simon Bradshaw, since I can't read anyone's mind — and I presume you cannot, either — please let's try to avoid to ascribing cynical or otherwise untrustworthy motives to unnamed and undefined groups of people.

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## **An author she reviewed**

November 6, 2014 at 8:43 pm

Please don't apologise. I am glad you did what you did. I'm just scared. I'm not really scared of her anymore, considering the current situation, but I'm scared of well meaning people going to the link you posted to my review, reading it, reading the quotes taken out of context, the omissions and downright lies, her not understanding the humour and satire of my work and people thinking I'm writing a certain way because I have no other choice, all that stuff, and then agreeing with her. I hate that. I hate how scared I am of that. Of people truly thinking I'm racist. And I hate how much that scares me. I mean, if that's the worst problem in my life that's a pretty sweet life. But still. It scares me. I remember asking someone on a forum to take down the link to her review and he did, but not before telling me that she often made very good points. He was/is a smart person who I liked. That hurt. A lot.

But this needs to be talked about, she cannot just get away with doing all that and then after offering an apology be welcomed with open arms into our community. I'm sorry to say it but it's not fair. And life isn't fair, I know, but sometimes just sometimes we don't have to indulge it. Sometimes we can try to create a sort of balance.

Thank you for doing this. It's worth it.

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## **Simon Bradshaw**

November 6, 2014 at 9:07 pm

I certainly can't read minds, and I apologise for speaking out of turn. I am closely acquainted with several of RH's victims (some of whom are commenting here too) and have had to watch in frustration as they were attacked not only by RH but also by people who appeared very ready to follow RH's lead. I formed my own view as to what may have motivated them, but yes, it is purely my own view. Other people here have stories to tell and evidence to give, and that is more important.

I don't seem to be able to withdraw comments, so I would not be at all unhappy if you thought it best to remove this thread as being off-topic and inappropriate.

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## **MSL**

November 6, 2014 at 9:10 pm

As a member of a diaspora myself, I'm sorry this happened to you. Thank you for coming forward.

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## **Jerry D (JD) Bell**

November 6, 2014 at 9:13 pm

Thank you Laura. I did not know anything about this situation and I am gobstruck horrified that this person is raging through the internet.  
JD

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## **Anna Flixion**

November 6, 2014 at 9:18 pm

I heard of (and saw) nasty things WF/RH did here and there but never in a community I had any stakes in. When the 50 Books POC debacle went down, I watched from the peanut gallery, since it was not a com I was part of or familiar with. To be honest, the only reason I was even there was because you spoke up and I thought at the time, "Hoorah! Rachel Manija Brown is stepping forward, and she is so logical, kind, and well-reasoned, that surely in contrast everyone will see Winterfox for the pathological troll she is, rise up and oust her, and that will be the end of Winterfox!" ...yeah, I'm not naive like that anymore. I had no idea she continued her harassment of you, and I'm very, very sorry you went through that. I wish I'd stepped up and supported you, even though I didn't feel like that was the right space for me to speak in. Basically, I just wanted to say I'm sorry and you deserved better. And tell you that a lot of people really thought you would be the one to 'defeat' a known, vicious troll, because you were well known as someone good, rational, and even-handed. I'm still kind of shocked how that whole thing went down. I think that silenced a LOT of people who would have stood up to WF/RH, because if you couldn't stop her, really no one could. She was that scary. But even having been warned not to engage her early on and hearing rumors, I had no idea how bad she really was. All the healing and support in the world to you. Having been abused and having faced my abuser in court I want to give you the only

advice I think I have that might useful: look on her as she really is—insignificant and tiny and powerless to hurt you anymore. You are so much bigger and stronger than you imagined, and she is nothing.

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## **Naomi Bennett (Naomi)**

November 6, 2014 at 9:39 pm

Dear Laura,

Thank you for doing this. It must have been difficult and depressing work. I am horrified that this has been going on for over ten years .

RH has attacked people I know and like . It has been hard to watch them being hurt and be unable to do anything to defend them.

The only thing I've been able to do is to make a point of buying the books of the writers that RH has bullied. I've already made a start and enjoyed some fine books that I might not otherwise have come across.

Now that I have your handy list, I will be buying a few more.

I know it's not much but it's a start.Naomi

Best wishes

Naomi

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## **Suzanne**

November 6, 2014 at 9:40 pm

I was unaware of this until very, very recently, and I'm appalled almost beyond words, and also so incredibly overwhelmed by the strength and bravery of the people who have come forward to bring this to light, and those who have stood up, spoken up, and helped. It may be (surely is) ridiculously idealistic and simplistic of me, but I find the idea that fandom can be a place where we are afraid of each other, where we overlook or condone abuse in our midst, absolutely intolerable, and a fundamental violation of what the SFF community *should* be about. I refuse to compromise on the idea that all of us deserve to be heard, to be treated with respect, to be valued, and I do not and will not ever accept the entrenchment of divisive rhetoric, exclusion, and hatred as an acceptable status quo. We can be better than this.

Sending all my wishes for healing to those directly hurt, whether they've been able to bring themselves to speak up or not. I don't know that I have the ability to make any difference, but I swear I'm listening and I care.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 9:42 pm

That's the best possible response! Thanks, Naomi. 😊

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## **Emma Bull**

November 6, 2014 at 9:43 pm

Thanks so much for this summary, Laura. Your standards for evidence and your presentation of the facts shows that you're a damned fine scientist. Your willingness to do this work shows you're a damned fine person.

I sympathize with the victims of BS/RH's abuse, even the ones who may have abused others in consequence.

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## **Steven Brust**

November 6, 2014 at 9:47 pm



Damn, Naomi! What a great idea! If someone puts up a list somewhere of books this person has attacked, I would love to link to it.

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## Victor J. Raymond

November 6, 2014 at 9:57 pm

Laura, thank you very much for bringing this issue to the attention of the SF&F community; we need to recognize when people engage in this kind of thing. More importantly, we need to find ways to positively respond to this kind of harassment and shine some light on outrageous behavior.

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## J.M. Frey

November 6, 2014 at 10:04 pm

Thank you, thank you for saying that. (And thank you, thank you Laura for compiling all of this).

This was my debut book that was attacked. It was award nominated and very well reviewed and I just... I had no idea that this was coming. I nearly stopped writing when this happened. I shook every time I sat down to a keyboard. It took me 75 drafts to turn in a novel (with a POC lead!) to my agent. I cried a lot. Mostly on friend's shoulders. It took a long time to get stable again. When I saw her site's links incoming in my website meta data I felt sick. I had to learn how to block them.

Mostly I've gotten over it, but *every single time* I sit down to write a new project, I have to give myself a pep talk about how I have to write what I want, and I the representations that am going to produce will be as honest, fair and good as I can make them. And that will have to be good enough.

I still feel attacked, and I'm panicking and actually feel sick right now. But this helps. It helps to see that other people were manipulated too, that other people are able to help me understand this complex ball of shame in my own creativity, guilt for not writing what she wanted, sorrow and grief that something I loved so greatly could be so rended apart, and the rage in her manipulation, her lies, her disrespect, and the way that other commentators piled on without having actually read the book that those attacks caused in me.

I second guess everything I write now. I waffle, and bemoan, and I try to be good at representation and gender and sexuality in my books, but nobody is perfect and I feared, I genuinely feared putting more books out into the world because I was scared. And while it's a good first step towards acknowledging the horrible things she did and said, it doesn't feel genuine enough, nor does it go far enough.

(After a check, it seems all four of her posts about my books end up at a 404. If you're going to apologize, I find it cowardly to take down the proof that you need to apologize. If she felt embarrassed that they were still up, she should have locked them so they were still there, at least. With a small apology about why she's locking it. I have retrieved them from the Wayback Archive now.)

If nothing else in her apology letter, I would have liked to have seen our names listed.

What always saddened me most about her terrible language and disgusting images, her vicious, vitriolic bile, is that anger does not help people improve. I read most of the four posts she made about my work, and I learned a little. But I would have learned more, would have loved to have entered a dialogue with her about helping me become a more mindful and better writer, but I couldn't. Because I was too busy shaking and crying. And drugging myself so I could sleep. And having flashbacks to my time being bullied in high school and university. And vomiting up everything I ate so that I was weak and shaking all the time.

I think my work is a wee bit better thanks to her horrible blog, but not my self esteem or willingness to share the work, or, in fact, my comfort in public spaces. This woman and her blog is largely why I have nearly entirely retreated from the convention scene.

Because she scared me. Because I honestly thought that any person at any Con could have been her, and that she would escalate from words to something horrible, something physical. Because I genuinely feared that she would come across a dance floor and hit me in the head with a beer bottle at a Con. Because I genuinely feared she would come to my house and harm me.

Let me say that again, because it was hard to admit and repetition makes things easier.

**I genuinely feared she would find me and harm me.**

Because people had done that to me before. Bullies have cornered me at conventions, before I was ever an invited guest at them. Cyberstalkers have sent flowers to my parent's house. I've had to put a restraining order on an exboyfriend. And has recent news has proven, people who genuinely hate others will go to all lengths to harm them.

I'm glad she's apologized and realized her mistakes, but I still have nightmares.

Her letter is good, but she needs to go further to address the mental damage she's done to everyone she attacked, harrassed, and stalked. She needs to address the manipulation, and the lies, as "Another Author" states.

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Pingback: [Speaking up | Sam writes novels](#)

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 10:06 pm

Victor, I'm very grateful for your words of support. I would love to have more discussions in our progressive communities about how to elevate the voices of people who come from disadvantaged communities and cultures.

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## **J.M. Frey**

November 6, 2014 at 10:07 pm

(Sorry, Laura – I seem to be failing at finding an email address or submission form page for you. Where should I send you my files? You don't have to make this comment public.)

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## **LauraB**

November 6, 2014 at 10:07 pm

Admins, please feel free to withhold if this post has strayed to far from the topic, but speaking to the books of affected authors...

I'll speak to two targeted authors I have personally read books by:

Paolo Bacigalupi "The Windup Girl"

Mary Robinette Kowal "Shades of Milk and Honey"

I found both compelling, although Kowal's novels I found more... easily digestible, maybe? I made my book group read "The Windup Girl" because I found it thought-provoking and wanted people to discuss it with. It seemed a lot of people found it tough-going, stylistically, but I did not find anyone who disliked it. I have since bought all the remaining books in the Glamourist Histories, series, so I think that speaks as well to my enjoyment of them as anything else I might say.

I just ordered this anthology from Athena Andreadis, so cannot yet speak to its quality:

<http://www.candlemarkandgleam.com/shop/the-other-half-of-the-sky/>

I have added the following to my audible queue:

The Broken Kingdoms by N. K. Jemisin

Timothy and the Dragon's Gate by Adrienne Kress

The Darkness That Comes Before: The Prince of Nothing by R. Scott Bakker

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## **Icy**

November 6, 2014 at 10:17 pm

I followed the BS person/a on twitter for about 6 months (I think) before all this happened. I found that person/a charming and her writing exquisite. When BS locked her twitter account saying her identity had been outed to a stalker I was sympathetic. Not long after that I found out about the RH person/a and that BS and RH were the same (I wasn't aware of any other identities).

I was appalled.

I read the BS apology, which to my (uneducated eyes) seemed genuine. This is my last interaction with her – <https://twitter.com/individualchic/status/524158099565707264>. At that point I un-followed her. I decided that anyone who could write the words that RH wrote, even if I accepted the apology as genuine, wasn't someone I wanted to interact with at all, even if they'd changed or grown-up or whatever.

I still maintain that the BS person/a writes exquisitely. But I don't think I'll be reading that writing again. Ever.

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## AXD

November 6, 2014 at 10:23 pm

I've known of RH for a while. She spent some time on a forum I know. She seemed enthusiastically cruel about the smallest things. One example — tiny, inconsequential compared to the awful things in your report — when she discovered that someone on a forum was mixed race, she took time out to mock him for it on Twitter. He hadn't said anything about her, or relevant to her; she pointed him out to all her followers because she could, because she felt that being mixed race, or talking about it, made him an appropriate target for her scorn.

Thanks for collecting all the information. So sorry to everyone who suffered from her cruelty.

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## Minor Victim

November 6, 2014 at 10:27 pm

I was one of RH's minor victims — I submitted a first page to Dear Author that got put up on their site in 2012, and RH decided I needed to be lambasted as a racist shitstain on the face of the world who should die and leave the gene pool unencumbered by my horrible writing and my even more horrible self. She's deleted the post, and I have no screenshots, since I was so upset by it all. I do have my livejournal account of that time, where I talk about being sick to my stomach and unable to sleep. Obviously, I was too small potatoes to get the really good insults, but I still have not been able to write anything without feeling sick since then. Really sucks when you sit down and can't look at your keyboard without feeling sick.

I will say that my first page definitely had issues with racism/sexism that I hadn't been aware of (funny how that can be unconscious but still present) and I wasn't upset by any of the commentators on Dear Author who pointed them out very clearly and without any personal attacks, because that's what the "first page" feature there is for.

I post this in solidarity with the people who were more seriously victimized, and because I wanted to show that she also took down folks who were in no way possible competition, since this was a "first page" at a romance site....

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## Kate Orman

November 6, 2014 at 10:29 pm

I am not one of BS/RH's victims. But having been bashed with the rock myself, this account brought me close to tears.

A few years ago I made some insensitive, ignorant remarks online; it was only fair that they attracted ire. But soon afterwards, *everything* I said was being exaggerated, twisted, or simply reversed to provide ammunition for the pillory. I believed I deserved it all. So, apparently, did everyone else. I was never threatened, but it was bewildering, relentless, destructive. Coming on top of undiagnosed and untreated Bipolar II Disorder, it was the worst time of my life.

In the end I fought back, my friends and loved ones supported me, and I got through it, quitting the fandom in which it happened. I will never be "over" it, and neither will BS/RH's victims; but the exposure of their tormentor will make a world of difference. I didn't deserve what was done to me. Neither did you. My heart goes out to you all. Be well.

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 6, 2014 at 10:31 pm

I was about to add Peter Watts, which is when RH first came to my attention. Glad to see someone else remembered that.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 6, 2014 at 10:31 pm

Will do, and I'm delighted!

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## **EmergingAnon**

November 6, 2014 at 10:32 pm

\*hugs\*

I'm so sorry you've had to go through this. That is not how your debut experience should have gone. I hope that you get to truly celebrate future milestones without the memory of this one tainting them.

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## **Matt Huddleston**

November 6, 2014 at 10:32 pm

Thank you for putting this together. I had no idea that artists would turn against other artists in this way. I consider myself conservative, which automatically puts me at odds with my favorite authors on most geo-social political issues. However, my respect for their art supersedes those conflicts in the spirit of new ideas and open communication. This BS/RH person sounds horribly disfigured emotionally. I hope there is something the SFF community can do to combat her directly, and I hope you are not the target of any of her vitriol. Again, thank you for the information. The world you describe is new to me, and makes me fear putting my own work out there.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 10:33 pm

Actually, I don't think that's a tiny thing, AXD. Mockery about our core sense of self is very cruel.

---

## **Jordan**

November 6, 2014 at 10:37 pm

That would be great, but it might be tricky to pull off. I have no idea if the mods ever realized what kind of a person they were really dealing with in Winterfox/RH and what a mistake it was to give her the benefit of the doubt. After the community slid into disuse, there was never another post from the mods acknowledging what happened or attempting to revitalize the comm, so I would guess they lost interest or just didn't want to deal with it anymore. I don't know whether they would be open to someone else taking it over and revamping it, or what the reaction would be if a new comm were created for discussing POC authors.

Probably the biggest barriers would be the incredibly bad taste the whole incident left in people's mouths which may make some just never want to think about it again or anything like it, plus the fear that if the community came back, Winterfox would come back too. Knowing how tenacious she can be in her harassment, I'm not convinced a simple ban would be enough to stop her.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 6, 2014 at 10:41 pm

Actually, I don't think that's a tiny thing, AXD. Mockery about our core sense of self is very cruel.

And I know what you mean about going back and finding unintended racism and sexism in your own works. I've been there way too many

times for my personal comfort. It's hard to hear, but it's really a gift, when people are willing to speak up and tell us where we're messing up because of our own unexamined privilege. They're taking a big risk, by doing so, and I think that needs to be honored.

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## Madame Hardy

November 6, 2014 at 10:44 pm

Rachel Manija Brown's very fine memoir, *All the Fishes Come Home to Roost*, about growing up in an ashram in India.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 10:45 pm

All, a quick moderator's note. A few posts have had terms such as "crazy," "psycho," and so on to describe BS/RH. I really do get how hard it is to avoid these kinds of terms—they're deeply embedded in our language—but please try to avoid them, \*especially\* in this safe space.

Thanks.

Carry on.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 10:52 pm

Thanks for posting, Matt.

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## laurajmixon

November 6, 2014 at 10:53 pm

You can email me at [LoudlySingCuckoo@gmail.com](mailto:LoudlySingCuckoo@gmail.com).

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## Lela Gwenn

November 6, 2014 at 10:59 pm

I had a morning of hell with RH. Here is the link to the parts of the conversation she didn't have erased <https://twitter.com/search?q=%40LGwenn%20%40RequiresHate&src=typd> I was having a discussion with a WOC writer friend (who I won't name. She can tell her own story) about cyberpunk's Orientalist aesthetic... and she came out of nowhere asking me to please die and if I wouldn't mind having all white people die with me.

I knew who she was through my association with other writers she had tormented, so I pretty much wasn't gonna back down. Not when she'd been so awful to my friends. What I went through was nothing compared to what they went through, but I'm glad people are standing against this bully.

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## Steven Brust

November 6, 2014 at 11:05 pm

I've been sitting here thinking. I've been incredibly fortunate to be able to make a living doing what I love. But if, when my first book came out, 30 some years ago, I'd been subjected to the sort of attacks I've seen described, I have real doubts I'd have been able to continue. The idea that writers aren't producing stories that I want to read, and are not having the chance to have the wonderful, wonderful sort of life I've had, because of a sociopath, is appalling. I want to tell the people who've been driven out, "Write your stories anyway; the best revenge is living well." And that has a great sound, doesn't it? But could I have done it? I don't know.

I wish I could do more to help fix this.

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## Alina

November 6, 2014 at 11:09 pm

Rachel Manija Brown publishes (truly excellent books) both under her name and a pseud:

[http://www.amazon.com/Rachel-Manija-Brown/e/Boo1JP89GC/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_1?qid=1415315259&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Rachel-Manija-Brown/e/Boo1JP89GC/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1415315259&sr=1-1)

[http://www.amazon.com/Lia-Silver/e/BooIU8LG84/ref=sr\\_ntt\\_srch\\_lnk\\_1?qid=1415315322&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/Lia-Silver/e/BooIU8LG84/ref=sr_ntt_srch_lnk_1?qid=1415315322&sr=1-1).

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Pingback: [RequiresHate/Winterfox/Benjanun Sriduangkaew Linkspam](#) » Rants and Ramblings By An Old Bag

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## Sarah Rees Brennan

November 6, 2014 at 11:21 pm

Cindy Pon's Silver Phoenix (very cool girl's own adventure) and the upcoming Serpentine (serpent demon for a heroine, the lady as a monster, sold).

She's a friend, but I read and enjoyed Silver Phoenix before I ever met her.

And I second the recommendation for N.K. Jemisin's Inheritance trilogy.

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## J. Kenton

November 6, 2014 at 11:21 pm

The ugly thing is that while RH has made a point of targeting the most vulnerable segments of SFF: The fans, the aspiring writers, the "noobs" who came into a forum looking to make friends, to share their love for the genre. She preyed on them, bullied and harassed people who are already marginalized in "normal" society. Any attempt by her victims to defend themselves was painted as "proof!" that they "deserved" her attacks, and her defenders and allies would pile on the "racist/sexist/homophobe" who had "revealed themselves" by trying to defend themselves with her. (Consider that game of posting something vicious and then deleting it, so the angry, hurt person who responds appears to be the aggressor....)

Also, consider what she did to honest attempts to educate people on issues like marginalization, whitewashing, etc. A new fan walks into that buzz-saw of hatred and venom... how's that going to shape their perceptions on the issues of gender, sexuality, and race?

She's gotten away with it; been excused, even defended, on the grounds that she was "fighting racism!" or "fighting homophobia!"

Clearly, she expects that her apology to a whopping 3 high-profile members of the community, and vague, non-apology to everyone else should help protect her from the consequences of her hateful and bullying career as a predator. She is, after all, at a point where publishers and editors are going to have to decide whether or not they want to be associated with her.

It should be noted that her "Oh, I was horrible to people, and it's no excuse, but I did it for a good cause," non-apology makes no mention of her blatant racism... calls for genocide aren't "punching up."

To be honest, her "apology" reminds me of David Duke when he quit the Klan and went into politics.

I'm neither Right, nor Left, nor good red meat. My "tribe" is fandom; I've friends across the socio-political spectrum. And I sincerely believe that a person who methodically targets vulnerable members of our community should not be excused no matter what "cause" she claims to have been doing it for.

Park her next to Vox Day. They deserve each other.

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Kr

November 6, 2014 at 11:22 pm

I wonder if/when law system will be able to address that sort of terrorism — and which country would have jurisdiction. She needs to be ordered to undergo lot of therapy — and no internet access until she gets it.

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## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 6, 2014 at 11:23 pm

Yes. I don't disagree. I can tell a lot from text.

For instance: it's obvious which wave/generation/clade of SFF writers RHB identifies with, and therefore envies. What's interesting is that she doesn't attack writers who fall outside that group. If RHB's attacks were truly motivated by opposition to racism, misogyny, and homophobia, the field has no shortage of more deserving targets. She hasn't touched them.

Let me repeat that: where are her wildly hostile "reviews" of older writers whose works should make them more obvious targets than the writers RHB has attacked?

Paolo Bacigalupi is not an offensive writer, but RHB's attacks on him have been completely over the top. I suspect his actual sin, aside from being part of the generation of writers RHB identifies with, is that he picked up a respectable string of award nominations, then in 2010 won the Hugo, Nebula, Seiun, Compton Crook, Locus, and John W. Campbell Memorial Awards for his novel *The Windup Girl*, which is set in Thailand.

Unforgivable, eh?

N. K. Jemisin is a smart, talented, original writer who doesn't have an evil bone in her body. *For a year*, RHB flung poo at any reviewer who said positive things about Jemisin's writing. It was an unambiguous attempt to suppress her work.

Want to strike a blow against RHB and all her doings? Go buy a copy of Jemisin's *The Thousand Kingdoms*. Buy the whole Inheritance Trilogy while you're at it. It's the only way repair that particular wrong — and besides, they're *good*.

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## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 6, 2014 at 11:26 pm

Yes.

I've never understood why people think unmoderated pseudonymous environments are safe.

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## Colum Paget

November 6, 2014 at 11:27 pm

# And ask whether anyone's started IP tracing.

Look, I was one of the people RH attacked, it was the most profound experience of my life, but I don't want her 'found'. RH is not the problem, and this stuff is more serious than most people think. In some jurisdictions RH could serve jail time for what s/he's done. Do we really want that? You don't know who it is, it could be your best friend for all you know.

What I want is for this never to be allowed to happen in the first place. As we've failed at that, I'd like it not to happen \*again\*. Achieving that lies not with RH, but with the SF&F community. I see this situation as analogous to the big data-breaches that we've seen recently at Target or Home Depot. The Community is waking up to that fact that it's been hacked, and that the hacker's been in the system and running rings around everyone for YEARS. Naturally the community wants to 'make the problem go away', find someone to blame, declare that it was 'a very skilled and advanced intrusion that no-one could have defended against', but really we should be asking "What was it that made us so easily pwned, and how to we make sure it never happens again?"

RH was enabled and supported by many powerful people in the community. I don't blame them, and I think we mustn't go after them with witch hunts, many of them are waking up to their mistakes now, and which of us has not been misled in the past? However, we do have to ask ourselves what's wrong with our thinking and language that it is so easily hacked and turned against us.

The problem is, that means the community has to face up to the fact that there's problems with its software: i.e. its political ideology. This is what RH used very effectively to attack people. We should be denouncing assaults on anyone, but instead we declare that some assaults are "Punching up" and hence are applauded. All this does is to encourage people to go through clever contortions to position themselves so that they can punch whomever they want, and claim they're "Punching up". Thus everyone and anyone gets punched sooner or later.

Another aspect of this is the widely advanced claim that "There's no such thing as racism towards white people" or that "Racism is prejudice plus power/privilege". This was, and still is, widely used to claim that RH's anti-white rhetoric wasn't racist (I've no idea what argument was used to defend her attacks on people-of-color, because I never saw that card played). Other times we had many learned commentators in SF&F were lecturing us about how RH was entitled to say whatever she liked about people, and that any claims otherwise were versions of "the tone argument". There's a big problem with these gospel beliefs of the SF&F community: The law, at least in the UK, doesn't agree with them. There are laws covering racism and online abuse, (the latter could land you a six-month jail term, which is going to be increased to two years in the near future). How long does anyone think "don't give the the tone argument" or "there's no such thing as racism towards white people" is going to stand up when the coppers are knocking on your door? Again, this is why I don't want RH 'found'.

And if we 'found' RH, does anyone think that would make the problem go away? If you catch one hacker, do you think that stops anyone else trying the same stunt? The only way to be protected from this happening again, is to build a stronger environment which is less easily hacked.

There's a lot of reasons why this situation is more serious than it looks. RH's "supporters" were endangering her, and others, by claiming that it was okay to hurl violent abuse at people: it's not. The community needs to rethink its politics to be inline with basic legal realities, and return to a worldview where people are entitled to be treated with a basic level of decency regardless of age, race, gender, religion sexuality or what platform they're running on. I don't believe, however, that it's capable of doing this. I know it's not willing. Thus there will be more requires\_hates and the like going forwards, until some great and terrible F-up happens, when the community will find itself having change dictated to it by outside forces, and not on terms it's going to like.

Colum

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## Jeremy Szal

November 6, 2014 at 11:29 pm

Honestly, this person is beyond filth, beyond disgusting. I personally know authors who have been targeted by her and her vulgar cycle of bullying, and what she's doing is so repulsive it's absurd. She's just using these "rape culture" and "white man" accusations as politically correct backdrops, disguising herself as a SJW in order to gain more credibility. And you know what? It works. And it makes me sick to my stomach that these people have been assaulted by her to such a degree. And yet people still defend her because they feel she's "addressing rape culture" and exposing "the white man dominance" all that crap. It's nothing but a facade.

Just how low can one person go? After reading this again, I wouldn't be surprised if she found herself a level to dwell in, spewing more acid at people. Thank you so much for documenting the online history of this disgusting individual. People are so quick to forgive any "misgivings" once they find a person has tried to "call out" so called racism, sexism, etc, believing themselves to be a good person. I hope this post buries that notion once and for all.

Again, you're damned brave to be doing this, and I'm eternally grateful for your work on this matter. I hope to see this list grow and spread out, showing people the extent of this person's filth and hopefully, making sure her and her small army of hateful minions are never allowed to do something like this again. It's revolting.

Call me cynical or overreacting, but I don't care. I'm sick of volatile behavior and intent to demean, slander and embarrass get glossed over as "doing the right thing" and dressed up as social justice. This sort of thing is a sick poison and should be dealt with such.

Again, from the bottom of my heart, I thank you.

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## J. Kenton

November 6, 2014 at 11:38 pm

A side note: I lurk a good many places, I've seen RH or one of her incarnations pop up here and there over the years, never gave her much head-space until now. Granted, I had no idea it was one person with such an intricate and extensive web of predation and hate.

In any case, I've seen apologists suggest that she's understandably responding to oppression and privilege by Western men. That her attitude was normal, and reasonable for a person who'd grown up in a nation that was occupied, or had been broken, by imperialist. It is, after all, understandable for a person from India or Pakistan to be less than charitable in their thoughts of British culture, or a Vietnamese person to be hostile to American or French interests.

Thailand was never colonized or conquered by a Western nation.

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## Sherwood Smith

November 6, 2014 at 11:39 pm

Steven, you had a great suggestion above—that people make a point of checking out the books and authors she excoriated and victimized, at the very least to decide about these works themselves.

I've already written down half a dozen authors to check out, and several books.

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## Jonathan Kamens

November 6, 2014 at 11:48 pm

I am awed by the work that has gone into exposing the acts of this individual and the damage she has caused in such a concrete, evidence-based, indisputable way.

I am also awed by the people who have bravely stepped forward to testify about how they have personally suffered at her hands.

Many years ago, in the early days of the internet (I've been active under my real name since 1987 — you can check ;-)), I attracted a number of trolls and sociopaths. One of them went so far as to contact my employer and try to intimidate them into firing me; they didn't, but they did make me take down the Usenet server I was running for the use of employees, so the troll was successful at making my life at least somewhat more difficult.

And then there was the time someone read one of my blog postings which mentioned my wife and her doctor by name (big mistake, I know!), and showed up at the doctor's office ranting and raving about how he needed to see my wife's medical records. That one scared us enough to call the police.

But really, nothing that I've experienced comes anywhere close to the true evil documented here.

There have been many times over the years when I've been menaced on the internet, or I've seen others menaced, and I was appalled by how few people stood up for the victims. I can't bear to do that here; I feel the need to show my support for the victims in a real, substantive way. Therefore, I've just bought a book by every one of the authors listed in the table above that has hard-copy books for sale on Amazon, as well as J.M. Frey. Except NK Jemisin, that is — my kids have already bought many of her books. 😊

I've been mostly inactive in SFF for many years (no time), so I don't have a good way to find out about new authors I should be reading and to whom I should be introducing my kids. It seems to me that anyone on BS/RH's victim list is a good candidate!

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 7, 2014 at 12:03 am

Echoing Colum Paget, the limiting of Requires Hate's options will not make the problem go away. The online SF community provided her

with a very rich field in which to sow seeds of hate.

While few are so accomplished at what RH did, her tactics are very familiar. We need to stop supporting those who hunt in packs no matter how right their cause may seem at the moment.

I was deeply upset in 2012 by what I read of RH's attacks on writers, but did nothing at the time except to speak privately with victims and unfriend people who seemed to think what she was doing was OK. I said nothing publicly because of the very realistic fear that I would be harassed for objecting, that I would make myself a target.

SF – RH still has plenty of people in it willing to target someone for defending someone else from harassment. That needs to change.

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## Judith Tarr

November 7, 2014 at 12:10 am

It's necessary. I had always been appalled by the behavior of this troll, but when she went after vulnerable women writers, and worse, women of color, that made me angry. I will do whatever I can help and support them.

I have dealt with a personality like this in another side of my life. We called her the Feral Nut, and luckily the mare did not abort and we were able to escape from that horse-boarding barn before the subtly sliced girths and reins caused an accident. It's brutal to live through the stage when you've been convinced you're the one at fault—and if you're at a delicate phase in your career or your life, it can break you. For that, I have no mercy.

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## Melissa Scott

November 7, 2014 at 12:10 am

Laura, thank you for all the work you've done in compiling this, and in making this a safe space for people to share their stories. I had managed to miss both the Requires Hate reviews and Winterfox on LJ (though a discouraging number of friends knew that name once I mentioned it); my first contact was with Sriduangaew, and came through her submissions to a year's best lesbian SF/F anthology of which I was co-editor. That interaction was civil, even pleasant, and I certainly came away with the impression that Sriduangaew was very much a newcomer to the field. As all this has come out, I am more and more appalled by the amount of damage she has managed to do over the years. (I'm particularly discouraged by the way she wrapped abuse in the language of progressive politics, and used the language of social justice to persuade other people to go along with her.) Thank you to everyone who's come forward – you have both my sympathy and my respect.

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## Steven Brust

November 7, 2014 at 12:15 am

As for what can be done—various people, Laura, Athena, several others, are doing it. Making us aware that this can happen and has happened is, I believe, the most potent defense against it. We may all be a bit paranoid, or at least hyper-vigilant, for a while now, and that's okay. We need to remember this. The next time we are victimized, or see someone else victimized, it will be that much easier to speak out, and to avoid a similar trap. In my opinion, that is exactly that importance of this post.

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Pingback: [Requires Hate Requires Speaking Out](#) « [Intellectus Speculativus](#)

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## Moderator the Second

November 7, 2014 at 12:23 am

Hi Jeremy. Let's not stoop to namecalling—whatever we may think of her, RHB is still a human being and I am deeply uncomfortable with this safe space becoming a place to call her names.

Thanks so much.

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Pingback: [Truth. Reconciliation? | Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea](#)

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## **J. Kenton**

November 7, 2014 at 12:29 am

If I may, I'd like to add that we need to judge behavior by how we'd react when it's directed at someone we like and agree with. If we cheer for, smirk at, or ignore a tactic when it's used against someone we dislike or disagree with, then we honestly have no problem with that tactic. Maybe it's a skewed, loaded meme, maybe it's a hate-filled, cruel tirade... whatever it is, we have no right claiming outrage, howling at injustice, if we snicker and sneer when the crap is being thrown from "our side."

No one can claim to have any sort of moral or ethical high ground if they judge behavior strictly on who the target is.

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## **Jordan**

November 7, 2014 at 12:29 am

Moderators can't save you when they are bamboozled by her false pose of being an advocate for social issues. That is what happened in the 50 Books POC community, which did have multiple moderators who were well aware of her activities. She was able to exploit their earnest desire to be fair and open to minorities' voices, using progressive terminology and ideas to claim that anyone who didn't like what she said was contributing to centuries of racial oppression and not letting people of color speak freely. Of course, her supporters also turned up to agree with her points and to praise and flatter the moderators every time they gave her the benefit of the doubt and another chance.

This is not a simple case of "ban the troll". She is very, very skilled at manipulating people's goodwill and their worst fears about themselves. Some people do see through her, but many intelligent and well-meaning people do not.

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## **Steven Brust**

November 7, 2014 at 12:34 am

I should add, which is why I think it is important to spread this as far and wide as we can. Not to punish the perpetrator, but to protect ourselves from the next one.

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## **Kero**

November 7, 2014 at 12:40 am

I'm quite uncomfortable with what reads as mental illness shaming. I'm replying to Kr's post, but it's come up in a couple of places. RH may or may not have a mental illness. Therapy may or may not be an appropriate tool for her. But the implication here reads as though RH only did this (this – a small word for ~10 years of violent and obsessive abusive behaviour) because she's not mentally well and that if she, personally, is shunned until cured, this kind of thing won't be a problem for our community any more. This is a bit crap, both from the perspective of mental health justice, and from the perspective of developing community resilience to the predation of future trolling arsebadgers.

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## **Lizzy Lynn**

November 7, 2014 at 12:42 am

Laura, thank you, thank you, thank you for putting this presentation together in such a thorough, clear, compelling way. Not being part of LJ or Twitter, nor the other forums this person frequents, I knew nothing of her. As Jeremy Szal says, this is poison! I hope that, having identified the poison, the community can find its way to the antidote(s.)

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## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 7, 2014 at 1:06 am

If Simon Bradshaw's comment survives:

The term Patrick and I use for that transaction is Cheap Moral Glow. It's very addictive. Consider forgiving those who repent of it, because they aren't going to have an easy time of it.

None of us are entirely immune to the kind of targeted microtheatre RHB served up. We might have seen through her version; we might have fallen for another. Repent, forgive, do better.

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## Anne Leonard

November 7, 2014 at 1:07 am

Laura, thank you both for creating a space where victims can speak and be heard and feel safe, and for the continual reminders not to objectify RH as less than human. Each is hard to do and requires courage, especially when they are part of the same conversation.

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## jane yolen

November 7, 2014 at 1:09 am

There is something both historic and heroic going on here, this stand against cyber bullying, that I can't wrap my brain around. It's not the heroism I don't get, it's the psychopathy that demands the response. When Laura first told me about this, I was both unnerved and snake-brain fascinated. It was like a bad screen play and a worse book. That this had been underground for so long and worked for so long, mired in anonymity and fear, both makes me mad and sad, at the same time.

But from what I have read here in Laura's brave and thorough account, I feel certain that this is actionable, and I have no fear of saying so out loud. This needs to be turned over to authorities. This is not just troll games-playing. Many lines have been crossed. The threats have seemed real enough to those who received them to drive them to silence, into hiding, to thoughts of suicide, or worse.

Jane

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## Anne Leonard

November 7, 2014 at 1:31 am

Unfortunately it's probably not that easy. There may be statutes of limitations issues that mean many of the threats are not prosecutable, and there are complicated jurisdictional issues. There are likely evidentiary issues too since so many of the posts have been deleted. "What to do" is a conversation people seem to want to have; has anyone started a discussion somewhere? (This space needs to be preserved for listening, not advising.)

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## J. Kenton

November 7, 2014 at 1:31 am

And to protect ourselves from not becoming the next one.

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## ModeratorY

November 7, 2014 at 1:37 am

Simon, that's a gentle and considerate response, and I appreciate your understanding. Thank you.

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## Walt Boyes

November 7, 2014 at 1:38 am

Pat, I'd be interested in helping as well with the mentoring program. I have done several panels at cons about fans and writers with disabilities, and how to make them more comfortable in fandom, I am on the Board of ReadAssist.org, which administers Baen Books' free ebooks for readers with disabilities program, and I am the parent of a profoundly dyslexic daughter. I am also white, male, and mostly able, for which I make no apology. We are all part of the community, and in order to keep that true, we need to act in communitarian ways.

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## anonymous

November 7, 2014 at 1:48 am

Not every reprehensible act stems from mental illness. It is bigoted against the mentally ill to make such assumptions, and it minimizes the degree of agency that the person committing those acts has.

Sometimes, people are evil. The end.

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## Lela Gwenn

November 7, 2014 at 1:59 am

You seem to be implying that we are "just as bad as she is" for pointing out her behavior (or maybe I am completely misreading you. If so I apologize now)

I don't see anyone here dancing on her grave. Holding someone accountable for their actions is not being a troll or a terrible person. Many people's lives were altered by RH's campaigns of vitriol. They suffered alone in the dark because people worshiped this woman's terror campaigns. It is important that people see not only WHAT happened, but HOW it happened and how many people were harmed.

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## lisa

November 7, 2014 at 2:14 am

What a stomach-turning compilation. My heart goes out to those who were targeted. I hope that you will again find joy in writing and allow us the pleasure of reading your work.

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## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 7, 2014 at 2:16 am

Colum, I maintain a weblog where no one gets to behave like RH or her minions. I don't silence their precious opinions, but if they post something rude and abusive, all the vowels disappear from the objectionable passages. They resent me for this. I don't care. I love fandom, and I love my readers, and I will not serve them up on a platter for the likes of RH.

Forums need moderators like cow towns need sheriffs. Mostly you just keep an eye on things, but when a real baddie comes through, you need to be there to stop them. It's not something the citizenry can do for themselves.

I'm sorry you were abused. The fandom I fell in love with nearly forty years ago didn't treat its members like they were disposable. There's no reason that attitude should be tolerated today. RHB misuses language in horrible ways. It's meant to hurt, not enlighten, and it does real, lasting damage. In an environment where I'm responsible for maintaining order, I wouldn't allow one person to physically hurt another, no matter how much Oppressed Person's Rage they claimed they felt. The same goes for language.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 7, 2014 at 2:19 am

Pat, I think that's a wonderful idea. Maybe through SFWA, but not requiring a SFWA membership for the mentees? Just a way to help new/marginalised writers network?

I'd help.

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## T. Nielsen Hayden

November 7, 2014 at 2:21 am

Maybe so, but I'd dearly love to be able to subpoena her ISPs.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 7, 2014 at 2:25 am

I can second that rec for Jemisin's work.

Another RH target who deserves wider reading is Karen Lord.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 7, 2014 at 2:29 am

A Nonny Mouse, above—

I wasn't even one of her targets, and I haven't been able to look at food all day. This stuff is kicks up every ounce of lingering PTSD that still circulates in my bloodstream from what we will charitably call an unhappy childhood, and some other things. As I said to Rochita on twitter not too long ago: physical abuse heals. Emotional abuse leaves deep and abiding scars that pull and itch and constrain for decades.

You are entitled to your hurt.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 7, 2014 at 2:33 am

What you are describing, J.M., is post-traumatic stress disorder.

I want to stress that it's real, it's physiological, it has treatments. And that you are exhibiting courage every time you challenge it by sitting down at the keyboard.

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## Azarias

November 7, 2014 at 2:34 am

Thank you for writing this. I got involved enough to write my roundup post because I have the luxury of no dog in this hunt and no vulnerability for Winterfox to exploit. I have never confronted her directly. My involvement with online media fandom these days is minimal, while my involvement with pro-SFF fandom is nonexistent; in real life, I'm a self-employed spinster whose friends are already aware of where I stand in this and whose cats don't care. There are no personal or professional consequences for me to suffer. The bravery it's taken for victims to come forward is astounding, especially in light of Athena Andreadis's disclosure of the recent professional harassment she's suffered.

What motivated me to step in was seeing that this problem is larger than Winterfox. Online media fandom has by and large learned to deal with her over the past ten years, though she's left plenty of ruins in her wake. I see her repeating her same pattern in pro-SFF fandom, where she's finding fertile ground. During the first discussion on James Nicoll's journal, I found myself in conversation with a woman — a white woman, self-described — who was arguing that threats of rape and murder directed at queer women of color are the progressive position, let alone those same threats directed at less oppressed people. The crime of disagreeing with Winterfox is enough to warrant that, and

“punching sideways” is somehow different from run-of-the-mill assault. That we could come to this, where good-hearted, well-intentioned people are making that atrocious argument and being taken seriously, is a problem too big to have started with Winterfox — but she’s helped it grow.

So. Where do we go from here?

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## Kylie Chan

November 7, 2014 at 2:35 am

Hi Laura, You can kind of add me to this list. I’m the reason the @requireshate (Misandry Shrugs) twitter account was made private. She sub-tweeted me with rage-filled vitriol, that I have to admit I found rather cute. She had some good points: I’m whitey mcwhiterson writing Chinese characters. She had major issues with my last name and the fact I’m white and writing POC. I was annoyed when she put words into my mouth, ie ‘I would ask her about intersectionality but the dumb bitch wouldn’t even know what it is’. When it descended into abusive spewing, I started favoriting every tweet so I could show people: ‘Look I have my very own stalker! isn’t she CUTE?’. (My usual response to threats is ‘bring it’.) RH raged that I was ‘stalking’ her and ‘being abusive’ – I never replied to the tweets, I never said a word about her online, I just favorited all the bile. In response she started tweeting bestiality porn snippets and claiming that I’d written them. Her followers were confused and kept asking what was going on, and she said I was threatening her. Then she made the twitter account private and that was that. Unfortunately the twitter account is gone now and all those wonderful bile-filled tweets have disappeared. I regret not screenshotting them now, just favoriting them wasn’t enough. Such a shame, I really enjoyed showing them to people who would ask me if anyone objected to my work. She’s the only one who ever has, the rest of the Asian community have been universally supportive.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 7, 2014 at 2:35 am

Karen Lord’s THE BEST OF ALL POSSIBLE WORLDS is worth your time.

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Pingback: [A Massive Disappointment | The Infinite Library and Other Stories](#)

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## Bergamot

November 7, 2014 at 2:51 am

I have been watching for at least eight years now as RH and her various personae wreaked havoc throughout several communities in which I participated. I can’t say that everyone in those communities knew the extent of her activities, but I know that many of us felt an uncomfortable wariness, coupled with a do-not-engage policy, whenever she appeared in a discussion. The general sense was one of hoping that she would simply speak her piece and go away. Any fair sized online community has a few bad apples, the kind of people toward whom one instinctively thought “oh god, this again,” but RH held an uncomfortable amount of power. There was always the desire to prove her wrong, along with a stronger desire to stay out of her targets. In the end, those two always combined to leave us mute. Whenever she appeared in a conversation, everyone was a hostage.

That was the effect she had in public. In private, god only knows.

When I found out that her secret identities had at last come to light, and that people were documenting her activities, and victims were coming forward, I literally gave a little whoop of delight. Did a little happy dance in front of my computer. May have sung a few bars of “ding-dong, the witch is dead.” I ain’t proud.

This victory dance was cut short as I immediately learned that her Sriduangkaew persona had not only managed to break into the very industry RH held in open disdain, but seemed to thriving there. The hypocrisy was enough to make my jaw clench.

Point blank, I hate a bully. It’s one of my life’s failings that I can’t forgive a slight. I am furious that RH not only got away with so much abuse for so long, but that she succeeded in shutting up so many witnesses. Moreover, I’ve had enough experience to know that bullies don’t stop bullying—they just get more subtle and cautious, picking more and more defenseless and voiceless targets. I feel that, given the opportunity, RH will repeat her behavior in the future if others are not informed and on guard. Your report and the testimony of others will, I hope, stand

in the way of giving a serial abuser a legitimate platform.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for documenting this.

Please, everyone, if you're out there, keep talking. Don't let this conversation fade away.

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## **Laurence Brothers**

November 7, 2014 at 2:57 am

Respect is due to Laura Mixon and everyone else involved in shining light on this repugnant and monstrous behavior. I hope the people who suffered these malicious attacks are not permanently affected.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 7, 2014 at 3:01 am

Colum, I know you have spent a lot of time thinking about this. I owe you an apology. I shouldn't have talked about punching up. This is just not the time to get into a philosophical debate about privilege and power, and larger societal issues, when people are only just now being able to talk about what happened to them.

I think there is a very important debate to be had in SFF circles around reasonable boundaries of discourse, especially with regard to social equity issues. I've actually reached out to the Carl Brandon Society because I think as a larger community, we need to find a way to negotiate all the complicated intersectional and personal boundaries with what has happened here. I want their insights and their help enabling everyone's voice to be heard. There are so many complexities.

For right now, if you're OK with deferring the larger discussion, I propose we keep the focus on people's personal stories and support. But I promise you that I will help foster further discussion of the bigger picture, and I value your insights. You have had a lot of time to think about this and I know you care about both the individuals, and the larger community.

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## **J. Kenton**

November 7, 2014 at 3:02 am

Goodness no... I'm talking about holding people accountable for saying and doing awful things, even if they're on "our side" of some issue. I'm implying that people who chose to ignore her behavior, who snickered, because she was attacking people they didn't like.. or because they just didn't want to call out "an ally" for awful behavior should be eating some shame about now.

As for the people who eagerly assisted her, cheered her on? \*Those\* are the ones who are just as bad.

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## **Just Passing By**

November 7, 2014 at 3:02 am

I think that's the opposite of what J Kenton is saying. I interpreted the comment as an admonishment that RH's tactics are not okay just because they are directed toward a perceived enemy — that approval or disapproval of tactics must be consistent.

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## **J. Kenton**

November 7, 2014 at 3:16 am

Agreed. I'm stunned by the number of people coming forward, risking the ire if RH and her followers. I never imagined that she'd racked up so many victims. God only knows how many people we won't hear from because she and her hate-posse actually drove them away from the SFF community.

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## Bergamot

November 7, 2014 at 3:19 am

You're not the first person who's said Sriduangkaew has stressed her newcomer status in professional circles. The entire RH blog, coupled with her shorter reviews elsewhere, should prove that RH has spent nearly a decade claiming to be very familiar with both the SF/F genre and the publishing industry—if not as an insider, then as a very perceptive and widely-read amateur. Part of the power of her rhetoric comes from the idea that she is so well-versed in genre lit that she's become jaded and frustrated. She's used this air of authority to make her reviews and opinions very difficult to refute. That she's now playing up being a wide-eyed newbie to advance her professional persona is appalling.

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## J. Kenton

November 7, 2014 at 3:23 am

Pretty much what I meant. I do love to hear myself type though...

Point being, we've got to hold ourselves and our allies to the (typically higher) standard we hold our adversaries to. Otherwise, we risk feeding and nurturing predators and bullies. Or even become ones ourselves.

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## laurajmixon

November 7, 2014 at 3:25 am

Folks, it doesn't fit in with the report per se, but it's so important that I need to boost it here. This post from Liz Bourke captures exactly how I'm feeling.

<http://lizbourke.wordpress.com/2014/11/06/truth-reconciliation/>

I'm grieving. I'm having to hold so many contradictory realities in my heart right now.

I don't know what the path out of this is, but I know I'm in it for the long haul. SFF is my home, and my family. Family can get pretty f\*cked up at times. But I'm committed to finding that path, that gives everyone who wants to be on it a safe way to a better place.

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## Pat Bowne

November 7, 2014 at 3:39 am

I'm glad you summarized all this, because I'm seeing the start of a real conversation about the role of the larger community now; that was conspicuously lacking in most of the places where I saw this stuff discussed earlier. The fact is that a bully can be frightening, abusive, etc., but a bully alone cannot make her victims feel isolated and condemned. That requires a whole community of people who choose not to speak up at all, or to speak up in support of the bully.

Of course pointing out the problem and suggesting a solution are two different things... but your hard work in pulling the evidence together perhaps makes it more respectable for people in the community to react to abusive behavior in future, by documenting a precedent.

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## MacAllister Stone

November 7, 2014 at 4:21 am

This is a powerful personal anecdote, that leaves me profoundly sad for the damage that's been done in the name of "social justice" in our community.

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"Oh, right: because if I'm a real activist, a real bold POC like you, I'll speak out in namespace. So RH and Alex and Tori and you can harass and bully and blackmail me into silence. So you can dig up old emails of mine and send them to my employer.

"Or, wait. Maybe you didn't know about that part, the part where RH bought my silence with blackmail? Maybe despite being clearly

part of her defense squad, you weren't in on that? But if you didn't know... why not listen to those who do know? It's not news. She's done it before. She'll do it again."

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Because you know what? We NEED social justice. We NEED people to be righteously angry with us, when we're blind to our own privilege. I'm perfectly happy to raise my hand and say, "I've had my ass hanging out all over, more than once, because I hadn't figured out how to do better — but I'm dang well trying, and will keep right on trying."

But blackmailing for purposes of controlling and silencing? Oh hell, no.

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## Karen G. Anderson

November 7, 2014 at 4:22 am

There are too many intelligent people in the speculative fiction field speaking out articulately, forcefully, and publicly against racist, sexist, and otherwise exclusionary writing for us to give someone who uses obscenities and threats of violence a place on the same platform — particularly when the person refuses to show his or her face. My heart goes out to the writers who were stalked and harassed.

Laura, I am awed by what you've done to raise our awareness of this shameful situation. Thank you.

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## Laurel Amberdine

November 7, 2014 at 4:22 am

Thank you for compiling all this. I knew a lot of it, but it was scattered around and hard to point at.

I felt so bad for all the victims of harassment, since the majority of public statements by professional writers I saw were in support of BS. I couldn't believe writers would do that to people who are mostly their own fans and readers! I knew it was just that the writers didn't have the time or opportunity to dig up all the background as you have. I'm so relieved to see that most SF/F professionals are as decent as I expected.

And personally, while I may be pretty much a nobody, I'm a nobody who sometimes is called to work with writers, and I'm grateful to have something to point to to explain why I am not comfortable working with a certain one, should the issue arise.

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## GQ

November 7, 2014 at 4:26 am

I think this quote is something worth meditating on:

"The point is that as a society changes, as what's held sacred and who's empowered shifts, so do the paths through which evil enters in, the prejudices and blind spots it exploits.

"So don't expect tomorrow's predators to look like yesterday's. Don't expect them to look like the figures your ideology or philosophy or faith would lead you to associate with exploitation."

This is in response to a much more terrible situation, systematic sexual predation

([http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/opinion/sunday/ross-douthat-rape-and-rotherham.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/09/07/opinion/sunday/ross-douthat-rape-and-rotherham.html?_r=0)) but the spirit of it applies here.

When we as a collective make the rightful decision to work towards social justice, to give the marginalized a voice, and to create safe spaces for groups that have been historically been without such things in the mainstream, we also open ourselves to the risk that fear of betraying an ideal will leave us paralyzed when an individual we are deferring to proves unworthy of that deference. We cannot sabotage ourselves by choosing a theory of justice over the functional protection of individual people. It's not easy to both weather the storm of constant outside abuse in the form of racists, bigots, sexist, and the indifferent majority while also keeping our own house clean, but it something that must be done if we're ever going to make it towards true justice.

At this point it isn't Benjamin that concerns me. It is the next Requires Hate, the one who checks all the boxes on the "should be listened to and deferred to" form, that we should be concerning ourselves with. Hell, if the pendulum swings far enough it may be the people who use this debacle to silence mild criticism. Social justice theory is never going to replace critical thought and compassionate action. I entreat

everyone, particularly those of us who are bystanders in all of this, to remember that.

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## Jeremy Szal

November 7, 2014 at 4:57 am

Perhaps you're right. I don't want to be a hypocrite, and although is she a coward who gets some sort of sadistic pleasure by assaulting people, I don't want to stoop down to her level.

Keep doing what you're doing.

– JS

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## EmergingAnon

November 7, 2014 at 5:01 am

THIS.

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## Rachel Manija Brown

November 7, 2014 at 5:13 am

Thank you very much. I'm sorry you too felt the chilling effect she had on communities. Was it fantasy or fantasy-books on Dreamwidth?

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## Rachel Manija Brown

November 7, 2014 at 5:18 am

Thank you so much for writing this. It made me tear up a bit. But in a good way.

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## Celestine Angel

November 7, 2014 at 5:42 am

Well, well, well. I wasn't familiar with Requires Hate, or any of the other sock puppets, but I did have a (surprisingly, from what's being said) brief encounter with Winterfox a few years ago. Sadly, I was not aware of how huge the problem was, and I didn't save any screencaps. Myself and the other person involved both basically went "WTF is this person's problem?" avoided her, and forgot about her. I see now we were lucky to be able to do so.

This took place in an LJ community I can't remember the name of, the purpose of which was for new and aspiring writers to share some of their work and receive *constructive* criticism back from the members of the community. The other person involved was someone who had shared her work before, and with whom I'd been speaking with through emails and private messages since then. When my friend posted a revised version of the scene in question, most people did what they were supposed to, and offered valuable constructive criticism of her writing, with the purpose of helping her improve.

Winterfox, however, popped in and started exclaiming about how trite and tired absolutely everything in the writing was, and how Euro-centric... valid points, perhaps, but given without any attempts to teach, or to help. Then Winterfox went on to tell my friend that she was a terrible, horrible, awful writer, would never get better, and should stop writing forever and ever, because she was *shit*. My friend, happily, didn't take her very seriously, as it was obvious that someone had a serious case of the grumpy trolls, and more than one person, including myself, called Winterfox out for ignoring the "constructive" part of the criticism, none of which did any good, of course. If I remember correctly, someone sent me a private message warning me about Winterfox, but it wasn't a dire warning of the "oh gods, please don't get her started, she'll start abusing everyone" variety, more a simple "Just ignore her, she treats everyone this way" kind of warning.

I suppose it's possible all of this happened long before Winterfox had truly begun a reign of terror, and I truly can't remember what year this happened, or in what LJ group, though I could point you in the direction of the friend of mine who was involved. I'm not even sure she would remember; as I said, we kind of went "Dude, what?" then shrugged and went on with our lives, and for whatever reason, Winterfox let

us do it. Maybe we weren't big enough fish for her.

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## **ModeratorY**

November 7, 2014 at 5:46 am

Kero, yes. Exactly so.

Internet diagnoses and mental-illness shaming aren't appropriate here. Thank you for calling it out.

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## **E. P. Beaumont**

November 7, 2014 at 6:08 am

I read the RH reviews and remember well the list of authors of colors she trashed. I'm currently using it as a reading list. As more details of this story have emerged, it looks a lot like "kneecapping the competition." I have been on the receiving end of that in (mostly non-internet) work settings. What these folks were put through makes me literally sick. I haven't finished the report yet; I'm taking it slow for self-care reasons because it's tripping flashbacks.

My very best wishes to all of the people victimized by this serial abuser. (And my vote for retiring the term "troll" in favor of the more accurate "predator.")

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## **Farah**

November 7, 2014 at 6:16 am

Colum I'm not sure that RH was supported by powerful people in the community: what I saw — and I followed the RH links for a while—was relatively unpowerful people supporting her with retweets and on line strokes. Some people [I am not going to name names here] gained power and influence and Name status through their publicizing of her tweets but that's another issue.

What \*did\* happen is that lots of us (see Teresa's comment) blocked, muted and turned away. In my case I started to block \*anyone\* who retweeted her or otherwise gave her oxygen. Usually that's a good tactic. In this case however it back fired because we didn't see what was going on under our noses, and it reinforced the isolation of victims on which RH depended and depends. What I know, I know because it became clear that some of my very good friends and colleagues were victims and they had the good sense to tell each other.

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## **Farah**

November 7, 2014 at 6:19 am

In the UK it would be stalking.

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## **Farah**

November 7, 2014 at 6:20 am

Well done. I'm not an RH victim, but this has been my practice when I've had abuse.

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## **Daniel Martin**

November 7, 2014 at 6:41 am

I find this behavior appalling; on that count though, I really have nothing else to add that others haven't already said. I am not a writer of fiction, and am involved in the community only in the sense that I am an avid reader of SFF and a very occasional writer of comments or short book reviews.

As such, I am somewhat bothered that the “headline” column in the chart above frequently uses quotes from a review about the work under review as the way to summarize a row. This happens even when the row contains genuine bad acts that aren’t book reviews. A particularly egregious example of this problem with the chart is the row discussing NK Jemisin, where the row discusses something truly terrifying for reviewers – the year-long stalking and harassment of anyone who left an “incorrect” review – yet the headline of the row is an actually somewhat bland expression of disapproval of a work. (“bland” compared to the sum total of the chart)

I worry that this pushes the narrative that what RH really did that was bad was in her reviews and in her statements about works. In fact, there’s more than one comment here that strongly implies that the fundamental problem was contained in her reviews, or that the general problem if we extend beyond RH herself is one of certain types of considerations being used as the basis for reviews. (Not, you know, repeated serial harassment and stalking)

Now, don’t get me wrong: she’s clearly done some really, really vile things. But the chart conflates “gave a book a bad review” with “attacked” in a way that makes me as someone who’s seen the craziness of authors subscribing to the “Stop the Good Reads Bullies” philosophy very nervous. Bad reviews happen, even bad reviews by people who totally misunderstand the work, even where that misunderstanding is deliberate.

If RH attacked *people*, fine – that deserves to be known and documented, but I don’t see what good it does to headline her actual attacks on people with the fact that she thought a work was overrated. If the contents of a row are really and truly accurately summarized by a quote that boils down to “I think this work is not good”, then I question whether the row itself should stay.

I realize separating her bad acts from her reviews is difficult, and I also realize that there’s more than one comment on this post by people who’ve been truly hurt by reviews (some to the point where, yeah, I see the worry about PTSD). Still, I feel that an attempt should be made.

(Quotes – even from a review – about what should happen to an author or to a disagreeing reviewer are a horse of a different color)

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## Vylar Kaftan

November 7, 2014 at 6:41 am

I’d help with such a program too, Pat.

And to those who experienced such abuse: I’m sorry. So awful. 😞 Thanks for speaking up.

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## Andrew Porter

November 7, 2014 at 6:42 am

I’ve sent the link for this to my list of about 60 SF fans and pros, SF news blogs and others, and also to the SMOFS list.

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## ModeratorY

November 7, 2014 at 6:52 am

Daniel, thank you for your notes. I’m sure that Laura will take those observations under advisement, when and if future updates are released.

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## Tricia Sullivan

November 7, 2014 at 7:04 am

Even though this is meant to be a safe space, I don’t feel safe here because I am a professional with a book out and because I have friends who are involved and they are all hurting in different ways. I still don’t feel like I can really speak my mind because whenever I speak, it seems I hurt someone.

I still need to say some things anyway. I will try to keep it about me.

Why I submitted my book

- Because my friends told me not to listen to RH. They picked apart her criticisms and compared them to my actual work and showed me several instances of false logic that, in my self-flagellation, I couldn't see. Even my friends who had issues with the draft that RH criticized told me that I shouldn't feel I had to pull it from publication.
- Because I needed the money. Really. And I didn't make a lot of money, but I really needed it.
- Because I was writing another novel, the SF novel that I just sold, and I realized that if I stayed completely out of cultures where I was an outsider, I couldn't write that novel, either. I might as well throw in the towel and do something else.
- Because another Thai reader helped me work on the stereotypes
- Because I looked again and made all the revisions that I could

I also left twitter in 2013, ostensibly to concentrate on my studies but really because I wanted to stop following a bunch of people including RH and I was afraid to do that. I came back on a few months later under another handle.

When Shadowboxer sold I felt terrible. Ask my friends. I felt like shit.

It was all I could do not to apologize to RH for submitting it. A close friend stopped me from re-engaging after I'd backed away carefully in Oct 2012. I feel ashamed to say this. I feel ashamed to say that I felt so low about my writing career that I would even think in those terms. It was a hard time for me. Women's SF was breaking out everywhere, but my career had been timed too early for any of this and was already over as far as the world was concerned. I was—to use words that have already been used in public—a has-been. Actually, to most people I wasn't even a has-been, I was a never-was.

How I felt this last year or so, and this summer:

- I have known about the RH/BS connection myself since almost the beginning. I put it together myself. It wasn't hard. Not because they are both Thai, but for other reasons.
- I assumed 'everyone' in the diversity community must also know, and no one was telling me because of my alleged racism (the transphobia came later)
- I resigned myself to whatever implications this situation had for my career and relationships.
- I trusted my novel wouldn't sell much and hoped it wouldn't cause me or my friends too much trouble. My publishers were very sensitive to my reluctance to publicize the book—in turn, I did what I could. I told them about RH, but not about BS because they publish her, too.
- I did not want to be seen to attack BS in any way as 'revenge' for her criticism of my work, so I recommended her against my better judgement. I believed she was trying to reform.
- I found out what Alex and RH were doing to Rochita because she told me. I wanted to make it stop. My hands were tied. Rochita didn't want RH harmed. To explain what happened with my book was almost impossible without getting into the BS/RH connection. BS couldn't review the book herself because she was too nice. She had to find someone else to do it for her. It was clear that she wanted to use Rochita. She saw Rochita as lesser. Alex helped. A lot. It was sick-making.
- People don't have to believe me, but my overriding concern was for Rochita. How could I protect her? I couldn't. She was being attacked for something I had written, just because she was my friend. I couldn't fight back or I'd be a 'snitty author who can't take criticism'. I'd be an established white writer punching down. I'd be the bully.
- If I did anything against RH it would be a betrayal of Rochita, wouldn't it? So I had to stand there and watch Rochita be tortured. It is still going on. I'm sorry, Rochita, but I have to say it. Her friends and community have been turned against her. What is happening to Rochita is torture.
- I was completely beside myself. I still am.
- I withdrew my recommendations. I told a couple of trusted members of the community about Rochita being bullied because I was worried what would happen at Nine Worlds. They said they would keep an eye out, but I felt extremely impotent. I wanted to scream from the rooftops but I couldn't.

What happened when I wrote 'Toxicity and Me'

- I was trying to keep my head down, publish the book, and move on. What else could I do? I was trapped. Then a small thing happened that broke my camel-back. This also involved a friend, who found herself in a position of having to choose between keeping a secret and betraying another friend. It also involved another victim offering me solace, though they didn't know the BS/RH connection. (Sorry to be cryptic, but: friends. Confidential.) I couldn't stand it anymore.
- I wrote the post very fast, like I always do when I have something to say. Like I'm doing now. There were errors of judgement, especially a line where I inadvertently implicated Rochita. I literally didn't see how I'd done that—I was physically shaking and highly adrenalized and barely re-read my own words. People probably won't believe this, either. All I can say is I'm not a machine.
- I was attacked on twitter by a colleague (who later apologized, which I appreciate)

- I called Pat Cadigan in tears. She waded in and got the attacks to stop. I'm so grateful to her.
- I got an e-mail from Laura Mixon-Gould, whom I knew a little and was friendly with in a collegial way. She asked if I was OK and if I wanted to talk in confidence. I said I'd think about it.
- I got a brief e-mail from Athena Andreadis, whom I knew very slightly as an editor. She said, 'This has also happened to me.'
- No one else who commented on twitter gave me the courtesy of an e-mail or a phone call until after Pat stepped in.
- I have been a member of the SFF community for nearly 20 years. I don't believe I've ever caused drama or trouble before. The way I was jumped on was shocking to me. That day I was ready to walk away from SFF. I am still not sure how this is all going to play out.

Mostly what I want to express is my deep gratitude to Laura and to the mods here who make this space possible.

To the other targets, I'm so sorry for what you've been through.

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## Deirdre Murphy

November 7, 2014 at 7:24 am

Laura, thank you so much for doing this research and sharing it. Thank you especially for the historical research that shows these vicious attacks predated RH's connection to feminist and other social justice issues. To me, that point is vital.

As to why that matters so much to me—I was involved with a twitter chat that RH found, #feministsf. Once RH started attacking, she showed up every time we had a chat. She attacked me, other regulars, and even guest moderators viciously, calling a request for polite discourse “racist” and worse. She attacked men in the chat for daring to call themselves feminists just because they were male. The chats stopped being fun and people stopped coming; as a result the chat died in 2012, though the hashtag is still in occasional use. It looks like the @requireshate twitter account is no more, and her tweets have been deleted, but the chats were archived. Her words still exist, though from what you say here, she was just picking up speed when we all stopped hanging out there to be attacked.

I would like to think that I was not really hurt by my relatively brief encounter with RH, but I know from my reactions to this report that that just isn't so. The personal attacks did undermine my confidence and enthusiasm, probably more than I realized. I feel shaky just remembering those chats, even now that I believe I was essentially a random target of a hate crime—like most of the other people attacked, I am a minority (in my case, female) writer of speculative fiction. Or maybe I am upset even more by learning I was attacked for the hell of it, for nothing of substance, just for being there, or for daring to talk in public about things I care about. As I write this response, I am debating whether I am comfortable putting my name on this comment. I probably will—I have shared enough details here for anyone with a smidge of net-surfing ability to figure it out. But I am not comfortable. I am upset and outraged and kind of shaky.

Aside from the personal attacks, losing the chat hurt. I kept thinking—if RH and her friends thought the chat should be run differently, why didn't one of them take over? It was set up so that anyone could volunteer to moderate one or more chats. If RH wanted to support women, POC, feminists and/or queer people, she had the opportunity to do so, but instead of doing that, this report shows RH just went to find other people to attack. Again, I think this speaks to the question of RH's true motive.

Thank you again for writing this, for showing that these tactics are not “justified anger”, but are simply harmful and hurtful and hateful. I believe that anger is a valid emotion, but having good reason to be angry does not excuse attacking other people with intent to harm. No matter what motivated it, this kind of behavior is Not OK—and some of the threats you quoted are probably criminal in the legal sense, though that is only a lay person's opinion.

Thank you for shining a light on this. Thank you for letting us all know we are not alone, and this abuse was exactly (and probably deliberately) that—it didn't just feel unfair and terrible, it was unfair and terrible.

Finally, I am starting to feel more hopeful, after drafting my comment and then reading the comments of those who arrived here before me—RH cannot stop us from writing and chatting and building a better world.

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## ex-friend of RH

November 7, 2014 at 7:34 am

That's all too true. The Cheap Moral Glow's addictive, but not very satisfying. You are always looking for the next hit and winterfox/RH was all too willing to give it. I was young and dumb believed that I was too smart to fall under the spell of a charismatic bully. I was wrong.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 8:26 am

This is all being done – don't worry. And by people who have much better resources than the average.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 8:35 am

I would like to second the fact that your fears are entirely justified. I have had a number of people make threats on line on in person, to myself, and to my community in my town. ALL of these were acted upon: the man who went on a sexual assault spree in the street, the man who turned out to have a gun collection and was subsequently prosecuted for rape and attempted cannibalism, the woman who turned up on my doorstep, at my house, armed with a knife and threatening to kill my lodger. All of these people have now been jailed or section, and they are examples, not the total.

Anyone who is afraid of people making violent threats on line is being rational, intelligent and justified in their fear, because you do not know if the person is going to act on it. One of RH's sockpuppets – I don't believe she has an impersonator – started on the 'I know where you live' route.

This is why I have involved the police.

I would add how sorry and furious I am that you, and these other people, have had to go through this experience.

For God's sake – if this was happening in an office, would people prattle on about 'Swiftian satire' and 'performance rage?' I think not.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 8:46 am

There is another angle to it, in fact. I'll email you.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 8:53 am

I want to add something. A person on another thread said, quite rightly, that pro SF writers were 'silent' on the issue, when BS was outed. Many of us – probably more than people realise – had to be, because by then discussions were being had and this report was already in its early stages. We felt pretty terrible that we were silent in the face of someone who was behaving like a predator, but we didn't want to jeopardise the impact of the report.

I want to give enormous kudos to anyone who spoke up during the last few weeks. You must have felt you were voices in the wilderness. It was a scary and brave thing to do: thank you all. Now our voices can be joined.

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## **Staubundsterne**

November 7, 2014 at 9:28 am

This, this, this. All of it. Usually I don't come back just to go "this," but this comment sums up my reaction so perfectly that I had to. I remember also being shocked and confused at the moderators (whom I respect a great deal) decision and reaction. All the best to you.

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## **Chris Lawson**

November 7, 2014 at 9:42 am



The eerie conjunction of accusing targets of being rape apologists \*and\* making threats of rape and sexual violence does not seem to me to be the work of someone with a genuine concern for people who have been raped.

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## **Jo Graham**

November 7, 2014 at 9:45 am

This is utterly shocking, but sadly not surprising. I hope that all her victims will read this and take heart, realizing they are not alone and that they do not and did not deserve the viciousness aimed at them.

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## **Chris Lawson**

November 7, 2014 at 9:46 am

Thanks, anonymous. I think this can't be stressed enough. Mental illness is not synonymous with appalling behaviour and it only stigmatises people with mental health problems to make the equivalence. Some of my favourite people have severe mental health issues and they would \*never\* do this.

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## **Justina Robson**

November 7, 2014 at 9:50 am

I second what Pat has said. Thank you for the work on this, Laura. I don't think any interpretation of events is required in these cases, nor even identification of the perpetrators or speculation on their mental states. The important part is displaying what is going on to the community as a whole so everyone may see what is going on, and you have done us all a favour. I look forward to seeing the issues arising from this addressed in other times and places with love and care.

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## **Chris Lawson**

November 7, 2014 at 9:57 am

Adding to TNH's comment: Making Light is the epitome of a well-moderated community blog. I assume it's hard work to maintain that level of moderation (TNH can correct me if it's easy!), but the result is very special.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 10:06 am

This is great! I would love to burble on about a mentoring program here but this space is for the survivors of RHB's cruelty to reach out in safety and confidentiality. Please join me on Facebook, where I'm going to talk about it there. My Facebook page is public—you don't have to be an official Facebook friend to post or comment, although I have plenty of room for more. I'm also on Twitter as @cadigan, and I can be reached through SFWA.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 10:23 am

Holy shit.

I'm sorry, that's my response. Holy shit. Thank you for speaking out.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 10:29 am

You know, if it *were* just a matter of Evil White Women against Women Of Colour, it would be so simple. You could tell the Enemy just by looking.

When was the last time life was that simple?

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## Pat Cadigan

November 7, 2014 at 10:32 am

Trish, I will always have your back. And you're a kick-ass, dynamite writer.

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## Pat Cadigan

November 7, 2014 at 10:42 am

Deirdre, I hope other survivors of RHB's cruelty read your post thoughtfully.

For some reason, we all like to believe that we aren't *that* deeply affected by bad things that happen online. But as you can see from reading other posts here, people are having seriously intense reactions just to talking about their experiences. They tremble, they cry, they even throw up—classic PTSD reactions. Some feared talking about those because they thought these reactions were over the top, unwarranted. But they aren't.

I'm not a medical professional so I can't speak to how or why people have PTSD after RHB. If it were just one or two people, I might be tempted to think it was simply a fragility inherent in those people. But *so many*? At this point, the medical reason doesn't concern me—what concerns me is that their PTSD is *real*, and if I've got an ounce of human decency, I will try to help them however I can.

Even if it's just to say I believe you, I'm sorry it happened to you, if I can prevent it from happening to you again, I will.

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## Pamela Freeman

November 7, 2014 at 11:13 am

Laura,

Many thanks for the time and effort and heroic fairness which this report required. I've never encountered RH/BS in any guise (though maybe I should check my reviews, in case I overlooked it – I often don't read reviews).

What has astonished me, reading all the accounts, is the sheer amount of time this person has invested in hurting people. It reminded me of some recent research which is relevant to the 'why did she do it?' question and which undercuts the 'she must be mentally ill' excuse. Here is the abstract and the link:

'In two online studies (total N = 1215), respondents completed personality inventories and a survey of their Internet commenting styles. Overall, strong positive associations emerged among online commenting frequency, trolling enjoyment, and troll identity, pointing to a common construct underlying the measures. Both studies revealed similar patterns of relations between trolling and the Dark Tetrad of personality: trolling correlated positively with sadism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, using both enjoyment ratings and identity scores. Of all personality measures, sadism showed the most robust associations with trolling and, importantly, the relationship was specific to trolling behavior. Enjoyment of other online activities, such as chatting and debating, was unrelated to sadism. Thus cyber-trolling appears to be an Internet manifestation of everyday sadism.'

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886914000324>

So, the answer to the question: why does she do it? is: she enjoys it.

To those people who have been targets of the abuse, my sympathy and my admiration for still being here, still daring to communicate.

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## staubundsterne

November 7, 2014 at 11:21 am

I hear you, and I am so sorry wf/rh/bs targeted you. This, to me, isn't minor, it's huge! I am so sorry that her words affect your writing and I sincerely wish you all the best and that you heal.

(Also, wf/rh/bs has been a stalker and predator loooong before her writing career started. Her abuse then turned into a tool to suppress competition AND get a rise out of it (presumably). She just found another use and channel for her abuse, making it a win-win for her.

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## Thomas M. Wagner

November 7, 2014 at 11:29 am

Just learning about all of this, and am deeply dismayed, disgusted, and most of all, gobsmacked. As an online SFF reviewer of over 13 years now, I've always prided myself on one motto: "It isn't personal." A book review is and must always be about the *book*. "Requires Hate," on that criterion, was never a reviewer, just another internet thug. Very sad.

I will say that I have a *very* short list of writers I have blacklisted, because I find their personal character sufficiently distasteful or objectionable that I simply do not wish to read or discuss their work either favorably or unfavorably, or contribute to increasing their public profile through such discussion, either on my site or YouTube channel or on social media. I don't attack or menace these people. I just toss them down the memory hole. I've now added Benjanun Sriduangkaew to my blacklist. That's just my own choice, and not one I insist anyone should feel obligated to emulate.

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## Dolorosa

November 7, 2014 at 11:41 am

No, it was fantasywithbite. It's still trundling along, but it never really recovered from the double-whammy of Winterfox's vitriol and the general move of fandom to Tumblr.

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## Anna Feruglio

November 7, 2014 at 11:50 am

I am so sorry Tricia. I saw it going down and I didn't know enough to speak up. I wanted to be just didn't know enough. I knew you and Rochita were hurting but I could never have imagined the extent of the malignity. I wanted to but I just didn't know. And like many others, my coping mechanism since Racefail is to not engage, because if I do I will go crazy, it will consume all my emotional energy and break me. It's not a choice, it's not that I think you shouldn't feed trolls – it's just that I learned in a lifetime of depression that to survive I have to retreat. And it angers me more than I can say that it makes me less of a human being. I still speak up when my friends are attacked, and I am mindful (for having been on the other side) how painful and destructive the silence of the bystanders can be when you are being attacked. What saved me from being an Evil Ally back in the day was that one person I hurt – Patrick Nielsen Hayden – reached out to me, in some pain more than anger. And overnight it's like the scales fell from my eyes. There were a lot of people during Racefail that taught me a lot, and a lot of people who just plain gloated in scoring points. I have very little liking for them and I find it hard to forgive them even now, and they make taking a stand for fairness and justice and diversity and tolerance a lot harder.

I almost wrote "fighting" up there. But of course writing comments to a blog is not fighting. My parents' generation survived – and in the person of my oldest uncles, fought in – a war in which people were actually fighting the SS, with old rifles and none of the support of an army. The people who got me the vote, with hunger strikes and accepting the violence of the police, fought. The National Union of Mineworkers fought. You, Laura, you fought. Fighting is action. But writing scathing words in a blog is not fighting. It is taking a stand, and a good thing it is too, but I think a lot of the people who loved RH's rhetoric thought they were fighting, because emotionally it felt like it, and they were really not doing anything of the kind. They felt, by allying them to her, that they were doing something brave and heroic, something effective, because it hurt their targets. But inflicting emotional damage is not the same as changing the world.

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## Dolorosa

November 7, 2014 at 12:09 pm

Can I also put in a recommendation for ‘Throne of the Crescent Moon’ by Saladin Ahmed? It’s an excellent fantasy-adventure story in a Middle Eastern-inspired setting, with really charming characters. I have a particular soft spot for the curmudgeonly mentor figure who just wishes the teenagers in his charge would stop constantly dragging him into life-threatening situations.

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## Anon of Yore

November 7, 2014 at 12:11 pm

A user named **daveon** at James N’s blog said a couple of weeks ago that he has a friend who apparently lives in Thailand and has met BS’ “new persona” (his words): *“I’ve also got friends who’ve been hurt by the RH/WF persona AND at least one, who is a somewhat special case, who was insulted in person by the new persona over whom they chose to spend the rest of their life with.”*

<http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5132567.html?thread=96482583#t96482583>

Nick Mamatas’ replies to **daveon** about this are particularly interesting, too. It sounds (and I’m speculating here based on what NM has said) that he’s surprised to hear BS was ever in Thailand in the first place. Given he said about BS, *“I seriously doubt that RH’s current publishing name is her real name,”* I think it’s safe to say NM knows exactly who BS/RH is. Or he wants us all to *think* he knows who BS is.

<http://james-nicoll.livejournal.com/5121496.html?thread=96293592#t96293592>

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## Dolorosa

November 7, 2014 at 12:26 pm

I suspect I was lurking in several of those communities, and what you’ve described is exactly how I felt. I was so afraid of her then that I said nothing, and sat helplessly by as she ran discussion communities into the ground. As her various pseudonyms have come to light – first when the Winterfox persona was revealed to be RH, and recently when Benjanun Sriduangkaew was linked to both personae – my greatest fear was that her abuse, and the sheer terror it caused, would be denied or its harm minimised. It’s been really heartening to see that this has not been the case, that people are taking it seriously, and that something positive is going to come out of this mess.

RH thrived by isolating people, by making them afraid to speak up and making them doubt their own experiences and identities. We must respond to that by talking, by supporting each other, and above all by believing victims and bystanders.

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## Anon of Yore

November 7, 2014 at 12:28 pm

Laura, I want to thank you for this post. It’s terrific, well sourced and exactly what our community needs right now – thank you so much.

I don’t have any significant story to tell about RH, personally. On JournalFen in 2006 and 2007, when she was Winterfox, she made some kind of error in grammar that embarrassed her enough she lashed out with violent hyperbole. I’ve tried finding it but JF is impossible for me to search, so I have no links. But I do remember when people on JF, especially Fandom Wank, occasionally brought up that over-reaction, she would ignore everyone *except* those she considered soft targets. You’d see in the comment trees, it would be so obvious she was picking people she thought she could overwhelm, and ignoring people (mods, long-time regulars) she didn’t feel confident attacking.

The reason I’m going anonymous here is complicated but I feel necessary. Laura, you should have my email from the reply form, so if you want to email me so I can confirm to you my identity I would be happy to.

Again, thanks for this post.

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 7, 2014 at 12:51 pm

The basic circumstance that allowed Requires Hate to flourish is the feeling that getting published and having a viable career are a worse-than zero sum game: there are only so many pieces of the pie and the pie keeps shrinking every year. If your strategy is to depose the competition, you are part of the problem.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 12:53 pm

Pat, thank you for saying this.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 12:54 pm

Janis, thank you my friend for saying this.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 12:55 pm

Kathryn, thank you for commenting. It is my hope that bringing attention to this situation will help prevent future occurrences of this type of unwarranted stalking and harassment. Sister.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 1:00 pm

It's about attempting to stop people from expressing their own thoughts – for whatever reason. In this case, it looks like envy and desire to suck the air out of the room, seeking the perceived weakest targets first. Laura's stats show that the person didn't want to take on the typical white guys. Because she/he knew they were not the easiest, first targets. If this individual is nominated for a Campbell, then they somewhat achieved their temporary goal – as absurd as it is by any real standard.

What is the point, if people have spent years writing to capricious editorial standards, they must now fear writing their own work for fear of attack from capricious Catfishing internet harassers?

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## K

November 7, 2014 at 1:02 pm

I would love to see such a program. I'm a disabled writer, with autism as my primary diagnosis, and I struggle to be at home in the writing community.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 1:06 pm

>>Mostly I've gotten over it, but every single time I sit down to write a new project, I have to give myself a pep talk about how I have to write what I want, and I the representations that am going to produce will be as honest, fair and good as I can make them.>>

Please don't give up. Please hold love in your heart and know that the overwhelming majority of people are not like this person. They are decent people who want to read your best work.

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## silent observer

November 7, 2014 at 1:09 pm

It is important not to let the shaming language shut down this point. While avoiding internet-diagnosis, it's pretty clear that the pattern of observable behavior exhibited by RH is sociopathic. The problem that arose is not just the sociopathic behavior of a single person. The ravings of a single person can be dismissed. The problem is with people who back up, support and empower this behavior. The problem lies in online communities where this sort of behavior can so easily take root. RH caused people to fear her, not simply because of what she said, because because of what others believed.

I'm completely indifferent to the individual who posted under the handle of RH, to her mental state or therapeutic prospects. I don't want to speculate about it. But I insist that it's vitally important for people to ask themselves how this observably toxic behavior isn't immediately shut down in online communities.

Or it will keep happening and more people will be harmed.

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## Piers Beckley

November 7, 2014 at 1:10 pm

Requires Hate and one of her notable supporters bullied a friend of mine off Twitter a couple of years back. At the time, I just thought of them as common-or-garden trolls. A forensic examination like this makes it much less likely that this sort of abuse will continue in the future.

Thank you for putting this together.

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## Amy Sterling Casil

November 7, 2014 at 1:23 pm

Stalking, unfortunately, is a very seldom-prosecuted crime, whether it's online or in the real world. People can pretty much say anything they want online and it has on many occasions cost lives. One of the best-known cases is the Megan Meier case. The 45-year old woman who orchestrated the online harassment that caused Megan to take her life was prosecuted; she was not convicted. That was a long time ago. It still goes on – perhaps once a month or more often. This beautiful young girl took her own life last year: <http://nypost.com/2013/05/23/12-year-old-girl-hangs-herself-after-being-cyberbullied-by-classmates-sources/>.

As I stated to my friends yesterday, those of us who have survived unwarranted online harassment and stalking, and those of strong heart and good character, must find the strength to take action when we see it recurring. As it does. Laura has shown courage and fortitude in putting this information. May we all remember and have the fortitude to follow her example in the future. May we have the character and strength to defend those who are abused simply for being who they are and expressing their true thoughts. Especially, those with whom we may disagree. May we enable them to have freedom of expression, dignity and respect without fear.

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## Jordan

November 7, 2014 at 1:24 pm

It's even more than just not stooping to her level. In fact, getting people so angry that they insult her back is part of how she keeps the pattern of harassment going. When victims or bystanders (understandably) are so shocked and outraged by her behavior that they rise to the bait, she points to that and takes it out of context to "prove" that she is the victim and others are the ones targeting her. This helps her supporters to keep believing that she's a poor persecuted soul and not a manipulative bully.

Not trying to single you out here, Jeremy. Again, I understand your reaction, and of course you've already reconsidered it. Just noting that making people lose their cool is not just a side-effect, it's part of how she operates and keeps getting away with this.

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## Jennifer

November 7, 2014 at 1:44 pm

\*applause\*

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## Tanya Avakian

November 7, 2014 at 1:46 pm

I am here stating my unequivocal support of Rachel Manija Brown and everyone else who has come forward about the abusive and threatening behavior of the woman, man or collective known as Benjanun Sriduangkaew, Requires Hate, Winterfox, and several other aliases.

I have never had a personal experience with her/him/them and never expect or hope to. I absolutely believe what many people have been brave enough to come forward and say. This behavior is unacceptable and there is no longer any excuse for not knowing about it, or how far it has gone.

The following comments are my own entirely. They do not represent the opinions of anyone other than me. They are not to be used to create guilt by association for any of Sriduangkaew's victims.

I do not wish to demonize anybody who still supports her/him/them, makes excuses, casts doubt on the victims, etc. I do not think that serves a purpose. I do not doubt anyone's sincerity and idealism in other contexts, or the contributions they have made to the sff community. I do not believe in moral panic for any reason at all, and consider that we must leave it up to each individual how to deal with their network of relationships in light of this scandal. But I also do not believe anybody can still ignore the truth for other than mixed motives.

Benjanun Sriduangkaew is free to write and to publish, and her work should be considered on its creative merits. I have read it and find it shows talent, though it is derivative. Her nomination for a Hugo or other awards is separate from the content of her character, and properly so. It is however quite appropriate that editors and other professionals have been alerted about her.

She has recently attempted to repair her reputation by issuing apologies. Her victims should each remain at liberty to tell her what would constitute an apology to them. I propose a course she should take if she wishes to apologize to a community she has probably torn apart. She should carry on her career as a writer while abstaining entirely from social media, blogs, GoodReads, or any other online venue she has previously used to harass others. She should have no internet footprint at all and should not communicate with fans by email. She should in short abstain from any and all online social capital of her own creation. Then her work will be just that, her work. It is feasible, though not easy, for a writer to work this way, and it would put her on a level playing field with those writers to whom she has effectively barred the internet for years.

This is not silencing or policing her. Nobody has or should have the power to enforce such a move. If she doesn't do it, it's her right—just as it is the right of anyone else to ignore what critics want them to do. But she has offered an apology. That gives the community upon which she has preyed the right to name terms of restitution, if she's interested. This is one way to do that. Then the ball is in her court.

And I still wouldn't trust her.

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## Somhairle Kelly

November 7, 2014 at 1:52 pm

Back when I used to review myself, I remember backing up RH on a few occasions – I think only against white men, but that could well be my memory spinning self-justifying lies – and proofread a couple of her reviews before she posted them. Her lack of compassion bothered me, but I wasn't going to police her anger, so I made more allowances for her than I would have for others. I'm not sure how I escaped the attacks others have had for liking books she disapproved of – no, wait, could it have possibly been because I'm not a WOC or otherwise a competitor to her? I think that might well be why!

Benjanun Sriduangkaew I'd never interacted with – I knew the name only as someone whose writing friends liked, one of the rising wave of diverse SFF authors, whose work I'd made a note to check out sometime. I think now I shan't be doing that, but will keep an eye on the list of

things RH panned instead.

For helping to enable her, and to anyone I hurt myself with a lack of compassion, I'm sorry.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 2:00 pm

And I think a number of her supporters enjoy it, too. They might not quite have the bottle, as we say in the UK, to do it independently, but they'll join in if they see someone else doing it. Maybe they've been hurt and want to hit back, even if the target is not the original cause of their pain, or maybe they just like seeing people getting trashed.

One of the people who joined in rape and death threats on Twitter to a leading feminist here, who had the temerity to suggest the awful idea that Jane Austen's face be put on the new £10 note, said that she hadn't known who the woman was. She saw people being horrible, and joined in.

She's now in jail.

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## **Amy Sterling Casil**

November 7, 2014 at 2:05 pm

PTSD is real and it absolutely can be brought on by online attacks. I was diagnosed with complex PTSD in 2007 following a web page that accused me and my then-15 year old daughter of murdering my baby Anthony, who died in an accident at home in January, 2005. This web page was e-mailed to a mailing list of over 30,000 SF/F fans and publicized in other ways. I had multiple precipitating incidents, as I am also the survivor of more than one violent assault and the adult survivor of physical and mental abuse. So the web page was the final "straw" that precipitated the symptoms. At the time, what kept me alive and encouraged me to seek help was the knowledge I was the only one who could care for my daughter, who had herself been grievously injured.

If people are experiencing symptoms, the sooner therapy, and if needed, medication, is provided after the injury, the quicker the recovery and greater the chance of healing. For a physical, in-person incident, therapy that begins immediately has been shown to greatly reduce later symptoms.

I participated in an online PTSD community founded by an Australian man that was extremely positive. I do not think it is there any longer, but this community looks similar, and is anonymous: <http://www.huddl.org/>

It's important to understand that it's not "mental" or "volitional." The symptoms are part of the body's natural response to an attack, including hypervigilance, flashbacks, recurring dreams, inability to sleep, avoidance, anger, guilt, shame, sleeplessness, inability to eat — and striking out at those you love most, and who love you. In my case, I slept little for two weeks, my heart felt like it was going to come out of my body, and during the daytime, I heard my baby crying for me and would search for him, unable to find him. Again, my PTSD symptoms were a result of multiple incidents which were tipped over the edge by the web page — which followed over 10 years of real-world and online harassment, not dissimilar to what has been described here, with the exception that — the stalker/harasser actually attacked/threatened in real life — calls to employers, home break-ins, constant threats via e-mail, etc.

PTSD is actually a survival mechanism, and about 1/3 of people are biologically predisposed to it. It is real and physical. It is the result of biochemical changes in the body responding to a threat. That is why some people with PTSD are helped by medication. Therapy helps by enabling the person's own body to heal itself and recover equilibrium. My heart felt like it was coming out of my body because adrenaline and other "fight or flight" chemicals were surging through it continuously. People with PTSD consider suicide because it will be the "ultimate flight" and escape from the abuse, as illogical as that sounds to someone who isn't experiencing what those with PTSD do. In the online community where I participated, there were people working every day to learn how to ... well, to learn how to live again. While one has PTSD, one cannot be said to be fully-alive.

Another issue is Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACES. This is a resource I have found very helpful: <http://acestoohigh.com/>

Those who have suffered ACES are also vulnerable to injuries from later abuse in a more serious way than those who have not suffered them. ACES cause our society incalculable harm. ACES know no racial, gender, ethnic or other boundary. Every child who experiences a significant



number of ACES is at greater risk of real illness later in life. I am 10 out of 10 on the ACE scale. When I finally went for help for PTSD, the doctor asked me a series of questions that correspond to the ACE questionnaire (I am not part of the study which established these facts). At the end, she said, “You are a very lucky person. You should be either in a hospital or dead.”

Actually, she said “strong” and this has been a source of pride to me. It is no longer. Now, in my healing journey, I wish to be “weak.” I want to have some sense of what it is others who aren’t like me experience. I do not want to feel as though I must take up arms and battle at every step. I want to know what it’s like to simply express myself without fear of retribution or harassment or denigration.

Or being ignored.

I understand very well what has been suffered here. And I’m not “better enough” that I wouldn’t attack this individual wholeheartedly were they, or any of their helpers, to come forward — that’s the “pride” survivorship gave to me. I want the victims to be well again, to be better than me. To live fully without fear. To be happy. To know they did nothing wrong in any way.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 2:15 pm

Absolutely. Likewise the attacks on the principal targeted demographic with which RH ostensibly identifies.

That contradiction goes a fair distance toward impugning any identity claims — such as they are.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 2:17 pm

Very glad to hear that, Liz.

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## **Amy Sterling Casil**

November 7, 2014 at 2:26 pm

Kathryn, it was always a source of amazement to me that, once I realized the genuine underlying motive for the tragedy with Alan’s family and all later events – was a burning desire to “be a famous sci fi writer.”

Really? I just had to illustrate, give a brief bio of Isaac Asimov, and explain the basics of his career as a sci fi/science writer to my students. Not one of them had the least idea who he was, or anything he ever said or did or wrote.

So. Not. Worth. It.

Like fighting to be the first pig out of the sty to be slaughtered.

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Pingback: [On Battling Trolls](#) | [T.L. Knighton](#)

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## **J.M. Frey**

November 7, 2014 at 3:12 pm

Thank you all for your overwhelming support and kindness. I feel all snugly, like I could knit your kindness into a warm gold-coloured scarf and wrap it around myself over and over to stay safe.

I hope everyone else who has experienced this feels just as safe and cocooned. You people are all awesome.

I won’t give up. ^ \_ ^

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## **J.M. Frey**

November 7, 2014 at 3:14 pm

Timothy is fantastic! You don't have to read/listen to "Alex and the Ironic Gentlemen" first, but I would suggest you do, because then Timothy will have much more depth, and little in-jokes. Kress did a good job of writing a second book that didn't rely on having read the first one.

I love Alex so much I adapted it for a local elementary school to perform as a one-act play.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 3:24 pm

With all respect — I don't think so much high-volume violent cyber-stalking suggests much in the way of overall balanced mental health. I also believe it is no judgment on anything other than the nature of the actions of this one person to find qualities of real emotional imbalance and illness here.

One wouldn't stop shy of identifying a child abuser or sexual predator as probable candidates for mental illness just because it might make the diagnosis look bad. I'm not at all sure that \*not\* to question the potential limits of such outright pathological behavior as RH's wouldn't be simply irresponsible. By all accounts, over time RH's tactics have shown a clear trend toward escalation. They are obviously not at all rational, and the fact of there being over a decade's worth of her feculence suggests that the trait, whatever its origins, compelling RH to act as she does runs deep in her nature.

Considering the emotional consequences to some of the victims, it may be prudent, at least in the interests of self-preservation, to recognize that what looks like simple social despicability on the surface could be something that merits a closer look for very real reasons of self-protection of her targets. I'll cite Liz Williams' earlier examples posted here from her own experience with verbal threats as perfectly demonstrating the point.

I have had (for many years) the benefit of ongoing care for mental illness. I find nothing shaming whatever about discussions on the matter, or of RH's probable need for treatment. I suspect that may be because I have never granted any credence to stigma. You can't see my diagnosis. If I didn't speak up about it, nobody would know.

I frequently and voluntarily speak about it because mental illness is so widely misunderstood. And frankly, for myself, I rather resent the implication that mental illness makes for a flimsy, frangible disposition, or that I could in fact even BE shamed by anyone's ungenerous (probably uninformed) view of anyone with such a diagnosis.

That said, armchair differentials are probably silly and quite authentically stereotypical. Even so, my position is that it would be unwise to underestimate this RH person's capacity for harmful behavior. The current situation could exacerbate things beyond where they already were; I don't think it's out of order to extrapolate a little, and acknowledge that she could very well unchain the crazy for real. Police reports: yes. Evidence gathering: yes.

Your mileage may vary.

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Pingback: [The Psychopath in the SFF-sphere - Gregory Frost](#)

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 3:46 pm

If you are on Facebook, send me a private message there if you would prefer not to post a public comment, to register your interest. While I am not on the autistic spectrum myself, I can understand what it is to feel out of place.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 3:59 pm

Don't be too hard on yourself for being wrong.

In order to have understood what was going on, you would have to have been as...disturbed...as winterfox/RH. Take heart in knowing that you are not.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 4:10 pm

Well, I'm mentally ill—I am clinically depressed—and I don't read the remarks about RH as "mental health shaming." I have strong feelings about removing the stigma of mental illness, mainly so that people who need treatment won't be shamed out of getting it.

I am not qualified to make any sort of diagnosis, and if I were, I wouldn't do it for free. However, I know enough to know unhealthy behaviours when I see them.

Just my two medicated cents.

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 4:22 pm

Jane, that's my take on it. I would describe this as a series of hate crimes and in a civilised society, hate crimes are not just unacceptable, they are illegal.

This isn't a matter of some people whose feelings got hurt. People have described being unable to work, of trembling, crying, throwing up, of actually being afraid for their physical safety.

Back in the day, Damon Knight and William Atheling could eviscerate a novel without breaking a sweat. But I don't think the subjects of their criticism feared for their lives or suffered PTSD.

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## **Jens**

November 7, 2014 at 4:30 pm

I am thankful for each and every author, for their time and effort they put into their work, for the worlds we all can experience through their characters.

I'm not a writer, but have been avid reader since childhood, and I appreciate a believable and consistent "world" within a story, book, or even series.

Fill this world with characters, give them each a background (to be revealed when it fits the plot) to explain their motives, morals, quirks, urges, etc. and let the readers experience the story through them.

Plot holes, inconsistencies, and failure to research basic facts can ruin a story.

Feedback should be as constructive as possible, so that the author can improve and the next story can be better, more eloquent, etc. Just look at the now successful authors who started out writing fanfic, and used constructive criticism to improve their work.

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## **No Acceptable Targets**

November 7, 2014 at 4:34 pm

RH is obviously very good at manipulating people, but I'm sure people affected by this whole mess appreciate your apology even if they hold you blameless.

But...

"I remember backing up RH on a few occasions – I think only against white men, but that could well be my memory spinning self-justifying

lies”

I find this disturbing. The idea that there are appropriate targets for the kind of behavior RH engaged in is part of what enabled her to do it for so long. People in this thread and elsewhere have talked about how she co-opted the language of social justice to justify her attacks, and that many people hesitated to step in or moderate her because they didn’t feel comfortable silencing someone they thought was “punching up.”

What you seem to be suggesting (and I’m trying not to read too much into it) is that you would feel more comfortable knowing that you supported this behavior “only against white men.” Or at the very least, that your support of RH’s tactics — even if you’re referring only to her review tactics — would be more justified if it took place only in the context of tearing into the work of work men. This strikes me as problematic, even more so because I think many people in the SFF community share that view.

I think Liz Bourke said it very well in the piece that Laura linked to above: “Even advocacy in good faith cannot justify abusive behaviour.” I really, really hope that’s one of the lessons the SFF community takes from this.

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Pingback: [damages](#) | [Karavansara](#)

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## Madame Hardy

November 7, 2014 at 4:44 pm

A couple of people have pointed out that RH *destroyed* a successful moderated community, 50books-poc, by coopting the moderators. RH didn’t just assemble a mob; she also persuaded some well-intentioned people to look the other way by skillful use of rhetoric. When you’re dealing with a sufficiently competent manipulator, many of the systems set up by decent human beings fail to cope.

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## Arzarosz Rzangsur XXXI

November 7, 2014 at 4:57 pm

Sad thing is that from my experience charming usually means bad news. Usually it means either bullies and sexual molesters or people who are charming just because they want money. When it comes to my real friends (well, maybe friends is a too strong word), I can’t think of any that I could call charming.

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## Jeff

November 7, 2014 at 5:05 pm

It is really amazing to see this come together and the support for the community that’s manifesting for those in need (now and future). I encountered RH’s reviews/attacks a few years ago – and they affected me as a reader to the point where I did not feel safe commenting on books or sharing thoughts on author’s blogs/social media (twitter or FB). It’s taken me quite a while to even be able to reach out to authors that are creating the things I love and let them know that their creations have found a home with me. And if that’s how I feel as a reader in the SFF community, I can not conceive of the damage that’s been done to the authors RH has attacked.

Thank you for putting this all together for us – authors, reviewers and readers alike. I do see SFF as a community and not a purely business relationship of marketplace buyers and sellers, and bringing people together like this to make us stronger really drives that home. I’m proud to be a member of a community that works to build, not destroy.

My support to all of those that have been affected by RH’s vitriol. I hope that you’re able to feel the support that the community is offering and that it helps you to regain your strength and your voices.

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## Pamela Troy

November 7, 2014 at 5:12 pm

As a Livejournal blogger, I was only peripherally aware of Winterfox, but as someone who’s been online for years, much of what I’m reading

here sounds horribly familiar. An online personality who reacts to even mild disagreement with almost insane hostility; who gathers a like-minded online posse to launch attacks on people he/she dislikes; who does this under cover of some cause, whether it be progressivism or the free market, feminism or anti-feminism, racism or anti-racism, even the purity of literature... I've seen it perpetrated by various individuals in various forms online since the 1990s. It's chilling and disheartening to read that this person had a concrete effect on other people's efforts to write and be published, but not surprising.

I'd just like to make one point about something that gives people like this such power, that not only enables them to bully others into silence, online or off, but inspires others who should know better to cheer them on and join in. We too frequently romanticize hatred. We imagine it indicates strength and righteousness when in fact, it indicates the opposite. We work out all kinds of justifications for personal viciousness, calling it "satire," or "venting." We tell ourselves when the victim cries out in pain, "Oh, s/he'll get over it" and if s/he doesn't, we say it's because s/he's weak. Or, we paint the victims as so contemptible that their humanity is unworthy of thought. We join in because it's thrilling to imagine ourselves marching forward beneath a righteous flag with hardened jaws and narrowed eyes, just like Clint Eastwood. Cruelty looks like purity then. I wish I could say this was a problem on only one side of the political and religious spectrum but it's not. It's a human problem.

And we need to keep that in mind every time we get very angry.

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## **Bergamot**

November 7, 2014 at 5:28 pm

One of the authors RH has blasted against (though not one she seems to have made a career out of) is Ellen Kushner, author of the very excellent Swords of Riverside novels and the standalone *Thomas the Rhymor*. Needless to say, they're all highly recommended!

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## **Kris**

November 7, 2014 at 5:34 pm

Cindy Pon is a dedicated champion of diverse voices in fiction, and is supportive of emerging writers in many real, kind and genuine ways.

The fact that she is on the list of those targeted is particularly revealing of the disconnect between RH's empty "social justice" rhetoric and the reality of her actions.

I love the idea of supporting those authors who were affected by buying, promoting and reading their work.

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## **Bryn**

November 7, 2014 at 5:50 pm

I don't think "only against white men" is any kind of excuse. News flash – white men are people too.

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## **Laurel Amberdine**

November 7, 2014 at 5:56 pm

Gah. I'm so sorry. I believe you.

Just bought your book. Will write a review when I can.

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## **Emma Bull**

November 7, 2014 at 6:00 pm

Thank you, Anna. This is insightful and heartening.

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## **etumu**

November 7, 2014 at 6:08 pm

I've been reading and witnessing, and feeling more horrified as more people describe their reactions to the attacks. As a survivor of physical assault, I too remember the PTSD — the unpredictable fears, the paranoia, the reality behind the feelings — and I want to say that in time, with help, the immediate effect subsides. I'll never be completely rid of the flinch response, but I know what causes it. I hope the same will be true for every one of you in this select group.

Also, this is just to say that I have zoomed over to the ebooks and purchased Triptych, as well as the rest of N.K. Jemisin's trilogy (my bad for not keeping up). I'll be looking for Cindy Pon, and all the other writers who were targets. It's a little thing, but it's a way for me to show some solidarity. When I was recovering from my assault, it was the little things that helped at odd times, and so I attempt to pass this on, through whatever means I can.

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## **Emma Bull**

November 7, 2014 at 6:11 pm

My god, I'm so sorry. Publishing a book should be exciting and joyful (and yes, a little nervous-making). You didn't deserve any of that, no matter what you wrote, and it grieves me terribly. We talk about the "gatekeepers" of publishing; your experience had more in common with the troll under the bridge.

No one benefits from discouraging and frightening a writer. No one. I wish I had a sidewalk that needed breaking up or something, because I long to do useful work with a sledgehammer.

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Pingback: [A Case Study in Trolling | File 770](#)

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## **Colum Paget**

November 7, 2014 at 6:28 pm

# Colum, I know you have spent a lot of time thinking about this. I owe you an apology.

You don't owe me any apology Laura, I'm very grateful for what you've done here, I couldn't express what it means to me to finally have all this out in the open.

I wasn't quoting you in any sense, I was referring to arguments that I've heard used by RH's defenders.

I take your point that this may not be the best place to get into the 'deeper discussion', though I am concerned that if we ignore the structural aspects of this whole sorry mess, then we might descend into 'witchhunt' mentality, and I for one don't want that.

Colum

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## **Somhairle Kelly**

November 7, 2014 at 6:29 pm

Oh, I basically agree entirely there, and I'm not making excuses for myself — I don't feel good about having done it at all. I think the point I was (clumsily) trying to make is that the books by people like me were ones where I felt able to judge the success or otherwise of their writing on feminist grounds — the only ones where I could even consider myself punching across let alone up. These days, my opinion is that I probably shouldn't be punching at all.

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## **Dave**

November 7, 2014 at 6:29 pm

I have not been targeted by this individual but as someone who has suffered trauma as a result of bullying, I just wanted to say that I have found reading these comments incredibly moving and cathartic. I have enormous respect for all of you and I really hope this helps you to put it behind you. Thank you, Laura.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 6:38 pm

# Colum Im not sure that RH was supported by powerful people in the community:

I don't want to go too far into that, because no good will come of it, but it's my experience that she had a lot of influential backers.

# What \*did\* happen is that lots of us (see Teresas comment) blocked, muted and turned away.

That's a really interesting point that I'd never thought of before. It explains some of the silence around this issue. People blocked, and then didn't see what was going on. However, for many of her victims (or at least for me) this created the impression of a kind of 'official silence'.

It doesn't explain all the blogposts that I saw explicitly in her defence, though.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 6:40 pm

Problem is, if we ever get to know what was behind her rampage of rage, it'll likely be something really bad. That doesn't excuse what she's done, but we'd do well to imagine that we already know the cause, and behave accordingly.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 6:47 pm

# We NEED people to be righteously angry with us,

I don't. I didn't need people to be 'angry' with me when I was a catholic kid growing up in Birmingham after the pub bombings, and I don't need people to be 'angry' with me because of the color of my skin now. My granddad was a prisoner of war in Burma during WWII, and you can imagine he was angry about that, but we didn't need that anger either. We don't need anyone to be angry at entire groups of people, because anger is something that you direct at an event: Something happens, it makes you angry, then the thing is fixed, you're not angry any more. If you've got anger that's directed at people, or groups of people, by definition of who they are, then that's not anger you're feeling.

I'm not angry at RH or at the SF&F community, I'm angry that something like this happened, and I'm angry that I think it will happen again, but I'm not angry with people as people.

I'm just very, very disappointed.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 6:51 pm

# At this point it isn't Benjamin that concerns me. It is the next Requires Hate, the one who checks all the boxes on the should be listened to and deferred to form, that we should be concerning ourselves with.

This is my worry too, because the next one will be better, will know what some of the mistakes are, and will build more carefully.

# Social justice theory is never going to replace critical thought and compassionate action.

But it evidently has, or we wouldn't even be having this conversation.

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## Tanya Avakian

November 7, 2014 at 6:52 pm

Enough people in the creative community suffer from some kind of diagnosed disability, “mental” or otherwise, or are simply not neurotypical, that at least half the time when we wonder about somebody’s mental competency, it’s meant at least in part to excuse their behavior.

I am aware that for many people, it is offensive to hear a person being called crazy. I am also aware that it can be offensive to hear a person’s behavior being put down to health issues because of the assumption that the health issues are being stigmatized. However, I believe it’s really important to remember how often the people using this language are doing so to make allowances. And make more allowances. And make more allowances after that.

I try not to do so in public anymore for reasons of wanting to protect those who make the allowances, in addition to being aware that it is a language usage issue for at least some. A lot of people have problems. It wouldn’t surprise me in the least to hear that Sriduangkaew has some serious ones based on her behavior, if she’s one person. But people who are abusive to others generally have a particular kind of problem in addition to whatever else they have, which is addiction. Addiction to rage, addiction to control, addiction to causing pain and fear.

Addiction is not offensive to other mentally unhealthy people to name. It is defined by a pattern of behavior. It almost always leads to other patterns of behavior, including lying about one’s victims to make them appear abusive, evil, racist, ableist, dishonest, stalkers, and, yes, crazy. Addicts deserve compassion. But they do not deserve a free pass to destroy lives. Nor does it help them to make allowances for them.

My own two medicated cents.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 6:53 pm

A few commenters, I think, have mentioned concerns that anger over RH could have a chilling effect on legitimate negative reviews of books. But Pat Cadigan pointed out that Damon Knight and James Blish (as William Atheling) could skewer a book’s failings without skewering the author. That’s the line, right there. Dorothy Parker said, “And it is that word ‘hummy,’ my darlings, that marks the first place in *The House at Pooh Corner* at which Tonstant Weader fwowed up.” She didn’t then go on to accuse A. A. Milne of pedophilia.

Other commenters have pointed out another line RH crossed as a reviewer: distorting or outright lying about the content of a book in order to object to it. No review, good or bad, should be based on the back cover copy, a publisher’s blurb, the first chapter, hearsay, willful misreading and misinterpretation, or personal approval of or animosity toward the author. To base a review on anything but the text of the book, and the whole text, seems to me an abuse of the form. It does damage to the genre we love.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 6:54 pm

# What saved me from being an Evil Ally back in the day was that one person I hurt Patrick Nielsen Hayden reached  
# out to me, in some pain more than anger. And overnight its like the scales fell from my eyes.

This is what I thought would happen when I tried to reach out to RH.

I guess I’m no Patrick Nielsen Hayden 😊

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## Arzarosz Rzangsur XXXI

November 7, 2014 at 6:57 pm

Generally, she’s not just scared about police. She generally goes for people who are unaccustomed to being attacked. People who would be shocked and terrified by her behaviour. She may be a famous community destroyer and harasser of author, but I know her from one



community she didn't even try to destroy.

That community happened to have many actual racists, several neo-nazis, people who would causally joke about rape, misogynists, PUA wannabes, and many other weird and often repulsive people but her posting there certainly didn't involve any "iron-toed boots to neckbeard cocks".

Mainly because the community was founded by veterans of the Usenet and veterans of many flamewars and her antics wouldn't impress anyone and possible she'd get the same treatment back.

She was rather just another poster posting obnoxious views. She was the first person I have ever added to ignore list – not because she was unpleasant but because her mentality was disturbingly alien. Soon other posters I have found disgusting were to follow.

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## Kate Elliott

November 7, 2014 at 7:05 pm

<3, Trish.

For you and all the people who have had to deal with this harassment and abuse.

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## MacAllister Stone

November 7, 2014 at 7:05 pm

Colum, I should have spoken more carefully. I'm sorry.

I have a complicated relationship with anger, both my own and other people's, for reasons. But I also recognize that relationship is idiosyncratic, and not applicable to everyone else.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 7:06 pm

Colum, that's an excellent point, one I'm going to try to take to heart.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 7:24 pm

This reminds me of one of the roadblocks I've experienced and seen elsewhere in confrontations over social justice. I'm a nearly-sixty-year-old woman who all her life has opposed prejudice and discrimination on any grounds. (I'm not patting myself on the back for it; I think that's entry-level civilized, rational behavior.) But until 2009 I had no knowledge of the technical jargon of anti-racism training. I'm not using "jargon" as a pejorative. Every field discussing complex concepts requires shorthand to facilitate communication within the field. But I was outside the field, so when strangers in comment threads told me "you showed your ass," I had no idea they were using an unfamiliar shorthand. As far as I knew, I was being crudely insulted by strangers.

In discussing the damage RH/BS has done to the community, I'd like to remember that the diversity in our community includes diversity of background, outlook, opinion...and yes, jargon. I want to learn, help, and heal, but to do that, I need to understand what's being said, and be understood in turn.

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## Had Enough

November 7, 2014 at 7:27 pm

This, this, this. And Cindy would be the first to say you don't have to like her books and that if you find problematic stuff, then feel free to talk about it. That was never the problem. The personal attacks and harassment and attempts to suppress her work completely were.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 7:38 pm

I suspect she/they is/are a classic coward, but just in case – police involvement. I had a message from someone on the Codex forum taking me to task for my use of the term ‘quasi fascists’ – they were, he said, actual fascists and proud of the way young Winterfox had shaped up.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 7:46 pm

Colum, it's more that neither Anna or Patrick exhibits pathologically violent behavioural patterns. Benjanun does.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 7:49 pm

If you walked into a public bar and randomly punched someone, I doubt that the law would care which way you were punching, and your fellow customers certainly wouldn't. If the ‘defenders’ of social justice are as bad as the perpetrators, then who needs them?

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Pingback: [Your Happening World \(November 4th through November 7th\) | Wis\[s\]e Words](#)

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Pingback: [links, without commentary | Swan Tower](#)

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## **Anne Leonard**

November 7, 2014 at 8:04 pm

Some people have raised the possibility of legal action. I put together a piece on some of the factors that come into play in either a criminal or civil suit. <http://anneleonardbooks.com/?p=583>

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## **Pat Cadigan**

November 7, 2014 at 8:19 pm

Amen, Liz. There were so many times when I would actually start writing a status update for Facebook while Laura was working on the investigation. I wanted to talk about what had happened to Tricia, about how someone had played on her innate decency to gag her, to censor her.

And then I'd trash it because I knew that once Laura's report appeared, it wouldn't be just me expressing my feelings—it would be hard data and documentation. We needed data and documentation a lot more than we needed an update on my feelings.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 7, 2014 at 8:29 pm

Yes, that's how they operate. As Pat says – you saw through it. This is a huge thing in itself.

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## **Chris Lawson**

November 7, 2014 at 8:45 pm

I would be very surprised if RH lasted more than a couple of posts on Making Light.

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## slashmarks

November 7, 2014 at 8:59 pm

I'm glad that you were able to access treatment and it helped you. That doesn't mean treatment is helpful for everyone; many mental illnesses that are more/differently stigmatized than depression have mostly abusive treatment that often makes people worse, and people whose mental illnesses do not respond to treatment are often abused in care because of this. It also doesn't mean that "You need help" or similar is actually a statement of concern that they should access resources. These things are said as dismissals or insults (in this context, to make it clear that BS/RH's opinions are not valid), without any hallmark of a genuine therapy recommendation — such as some idea what kind of therapy would help, for one thing. (Therapy is not a magical fix it tool, as you probably know if you've done it. Therapy does specific things for specific problems.) Genuine therapy recommendations also are not made in public forums made to talk about the person in question with no real expectation that they will be read and listened to.

Abuse is not an unhealthy behavior that responds to treatment. (Programs that aim to rehabilitate abusers are usually not successful. See *Why Does He Do That* by Lundy Bancroft. They also aren't focused on dealing with mental illness, but on getting abusers to own up to their actions and change them. ) Abusers are not suffering or out of control; they are very much in control, and enjoying the tangible, real benefits their behavior gets them. (In this case, power, followers, and reduction of competition in her industry.) This stems not from unhealthy or abnormal psychology, but from pretty normal dehumanization of people in the way — it's a common value problem, not an abnormal brain problem.

The idea that anyone who perpetuates abuse or cruelty must be mentally ill or unhealthy is a form of mental illness stigma that hurts people, not through preventing them from accessing maybe, maybe not helpful treatment, but through encouraging legal action and violence against them. It's part of the desire to believe that normal people under normal circumstances would never do something awful. This is patently untrue, see all of history.

I'm sorry that my only comment on this thread is here, but I don't feel there's anything I can say about the situation in general that hasn't already been said. It hurts when people use situations like this as a way to reaffirm stigma and prejudice.

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## Janna

November 7, 2014 at 9:02 pm

Outstanding work here. This whole business is appalling. Shining a bright light on its every detail is the only way to deal with it. My sympathy and my admiration go out to everyone who has come out to expose RH/BS and the entire affair.

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## Anon Reviews

November 7, 2014 at 9:03 pm

I just want to say thank you for compiling this report and posting it. My own experience with winterfox was something I tried hard to forget, but seeing so many other people talking about what happened made it easier to talk about it again. It wasn't her initial disagreement over my reviews that got to me, I'd seen her be vitriolic towards other people in the reviews comms before. But as hurtful as those words were, they were temporary. It was the associated posts, how she'd pickup on anything I posted about reviews or books and use them as a reason to once again call me names. When it happened screencapping was the least thing I thought of doing, as I certainly didn't want permanent reminders on my computer, also I never imagined she'd delete everything. Some of the initial responses to the people talking about their experiences with her were hurtful, as they seemed to assume that if people had been genuinely victimised they'd a)be willing and able to talk about it publicly under their real name and b)that they'd be able to produce evidence. What I hated the most about her actions was that they helped destroy communities that should have been safe places for the people she says she's advocating for. The end of 50POC being a very vivid example, the way her behaviour was enabled, and any criticism of her was used to label the critic as racist was chilling to watch. Seeing more people share their stories has been comforting in some ways, knowing you are not alone is a relief, but it's saddening to realise just how many people were hurt, and to know that many were just too scared to speak up.

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## Stevie

November 7, 2014 at 9:17 pm

I'm grateful for the vast amount of work which has gone into this, and to the people who have stepped forward.

I'd like to say to Pat and Amy that I have absolutely no doubt that PTSD can be triggered by psychological trauma; in my own case it was indisputably physical trauma-I got blown up by an exploding oxygen regulator when I was 36 weeks pregnant- but the results are exactly as Amy describes. In essence, telling people who have been mercilessly harassed that they should toughen up and ignore the possibility that it will happen again is even less useful than telling me that being trapped in a room with a fire fed by pure oxygen isn't likely to happen to me again.

After all, manufacturers are rather more careful nowadays when it comes to explosion hazards, but using the web to harass people is still very easy. Notwithstanding the weight of evidence collected, at least some individuals are still dismissing these responses as an overreaction to the youthful exuberance of a newbie writer who has now seen the light. I'm not a writer, but as a reader I have no difficulty in distinguishing between rigorous criticism of the work itself and an attack on the person who created the work; it isn't hard, and I think it's somewhat insulting to suggest that readers are too dumb to manage to do so.

It may well be that someone advancing the 'chilling' rhetoric simply hasn't thought it through; on the other hand, given the extraordinary ability of the person or persons who constitute BS to manipulate people, this may simply be the latest ploy in a very long chain. I very much hope that as we go forward we retain some healthy scepticism about where arguments are coming from.

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## Amy Griswold

November 7, 2014 at 9:26 pm

Thank you for doing your roundup (and thank you, Laura, for this one.) I knew about the damage she'd done in LJ communities as Winterfox, but was only peripherally aware of her Requires Hate identity until this all blew up. I think there's a clear difference between negative reviews and threatening harassment, and she crossed that line long ago. I feel for everyone who was targeted and hurt, and I hope talking about this can make us better able as a community to welcome disagreement and debate without tolerating harassment and abuse.

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## Kris

November 7, 2014 at 9:32 pm

Emma, you bring up some interesting distinctions. Let's remember that criticism is a legitimate genre of professional writing. It has a "pro" level. People are paid to do it; editors run eyes over thousands of words of criticism every week, even in our depraved "publishing is dead" era. There are people who make their living writing a certain number of words per week about "I liked this movie even though it crushed my soul" or "His last novel was better" or "This pop singer has many young fans, but why?"

Now, don't misunderstand me. I'm HAPPY that it's all so democratic now, and that people can leave wild and crazy reviews on the Internet without hitting a word count or running them past an editor to see that they fit the mold of criticism. Because now you get things like that one guy who was writing a novel in his Yelp reviews of various date spots around New York. Or the Amazon reviews of the Three Wolf Moon shirt. I'm sort of a silly person deep down, so those are the "fringe reviews" that get me going.

I can sort of imagine that with a different constellation of planets influencing my gravitational field, maybe I'd be one of those people who really feels good reading an "epic takedown" type of review.

I'm not one of those people; my desire for epic takedowns can easily be satisfied by a Sasha Frere-Jones piece about the cultural implications of Auto-Tune. Even Pauline Kael, in her negative reviews, sometimes used to go too far for my delicate sensibilities.

But I don't judge. Transgressive language can be thrilling. The permission to express how much you hate something can be liberating.

Interestingly, and encouragingly for humanity, I think most of the commenters on this report are acknowledging that wild and crazy epic takedowns have their place. It's about addressing the work, and not always having to do that in a strictly professional way anymore. I really do not see this page devolving into a witch hunt or a call for an end to bad reviews. (Does anyone else?)

That said, I see a pretty clear line between an epic takedown, or a negative review with transgressive language or even a series of such

reviews, and the kind of poison that RH engaged in. You can write a review, you can specialize in bad reviews even, but you can stop short of following certain authors around the internet or harassing their supporters or tweeting your negative words into their mobile phones hundreds of times per week or mobilizing other people to harass them.

I think if this person had written bad reviews and left it at that, the situation would be a bit less sickening and we wouldn't all be having this conversation. And I think RH's own attempts at cleanup reflect that she herself has a sense of this, too.

Just my 2cents as someone who just wants everyone to drive carefully and love one another. 😊

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 9:33 pm

I couldn't agree with this comment more if I tried. So I won't.

Oh, go on then, I will just a bit.

RH didn't so much critique people's work, as project stuff onto it and then attack the author on the basis of that. She once accused me of 'exotification' because a character in my story was sitting on a batik cushion. She could make utterly ridiculous accusations look like gospel truth.

It's a really educational exercise to try RH's game yourself. Pick something written by your favorite writer (if you are a writer, then be honest, and pick something written by yourself 😊) and attack it, hatestyle. You should find that you can attack anything this way, a character of color is either a stereotype, or inauthentic and white-on-the-inside, female characters are either weak and lacking agency, or their fetishized action-girls. There's nothing that anyone can write that can't be attacked with some weapon in RH's toolbox, and any writer can be shown to be rotten from the things they've written. I realized this when, as so many people must have done, I started trying to write stories that couldn't be attacked, and began to realize that it couldn't be done if there were people in the stories.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 9:41 pm

Dear Self:

You really, really need to learn how this blog platform positions replies, and use it correctly. You keep clicking on the wrong "Reply" and responding to people you're not addressing. It makes you look like an idiot.

Sincerely, Me

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 9:41 pm

# The basic circumstance that allowed Requires Hate to flourish is the feeling that getting published and having a  
# viable career are a worse-than zero sum game: there are only so many pieces of the pie and the pie keeps shrinking  
# every year. If your strategy is to depose the competition, you are part of the problem.

To restate Sayre's Law: "SF politics are so vicious precisely because the rewards are so small."

But the worrying thing is that RH has shown that these methods kinda work. Oh, they went too far in the end, but there'll be others who'll figure they can do it right.

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 9:47 pm

So.... I could be a Patrick Nielsen Hayden?

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 9:55 pm

Emma, you didn't look like an idiot, I was agreeing with you about the distinction between critiquing a work, and attacking an author through their work, which was a really good point.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 9:56 pm

Colum, you're right—work that can't be objected to on any level, by anyone, is not what fiction writers are supposed to be creating. The awful thing about that game you suggest is that it's exactly what some writers who've been attacked in this way do, and not as a game. As you say, once you start second-guessing everything you want to write according to these standards, you realize there's *nothing* you can write.

And that's exactly what some of RH's victims have done, and will do: they'll write nothing.

I teach writing. I want more people to write more stories. Hell, I want them to write crummy, unexamined, thick-headed stories, because that's a start to getting better at it. To stop that process cold, and make a writer feel as if his or her words are wrong before they've even reached the page or screen—that makes my fingers curl with sickening anger and grief.

And goddamn, it's awfully hard to type with my fingers curled.

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## Kris

November 7, 2014 at 9:57 pm

Yes! But it's funny... I was talking with some friends about all this (and other recent events) and I realized I rarely write a review of a book I didn't like. I'll talk it over with people, and rant about it. But I don't enjoy putting negative stuff into writing. When I review a book, I try to work in a few criticisms just so I don't sound like an overly worshipful nitwit. But the vast majority of the books about which I've taken the time to express my thoughts in writing, I genuinely just worship. I just try to sound critical so people will think I'm smart. 😊

And quite honestly, when I write fiction (or non-fiction for that matter), well, I can't morph into some other person with a different background. I'm just trying to understand, that's all I'm doing. That's what it's all about. And that doesn't mean I won't accept criticism.

Maybe this is controversial, but what if John Hersey had never written "A Single Pebble" or "Hiroshima" just because he's a white guy? I would certainly have a smaller understanding of cultures other than my own. What if Haing S. Ngor had refused to have a white, male, American journalist work with him on "Survival in the Killing Fields"? Quite simply, then I personally would have no idea what happened in Cambodia in the early 1970s.

I'm probably treading on dangerous ground there, which is not my "thing" at all, I hate dangerous ground. But I cherish the process of trying to understand and I hate to see it undermined. It's our only hope.

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## anonymous

November 7, 2014 at 9:58 pm

"I suspect that may be because I have never granted any credence to stigma."

You are very fortunate to have been able not to do so. Stigma ruins people's lives.

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## Emma Bull

November 7, 2014 at 10:06 pm

Aww, thank you, Colum. I was looking over the comments, though, and I think I ended up posting my intended-to-stand-alone comment about abusing the reviewer's platform as a reply to Dave. Then there was the general comment further up intended for Laura, that I planted about two levels in on someone else's comment. And... Yeah, there may have been more. Oi. Teh Intarnetz is hard! \*g\*

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## Tad

November 7, 2014 at 10:12 pm

I just heard about this whole thing via a link that Steven Brust posted. As a long time Signal To Noise fan I chose to respond in Emma's comments.

As someone who has about 30 or so total reviews up, of stuff I liked I do not review stuff I did not like, I have never run across this person. In the link that Steven Brust posted I have read 3 of the authors in there. Some of the others are not my taste in reading. However the others I have read and not reviewed yet will be re-read of what of theirs I own. Along with me looking for new people to read I had not heard of before.

I suspect my own demographic has kept me from ever hearing of this person. What I write, who I read, etc., shielded me from knowing they existed.

However I wish to publicly support each author that was attacked ( in my own opinion) by the person/s.

To those feeling attacked by this person if you wish to just have a total stranger listen I am more than happy to oblige.

I am not in the affected demographic. White Middle Aged American Male, former military, Liberal Leanings, that writes mostly horror/surreal/gaming/urban fantasy like short stories.

Thanks for posting all of this. Incredible to me that someone was out there, and personally I feel, still is. I would suspect they will go to ground for a while then emerge once more with new alias and new identities once this dies down. Just my personal opinion.

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## Pamela Troy

November 7, 2014 at 10:15 pm

Well, yes, the "freedom to express hatred" can feel liberating. I think that's part of the problem. "Transgressive language" is too often a polite way of describing deliberate offensiveness. It's exhilarating because offers the illusion of strength and purpose, but is frequently just a cover for inept writing. Actually going into careful and intelligent detail about what's wrong with a given story, novel, etc., requires thought and effort. Invective doesn't.

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## A Professor

November 7, 2014 at 10:16 pm

I'm in the same boat. I followed her on twitter because I liked her short stories and she seemed cool, and I was taken in by the claim that her stalker had found her. I'm feeling sick inside for having been honest-to-god catfished and that she is the same person who has said horrible things about other authors I love and threatened violence to so many. I guess this is how sociopaths work? I'm so embarrassed.

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Pingback: [Requires Hate: Hostile exploits of cultural vulnerabilities | Where Worlds Collide](#)

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## Colum Paget

November 7, 2014 at 10:29 pm

Well guys, I went the other route. I didn't say nothing, I tried to engage politely with RH, and then later I tried to make people see how

dangerous they were. The results sucked. Overall I'd say you probably did the right thing, because all that you would have achieved was to be another of her victims, and we don't need there to be any more victims than there were already. She was doing this for over a decade, there must have been hundreds of people effected, and not just anyone could be a whistle-blower, a lot tried, and they all got stomped on. This is happening now because the stars are finally right, but lone attempts to take her down previously would have been futile.

The only person to every really have any success against RH, I think, is James Worrad, because he never took any of it seriously: more power to him.

# RH thrived by isolating people, by making them afraid to speak up and making them doubt their own experiences and identities.

That's a very good point. I think everyone felt that RH was personally attacking them, or at least people like them, with the support of the whole community behind her. I know I did. This is why Laura's charts are so important: we can all find ourselves on those charts, and realize it wasn't just us.

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## **Kris**

November 7, 2014 at 10:36 pm

That is an excellent point!

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## **Colum Paget**

November 7, 2014 at 10:47 pm

# I am not in the affected demographic. White Middle Aged American Male, former military, Liberal Leanings,  
# that writes mostly horror/surreal/gaming/urban fantasy like short stories.

Oh yes you are. RH hated on men, women, straight, gay, cis, trans, young, old, white, black, brown, writers, gamers, fans, diaspora and native born. Are you in there somewhere? Aren't we all?

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## **J. Kenton**

November 7, 2014 at 10:53 pm

This whole wretched mess has hopefully made one thing clear: If any community, forum, or group wants to pick and choose who gets to be safe, and who gets to abuse and personally attack others based on race, gender, sexuality, cultural, whether they can "pass" as a member of a privileged group, or those who simply fail to toe the ideological line.... then absolutely nobody in that group is really safe.

RH was given a position of privilege in the affected communities and forums.

Some folks said "well, I don't want to Tone-Police." Others thought she was only hurting white men, and considered that ok. Some might have realized that she was also attacking women, but figured that if those women where high enough on some privilege scale, they deserved it. Others felt that a WoC, or any LGBT person who dissented deserved to be hurt for their breach of Ideological Purity.

Some folks might not have liked watching RH hurt "the wrong targets, sometimes," but that discomfort was outweighed by the gratification they felt when she hurt someone "who deserves it" for being in the wrong group.

Communities, groups, forums, are going to have to decide what's important to them.

Do they want to create a safe place where issues can be discussed and even debated in a mature, honest, and respectful manner? Where genres can be celebrated and explored, and where newcomers can come in hopes of receiving education? (For example: "XYZ, maybe you're not aware of this, but the term "dusky" is now considered to be derogatory." Or "Actually, in that culture, the family name usually comes before the given name" or "You're confusing Sikh's with Hindus."

Or do they simply want to create a place where whatever group they wish to grant privilege to can bully and abuse members whatever group they feel "deserves" to be hurt and abused.



Can't have both.

Groups that chose to embrace, or even just tolerate, the latter must be able to look squarely in the eyes of every one of RH's victims and say "Well, you're what we call acceptable losses."

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## **Colum Paget**

November 7, 2014 at 10:57 pm

# In order to have understood what was going on, you would have to have been as disturbed as winterfox/RH.

Or you'd have to have seen it before. I kinda count myself lucky that I've seen some astounding manipulators in my life, its like catching measles, it's best to do it when you're young so that your somewhat immunized against it later, but not everyone is that lucky.

The fact is that very many people were taken in by RH, and everyone thinks after the con is revealed that "I would never have fallen for that", but the truth is a lot of us would have. This is why there's no benefit in blame, the benefit lies in deciding how we can all do better going forwards.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 11:04 pm

Yes... & that breaks my heart. I think it's mostly because I had great parents. I had a lot of problems as a kid, before we understood why. My mother stood up for me relentlessly, to other parents & teachers & administrators, until I'd been worked over & tested for everything under the sun.

I followed her example in my own self-regard without ever really thinking about it, because she was assiduous in defending me and never treated me as if I were anything but perfectly suited to any challenge before me. All the accommodations we had to make she couched in terms of schooling, which I could readily understand. I'm grateful for that to this day. I still think of myself mostly as a student before all else.

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## **Tad**

November 7, 2014 at 11:31 pm

Thanks Colum,

So have to look for your writings now just so I can see the Batik Pillow (I think Batik fabrics are cool looking personally).

Yes I suppose I fit in there in more than one spot with that run down. I suspect I have been fortunate in my communities online I participate in that RH/BS was not a part of them.

I still find it atrocious that that person treated people like you, Will S, NK Jemisin (sp I know but I loved her first novel), etc.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 11:35 pm

I respect that a great deal.

And I believe we can, and should, be angry with predatory actions that hurt innocent people for no reason. It's not necessarily a negative judgment on a \*person\* to refuse to permit abusive behavior, and feeling anger doesn't mean you hold a grudge. But anger at injustice — that seems like a proper application of the emotion, to me.

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## **Jennifer**

November 7, 2014 at 11:43 pm

Thank you for doing this.

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## Patrick Nielsen Hayden

November 8, 2014 at 1:23 am

Farah says: “What \*did\* happen is that lots of us (see Teresa’s comment) blocked, muted and turned away. In my case I started to block \*anyone\* who retweeted her or otherwise gave her oxygen. Usually that’s a good tactic. In this case however it backfired because we didn’t see what was going on under our noses, and it reinforced the isolation of victims on which RH depended and depends.”

Yes, exactly. I did just as you did, out of the same moral calculus, and I now realize it was the wrong thing to do. I failed to be there for people who \*really\* needed someone to be there for them.

The idea that “don’t feed the trolls” is sufficient to deal with determined sociopaths ... needs to die. Because it’s leaving victims out in the cold.

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## Patrick Nielsen Hayden

November 8, 2014 at 1:25 am

Colum: “it’s my experience that she had a lot of influential backers”

It’s my sense that she was very good at suggesting that her not-terribly-influential backers were terrifically influential. No blame to anyone who fell for this. It’s like being the victim of a professional pickpocket: it doesn’t mean you’re culpable or stupid, it just means that you were gamed by someone who bent their entire life energy toward successfully gaming you. Any of us could be the victim of this; it doesn’t mean there’s anything wrong with you.

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## Morzer

November 8, 2014 at 1:39 am

“Thailand was never colonized or conquered by a Western nation.”

No, but it has been a high-priority destination for scads of white European and American men (plus, increasingly, Japanese men) who treat it as a fantasy paradise of exotic, cheap, often underage playthings available for just about any form of sexual abuse/exploitation they desire. There’s more than one form of colonization.

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## Jeremy Szal

November 8, 2014 at 1:42 am

True, true, but if we never do stand up to her and her behavior then it never gets resolved. Why can’t we call a spade a spade? I understand this is how she bends sympathy towards her, but the facts remain. Her “writings” attest to that.

Also, you might want to add her slandering of Mark Lawrence and his Prince of Thorns books to the list as well. She actually involved his kids in her “review”. And don’t even get me started on the comments..

[web.archive.org/web/2012011164400/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2011/12/20/mark-lawrences-prince-of-rape-queues-and-the-neckbeards-that-defend-it/](http://web.archive.org/web/2012011164400/http://requireshate.wordpress.com/2011/12/20/mark-lawrences-prince-of-rape-queues-and-the-neckbeards-that-defend-it/)

Make sure you have a bucket nearby when you’re reading....

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## anonymous

November 8, 2014 at 1:54 am

First, critical thinking is incredibly important when discussing these things and Laura has displayed a huge amount of it when she let her compassion guide her actions. Thanks Laura, I believe you have made a huge contribution that will hopefully have a very long-term positive effect on our community.

Second, as someone who, in the past, has been cyberbullied and falsely accused of doing awful stuff (not AFAIK, by RH) I have a request of people here:

The next time you hear accusations about someone, even if it's from someone who know well and trust, take a whole day (or two or three) and think a bit before re-tweeting/re-posting and forwarding in public forums. Maybe the best thing to do is to try to act in a way that is both compassionate and pro-active towards improving things in the future, rather than joining a lynch mob (even if inadvertently — which is easier to do than most people think). Maybe the best thing to do is to engage in calm and thoughtful conversation on the matter, rather than screaming online and turning people away from our communities.

Gotta stop now, my hands are shaking too much from bad memories.

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Pingback: [Some personal thoughts on the whole RequiresHate exposé and discussion » Rants and Ramblings By An Old Bag](#)

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## Patrick Nielsen Hayden

November 8, 2014 at 2:12 am

I have always thought that particular piece of jargon, “showing your ass,” was unbelievably stupid. It emerges, I think, from the idea that racism and other systems of social control are fundamentally the result of individual moral failings, nothing more, and if we can simply identify and “call out” the Bad Racists, we’ll have solved the problem.

To my mind, this is about as sensible as believing that if we get enough people to bring their hemp-fiber bags to the grocery co-op, we can avert global warming.

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## Stevie

November 8, 2014 at 2:13 am

Tricia

You have been going through hell, but you are still prepared to step forward to help others, that's pretty amazing.

So, thank you for doing so. I don't share your views on everything: for example the relative efficacy of martial arts, but I hold firm views on those who are willing to misrepresent themselves in order to make people's lives a living nightmare. Unsurprisingly my views are very clear on that one...

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## Patrick Nielsen Hayden

November 8, 2014 at 2:19 am

Colum, Jesus, come on. You were screwed over by experts. No blame to you. None.

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## Meredith L. Patterson

November 8, 2014 at 3:00 am

The bystander effect is a social predator's best friend. In the psychology literature, one term to search for is “sociopath-empath-apathe triad”: a sociopath seeking to *really* demoralise someone will abuse them in the presence of a third party who fails to come to their aid. That way, not only does the empath have to deal with the direct effects of the abuse, there's also a strong likelihood of such lovely knock-on effects as worthlessness (“I really must be a terrible person, if other people think it's fine that I be treated that way”) or self-doubt (“I guess it wasn't

that bad; somebody would have said something, right?") A skilled sociopath essentially leverages an apath as a springboard for getting the empath to gaslight *themselves*. It's more devastating if the sociopath tricks or persuades someone the empath knows into the apath role, but complete strangers make perfectly good apaths as well.

(N.B.: "sociopath," "empath," and "apath" describe roles in a social dynamic, not diagnoses or even personal characteristics. A person with antisocial personality disorder can be manipulated into the empath role. So can an autistic. Neurotypical people can and do take the sociopath role, sometimes on purpose, sometimes not.)

I am generally a fan of blocking people up with whose shit I am done putting, but I confess it had not occurred to me, either, until you and Farah mentioned it, that the tradeoff of turning away is increasing the likelihood of the bystander effect. It's certainly the case that I'm usually one of the last to learn about the latest shenanigans of my community's problem children. To an extent that's even by design — if I were getting the news as it happened, it might try to involve me — but making it easier for serial abusers to silo their victims is not a desirable outcome.

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## Nicole J. LeBoeuf-Little

November 8, 2014 at 3:46 am

I'm fortunate in never having been targeted myself; I hurt for those whom I respect, admire, and love who have been targeted.

For some time I had been casually peeking at the RH blog to see what she was reading and what she was saying about it; I considered it over-the-top in tone, but useful in revealing problematic things that I, a somewhat naive white woman writer, might not realize were problematic.

Along the way, I also picked up impressions of the books RH thoroughly vivisected. If they were books I hadn't read, I generally thought, "OK, guess I won't read *that*, then." Which was silly of me, considering for the books I *had* read, my thoughts tended to be, "Ouch! I liked that book! Filing under How To Like Problematic Things, then, I guess..."

Having found out about this today (thanks, TNH, for sidelighting Laura's post so that I'd find it; thank you, Laura, for all your hard work), and having been made aware that sometimes the RH reviews weren't quite honest about the material being reviewed. I'm reassessing those impressions. And, like others here, compiling a reading list of authors that RH has preyed on. As you say, that seems a small but not insignificant way to help.

I also remember coming belatedly to the trainwreck that was RaceFail and noting a toxic tendency of people on one side of that war to hound dissenters through multiple communities and back to their personal blogs, spewing abuse the whole way, which tendency is noted in the case of RH's followers as well. It's been some years and I haven't gone out of my way to refresh my memory, but it seems to me there's some overlap in the LJ and twitter handles involved in both cases.

Pat Cadigan: You have a new Facebook follower re: your SFWA mentoring idea. Not sure what I have to offer other than my full attention so far, but you do have that for sure.

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## J. Kenton

November 8, 2014 at 3:49 am

Actually, I've been impressed by how lynch-mob free this report and the comments have been. No howls for boycotts, no demands that every con or editor preface any invitation with "Are you, or have you ever been, a supporter or fan of RH?"

Folks have been pretty damn well level headed, which is remarkable considering how emotionally brutalized they've been by RH and her operatives.

That being said, given the trail of victims RH and her co-conspirators have left in their wake, this is a case where people would quite literally have cause to feel "unsafe" to be at a convention or conference with.

The world's full of people whose presence at a con would make me feel "uncomfortable." I don't People well.

Still, insults and obnoxious behavior I can shrug off pretty well. I've had experiences which have altered my perception about "an uncomfortable situation." Anything that doesn't come with shrapnel is, for me, an irritant rather than a threat. As a result, in a many cases I

look have trouble not looking askance at some of the claims that this or that person would feel “unsafe” sharing space with an offensive or obnoxious person.

People often conflate “uncomfortable” with “unsafe.”

Easy for me to say though... I haven’t been stalked and systemically smeared and sabotaged, for example... so my frame of reference is missing those experiences.

So I constantly try to remind myself that we all have different levels of insulation against different types of threats, and that what I can shrug off could be devastating to someone else. (And vice-versa. I expect there are folks here who’ve endured emotional attacks that would make me all sorts of whimper and weepy, because I’ve simply never had the misfortune of being tested that way.)

But in this case? Between the pattern of personalized, methodical attacks, the knowledge that Benjanun Sriduangkaew (whoever she actually is) has an active network of confederates and co-conspirators who will help her sabotage careers... and the very graphic threats of physical and sexual violence?

People are very justified in feeling “unsafe,” using the legal definition of the term as well as the emotional one. Every bit as much as they would learning that a known groper, sexual predator, or a batterer were attending a con. And they have the right to expect a venue to keep them safe from her and her co-conspirators.

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## Gezol

November 8, 2014 at 4:01 am

Colum,

Just wanted to say that I really appreciated what you had to say on the RPG.net thread about this whole thing- tried to send you a PM there, but I’m not sure if it went through. I never interacted with RH, so I wouldn’t call myself a victim of hers, but I did once seriously aspire to become a published fantasy author, and she was a major contributing factor towards my deciding I didn’t really want to pursue that, after all. To some extent that was because I was worried about becoming a target of hers (I could clearly see that there was essentially no way of avoiding her wrath if she decided to direct it at someone), but more than that I didn’t want anything to do with a community that enabled and supported someone like her to the extent that it did, back then.

I strongly agree with you about how a lot of what enabled her in the SF&F community was basically political and ideological in nature, and think that a serious reexamination of some popular tenets of that ideology (in particular the “punching up” thing) is in order- I think there are certain beliefs that have become popular in the community which seem almost tailor-made to enable people like her. I hope that the SF&F community will come out of this changed for the better, but I think it’s not going to happen for as long as some of those beliefs (which, tragically, I think became popular because of what were very good intentions, originally) remain widespread.

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## Meredith L. Patterson

November 8, 2014 at 4:02 am

Laura, first, adding to the chorus of “well done”. Chilling effects can be incredibly difficult to nail down, even when nobody can ignore the chill in the room anymore, but sunlight remains both the best disinfectant and a reliable source of warmth. Getting people to talk about this sort of stuff *at all* is hard, much less raising the quality of discourse at the same time — I think the intuitions you’ve articulated to Colum about immediacy *and* the need to actually follow up on the non-immediate things are instrumental to that, for what that’s worth.

SF writing went on the backburner for me not long after Wiscon 2003, entirely due to grad school. From the timeline as I understand it, it sounds like I dodged a bullet. I’m still friends on LiveJournal with plenty of folks I met through writing and fandom, but I don’t recall Winterfox showing up in their comments (except maybe Elizabeth Bear, but I could never keep up with all the discussion on her LJ anyway). Reading through the replies here is like reading excerpts from the history of a parallel universe that was going on right next door and I never noticed.

Even so, the story is a familiar one. The hacker community, which I call home, has its own predators who thrive by keeping their victims isolated and silent. Every sufficiently large community does, and for the community to stay healthy, it has to figure out an immune response

that resists actual predators but doesn't tear the body apart while doing so.

If you want to keep the scope of that bigger-picture discussion on the SF community, that completely makes sense, but if you also want to compare with how the "what was it that let us be so easily pwned?" problem has manifested in other communities, I'd appreciate the opportunity to participate in that conversation.

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:13 am

I think there are similarities to the way a small but very angry and intolerant band of gamers managed to convince Intel to pull their advertising from Gamasutra. There was no real influence there — the vast majority of gamers, developers, and journalists saw right through the smoke to the misogyny underneath because it's such transparent smoke. But...the fake influence was enough to make a major company pull its advertising, which makes it into real influence. Similarly here. Even if it was only a carefully tended inner circle of RH/BS's willing accomplices, they managed to destroy several online communities, cause years-long blocks in some writers, interfere with marketing of novels, and even managed to instil PTSD in some people. I think they developed a type of influence after all, but it's the influence of the extortionist, not the influence of the valued community member.

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:23 am

As you say, Emma, if you only write exactly what you know then your characters will only ever be versions of yourself and people you know extremely well. And then, of course, RH/BS would no doubt attack you for not having a sufficient diversity of characters.

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:32 am

Emma, I agree with much of what you say but not your statement, "To base a review on anything but the text of the book, and the whole text, seems to me an abuse of the form." I think the blurb can be relevant, the author's bio can be relevant, the marketing decisions made by the publisher can be relevant; I also think the author's past body of work is relevant. All of these elements are a part of the book you buy and they're fair game for reviewing provided the reviewer keeps the central focus on the text itself. What is not fair game is, as you put it well, the "hearsay, willful misreading and misinterpretation, or personal approval of or animosity toward the author." That is, if the cover of the book misrepresents the content, it is perfectly acceptable for a reviewer to comment upon it. If a book stands in stark contrast to previous works by the author, then it's fine to remark upon it. It's not the inclusion of metatextual information that's the problem, it's the dishonesty and the malice.

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## laurajmixon

November 8, 2014 at 4:32 am

Hi all, I took time off today and relied on my fellow moderators (for whose efforts I am deeply grateful—thanks).

For those who've reached out privately, I haven't checked the loudly-sing-cuckoo email address today. Preparing the report was a long difficult slog—not one I regret one ounce; my fellow SFF lovers, you deserve to be heard and I'm glad to be able to give you this gift, because I've been very fortunate in my life and I want to share some of that fortune with you. I just needed to recuperate a bit. But I want you all to know how grateful I am for the sharing that has gone on here. And to those who haven't felt ready to do so, I respect your need for self-care.

I have an idea for some additional posts on the subject. Watch this space. And continue to care for each other. Please keep sharing and processing this. It's difficult but important work.

With much love and hope—

-l.

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## laurajmixon

November 8, 2014 at 4:40 am

Meredith, I'm right there with you. From 2001 on, until mid-2013, I was locked in a situation that didn't let me participate in the SFF community, except occasional toe-dippings and connections with old friends. This whole situation was a huge wake-up call.

I have some posts planned that will talk about the bigger-picture issues, which I hope others will join in a discussion of. I think there are lots of lessons we can learn.

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:41 am

Yes, Kathryn. There is a small part of the industry that really is zero-sum — there can only be one book at the top of the NYT best-seller list every week, but for the most part the fiction (and music) industries are **positive-sum** games. That is, if someone you trust tells you “if you really liked Iain Banks’s Culture novels, you should check out *Ancillary Justice*”, most readers will go and buy a copy and read it rather than say “Oh, I’ve already bought my quota of intelligent space opera for the year.”

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:43 am

Actually, now that I think about it, maybe that’s why RH/BS was so heavily into savaging award-winning authors.

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## Chris Lawson

November 8, 2014 at 4:45 am

Ha! You confused me there, Somhairle. For a moment I thought “who reviews themselves?” before the lightbulb went off in my head and I got what you meant.

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## Arzarosz Rzangsur XXXI

November 8, 2014 at 4:52 am

So, at least something good came out of her attacks.

At least now there are less ignorant cruel normal people in this world.

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## Nicole J. LeBoeuf-Little

November 8, 2014 at 4:58 am

Azarias, thank you also for your roundup.

I hope this is not too off-topic or too beyond the limits of this safe space to ask, though: What was your criteria in labeling certain people as “defending abuse”? It seems somewhat inaccurate to throw, say, Keffy’s linked tweet communicating misgivings that there may be a double-standard in the SFF community regarding the treatment of female-identified abusers vs male-identified abusers, into the same bucket as Alex Dally MacFarlane’s active collaboration with RH/BS in author suppression campaigns.

I worry that in our zeal to identify those on OUR side and repudiate those on THEIR side, and define THEIR side with far too broad of a brush, we may cut off others who need help and a safe space. By contrast, I’d like to commend Laura’s compassion for those people currently in RH/BS’s clique:

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Members of the inner circle receive (initially gentle) correctives if they push back against BS/RH's directives. If they continue to resist, they become targets, themselves—with the added unspoken threat that she can publish their ill-considered emails at any time. They have been her loyal soldiers, and have spoken ill of and acted badly toward other people at her behest.

However, though they are culpable, it is important to remember that someone they thought they could trust is in essence holding them hostage. In a very real sense, they are BS/RH's victims, too.

It is my deepest hope that when they realize that the community knows her game, her inner-circle members who want to escape her control will feel safe enough to step away from her. And I hope that those who have been harmed by former supporters of BS/RH will find it in themselves to forgive those who lashed out at them, hear their stories, and enable them to make amends.

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And that's about "her inner circle", which I'm not convinced that everyone in the "defending abuse" column even is.

I'm also troubled by drawing a line between two sides, because, as others have pointed out already, there's the temptation to behave immorally towards those on the *other* side, and think that it's OK because, not being on OUR side, they're acceptable targets.

Again, I hope I'm not trespassing on the boundaries of this space to ask your thoughts on this.

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## laurajmixon

November 8, 2014 at 5:04 am

Hey, Emma, sorry I missed your response! I temporarily went pumpkin-esque. I'll catch up on comments tomorrow. I've also turned off threads, so it should be a little easier to follow the conversation.

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Pingback: [bullies and stifling multiculturalism](#) | [Cassie Alexander](#)

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## Peterbound

November 8, 2014 at 5:15 am

Lots of comments, didn't read them all, and this might have been asked up thread:

Does this negative backlash effect the publisher decision at all to print her books? Or is this a case of any press is good press?

I can't imagine someone wanting to be associated with this type of attention.

Any of the authors/editors/publishers posting able to answer that?

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## Nicole J. LeBoeuf-Little

November 8, 2014 at 5:30 am

Tricia,

For whatever it's worth: *Shadowboxer* crossed my radar for the first time via your "The Big Idea" piece at Scalzi's blog a week ago. So I encountered your book blissfully unencumbered by RH/BS's hatefulness. I know can't be alone in that.

Your career will survive this. **You** will survive this. I'm looking forward to every word that you write and publish.

Thank you for posting. Wishing you strength and healing.

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## Arzarosz Rzangszur XXXI

November 8, 2014 at 6:55 am



I don't think it's an accurate observation. I knew her from a community that she didn't try to destroy and she was always very elitist, even before starting writing seriously. Actually it was an elitist gaming community. I'm not very literate, but from my experiences with gaming, I can imagine to what sort of rage seeing all the mediocre authors rated 5/5 can drive a well read person.

When I was in high school, I haven't read almost any mandatory readings. I was too busy reading Forgotten Realms novels. I loved them. At some point around 2010 I've read a few novels from contemporary literature and after reading them, I have found a large part of fantasy stuff that I was reading completely unreadable. Like in I couldn't get past 10 first pages without having to suppress an urge to throw the book at the wall while screaming incoherently. So, I guess, before I got exposed to more ambitious stuff, I was an "illiterate maggot". It also drove me to revise my rating system. For example it made me notice that positive score doesn't start from 5/5 but from 2/5.

Besides that, it's not like all her reviews were negative. RH wasn't above praising even franchise novels and manga series. She actually wrote a favourable review of a Warhammer 40000 novel trilogy.

Regarding the shrinking pie, from what I've read she's not the kind person that actually has to write for living. Generally it's a big problem, though which should be solved by implementing some kind of basic income but probably won't because despite growing automation, computerisation and off-shoring driven unemployment many people still think very negatively of people without work and think that they should "get a job" :/ .

I suspect that as a person with a profitable non-writing career, RH doesn't have empathy towards people who have to write to put their bread on their table regardless of their literary merit.

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## Azarias

November 8, 2014 at 8:08 am

@Nicole, perfectly fair question. For context, my roundup was written a few weeks back when Nick Mamatas first publicly announced the RHB-BS connection. I know it had been sort of an open secret before then, but I don't move in any SFF pro circles; like a lot of people in the spaces I hang out, that was the first I've heard of it. Discussion was taking place primarily in James Nicoll's LJ, a few pro twitters, and several fandom (in the mostly fanfic sense, not SFF book fandom) anon memes. In fandom, we all remembered Winterfox from back in the day, or personally knew someone who'd tangled with her.

So there was a lot of history that was general knowledge in fanfic fandom that most folks in SFF fandom didn't know about, because the Winterfox part of her persona mostly operated in our spaces, not yours. So a lot of SFF fandom people were — quite reasonably — asking why some people seemed to be over-reacting to the BS/RHB reveal. It was because many of us were actually reacting to the WF/BS/RHB reveal. While at least a little bit of RHB's rageaholic career could be waved off as just an overzealous blogger, WF was well known as an abusive troll. So it was frustrating to see people conclude "She's not that bad, some writers are just angry they got bad reviews" when we knew damned well the problem was deeper and nastier than that. My roundup post was intended to answer some background questions I'd been asked, to debunk a few rumors that were flying, and to index what was being talked about where. I admit it was also driven by some disgust I was feeling at the behavior of a few specific commenters. It's one thing to defend a friend or want to think well of someone. It's another to (metaphorically) look an abuse victim in the eye and (literally) call her a liar.

I'll stand by those categories I originally set up. The people I named as defending abuse were, at the time I wrote the post, doing just that, and often very nastily. Calling victims liars, minimizing their experiences, making excuses for inexcusable behavior, and attempting to derail the conversation by accusing the victims of being the *real* abusers are all classic tactics used to commit, defend, and enable abuse. Saying on the one hand "Of course abuse is wrong" but on the other hand "But she didn't do that" or "But you deserved it" or "But let's not have this conversation in public because it's uncomfortable" doesn't change that.

Several of the people I linked have changed their positions, or at least expressed some doubt about what they've done so far. That's good. But I *don't* think it's unfair to say baldly what I saw them doing just a few weeks ago. If I were writing that post today, I probably wouldn't set it up that way, but I don't think I was wrong to do it the way I did. Of course, today I wouldn't need to write that post at all, because Laura's post does a better job of accomplishing most of my goals plus a few more besides. A kind anon dropped me a list of relevant links yesterday that I'd said I was going to update into the original post, but I'm starting to think I oughtn't do that at all. The important work's being done here, and in the conversations I assume are going on elsewhere in SFF fandom. I don't want to distract from that. I'm not sure that keeping my post and my opinions up to date is going to be the best way for me to support what you all are doing here. This isn't really my community and I think I've already said everything of potential value I had to say.

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## Andy Sawyer

November 8, 2014 at 10:39 am

It's very clear reading all this that people like me, who were able to walk away from this unpleasantness and/or who weren't attacked, owe apologies to people who were more deeply targeted. I have attempted to describe this to people outside the sf community and been stared at with utter disbelief.

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## Dolorosa

November 8, 2014 at 10:56 am

I want to both expand on something Azarias has said and recount my own (thankfully rather limited) experiences with RHB. As will become clear, the greatest hurt RHB caused me was through the reverberations of her actions, as it were, than from the actions themselves.

Back around 2009 or 2010, I was a member of several book-based Livejournal communities. The main one was *fantasywithbite*, and it is there I first encountered RHB, then in her Winterfox persona. She was a frequent poster and commenter, and (to my shame) on the strength of several reviews she posted, we became mutual followers, which allowed me to see her locked posts. Once I had done so, and one I had seen her in action for a greater period of time in *fantasywithbite*, I realised what a cruel person she was. This was when 50 Books POC was falling apart, and everyone in similar communities was having their eyes opened about RHB's behaviour. I was so afraid of her that I was afraid to defriend her, even though our interactions had been extremely minimal (I think she posted a few comments on my blog and participated in discussion with other friends of mine once). I sat helplessly by as she left a trail of destruction in Livejournal fandom, and breathed a huge sigh of relief when she deleted her Winterfox blog and seemed to disappear from Livejournal.

That was the extent of my interactions with her. Like Azarias, I am more at home in what we might term 'fanworks' fandom, although I am a friendly acquaintance with several people in the SFF community, and see a lot of overlap between the two communities anyway. A lot of my frustration with how the reveal of RHB's professional author persona was handled was due, I think, to the people involved not knowing her history as Winterfox in fanworks fandom. We have known of the links between Winterfox and her various other usernames (Valse de Lune, *acrackedmoon*) and so on for *years*, and most people even peripherally involved with Livejournal-based fanworks fandom have either tangled with Winterfox, known someone who has, or seen her at work in various communities. When RHB's RH persona was revealed to be Winterfox (I think several years ago although I don't recall the timeline exactly), we saw her vitriolic reviews in the context of her abusive behaviour as Winterfox. For us it was never only about 'performance rage', 'hyperbolic language' or 'negative reviews', and the way she had treated e.g. Rachel Manija (although we didn't know the full extent) informed how we perceived her RH persona. I think a lot of people in the SFF community were missing this context, and so they excused RH's actions, even though they were equally damaging.

So when RH was revealed to be Benjanun Sriduangkaew – someone I'd seen reviewed positively by friendly acquaintances or talked up as the next big thing in progressive SFF – it was never just about negative book reviews for those of us in fanworks fandom. It was extremely frustrating to see people I'd respected and trusted urging caution, accepting Sriduangkaew's apologies at face value, saying that talking about her behaviour as Winterfox was damaging to the community, and generally painting us as a bunch of jealous obsessives who were annoyed by a few negative book reviews. We had already been ignored when the RH-Winterfox connection was made, and it felt as if victims' voices were being ignored or silenced because people liked Sriduangkaew's writing.

I now know that for many in the SFF community, the RH-Winterfox connection was not known, nor was the full extent of RHB's abuse common knowledge. She isolated her victims, and, in some cases it seems, made them feel as if they deserved their treatment. I am extraordinarily grateful to see that RHB's abuse is being taken seriously at last, and that people in SFF are waking up to the fact that it's all connected, and that it went far beyond negative reviews – and that such reviews take on a different light when combined with her harassment of authors and fans on Twitter and other social media. I'm extremely relieved that Laura has put this report together, that victims are coming forward, that we have this space in the comments to speak up, and that RHB's behaviour is finally being treated as the abuse it is.

(I also want to clarify that fanworks fandom is by no means a monolith, and when I use the word 'we' to describe it, I mean my own circle of friends and the various fannish spaces in which I hang out. I do not speak for others, however.)

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## Kari

November 8, 2014 at 11:09 am

I feel like the worst kind of coward, for having taken so long to come forward and speak up, while others demonstrate great courage. I even contemplated posting this anonymously, because I am, as I said, a coward. And after two years, I'm still afraid.

But, but but.... First of all, I want to confirm that RHB did apologise to me and after that she left me alone. I am grateful to her for that and I respect her for doing it. And as a result, I don't want to rehearse what happened between her and me, though I will note that her tweets to me have been edited and the most distressing ones are long deleted. I deleted some of mine, too, because I didn't want that reminder. We all edit ourselves.

To this day, I don't know if she was justified in my case or not: I'm not her and I don't know how my words to a 3rd party may have affected her. So there's that: whoever she is, she's a real person and real people can be hurt and that is never good.

What is left behind, though, is the voice in my head that tells me over and over to be silent, not to speak up, to double-guess my words and my work. I don't feel safe speaking, I don't feel safe writing, I don't feel allowed, sometimes, to private thoughts. A lot of this was already there, due to past experience, but my brush with her convinced me that SFF was unsafe for me unless I monitored and controlled myself continually and silenced every thought that might not be good enough or kind enough or right enough.

I can't help thinking that there has to be a better way of being, of working, of building a safe and inclusive genre, where everyone genuinely feels welcome and supported. I hate that this debate — not here on this post, but elsewhere on the web — is tending towards the language of war, with 'sides' and attacks and divisions and crashing-and-burning. I hate that I still see many men — who still have more of the power in this genre — sitting on fences tutting and whistling and uttering reproofs to those who speak from whatever position. I do not feel safe. I know I'm not alone in this here. I know there are people whose views on this are completely different to mine who are scared and distressed and feeling rejected. Those who have been injured — and I include B and her circle in this as well as all those named in Laura's report and all the others who are coming forward, here and elsewhere — are being asked to account for themselves by people for whom this is a spectacle, or who are in a position to continue unaffected.

I don't know what to do about this, except to offer what support I can, I don't know if there \*is\* a solution.

But I want an end to the fear.

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## Pat Cadigan

November 8, 2014 at 11:12 am

Andy Sawyer, you are what my grandmother would have called a Mensch. With a capital M you could hear in her voice when she said it.

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## Colum Paget

November 8, 2014 at 11:14 am

@Gezol

# Just wanted to say that I really appreciated what you had to say on the RPG.net thread about this whole thing- tried to send you a PM there, but Im not sure if it went through.

I got it, but the reply system didn't work for me. I don't think that was anything sinister though, I use unusual web-browsers, and sometimes webpages play up.

# I never interacted with RH, so I wouldnt call myself a victim of hers, but I did once seriously aspire to become a published fantasy author, and she was a major contributing factor towards my deciding I didnt really want to pursue that, after all.

I think she, and some aspects of the culture of SF&F, have been contributing factors to a lot of people walking away from writing. That said, truth is that most communities do tend to develop heirarchies, with the people who have the sharpest elbows rising to the top. It tends to be that if you want to do anything in life, you have to contend with people who want to block you, although the whole requires\_hate thing is orders of magnitude worse than what I've generally seen anywhere else (there's the stuff going on in the gaming community right now though, but I dont know that community, so I can't compare).

# but more than that I didnt want anything to do with a community that enabled and supported someone like her  
# to the extent that it did, back then.

Yep, and again I think you're not the only person to have made that decision. All these years RH has been a sort of unelected ambassador for SF&F on twitter and her blog, especially when people saw the support she had.

# I strongly agree with you about how a lot of what enabled her in the SF&F community was basically political and  
# ideological in nature, and think that a serious reexamination of some popular tenets of that ideology (in particular  
# the punching up thing) is in order- I think there are certain beliefs that have become popular in the community which  
# seem almost tailor-made to enable people like her.

Yep, but the problem is that people find it very hard to change their beliefs and ideological commitments. As for things being 'tailor made', I think it's a case that if a system is flawed, then a predator works with those flaws. A different set of flaws would either attract a different kind of predator, or else the predator would re-align themselves to those flaws.

# I hope that the SF&F community will come out of this changed for the better, but I think its not going to happen for  
# as long as some of those beliefs (which, tragically, I think became popular because of what were very good intentions,  
# originally) remain widespread.

I agree, and it is a tragedy, and one that I think has not hit bottom yet. Perhaps someone will turn it into an opera one day.

Colum

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## Anna Feruglio

November 8, 2014 at 11:53 am

Kari – I believe in unconditional positive regard, which other might call lovingkindness. It does not mean a free pass for whatever behaviour, but it does mean that I am always mindful of the ultimate worthiness of everybody, even RH. If she really is a psychopath, then she is as much to blame as my cat when she catches a mouse. Although I shall point out that I was able to save the mouse on that one occasion when I saw it and it was still alive.

But of course, for some people that is more of struggle than for others. You I have long known as the most relentlessly nice person I have had the fortune to meet. I know full well that that is a result of a powerful internal superego, and I do wish I could drag that ego in a dark alley and – sorry, scratch that, that I could drag that ego to a side and give it a long hard stern talking-to. But you are not your internal censor – you are a genuinely nice and smart and funny human being. It wasn't your internal censor that made you gush about my hair, or tell my then boyfriend that he looked much happier since he'd met me, that delivered an immensely erudite and funny and pointed history of the Musquetteer's tie-in novels, and other spontaneous affirmative things you have brought into my life. It was not your internal censor that helped brought about much better safeguards – not perfect, but much better – against harassment in British fandom.

So when we disagree, when I want to clobber you over the head because you are too nice, I STILL LIKE YOU AND APPRECIATE YOU AND RESPECT YOU. I am frequently loud, rude, harsh and I speak out of turn. I have the great good fortune of having reached the ability to only care a little bit about it, enough to try to change my behaviour, not enough that I am overly crushed by guilt and a sense of my own horribleness if I notice it. I reserve my self-doubt for other things.

And what I generally want to say is this: we all fail. Sometimes a little, sometimes epically. Christians have the "let he who is without sin cast the first stone". I can just say, comrades, I've been there. I was prejudiced – I still am. I was a bully, granted when my frontal cortex hadn't completely come on line yet. I have waved a pitchfork. I am in no position to issue dogmatic and everlasting condemnations, although I have to say that for the sake of the community I am going to be mightily suspicious of a couple of enablers for a long time.

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## Liz Williams

November 8, 2014 at 11:56 am

I share a lot of the concerns about the culture, but would note that a lot of pro writers still have no idea who RH/BS is, because although she did target more major writers like GRRM, AFAIK, he ignored her. A large number of pros didn't speak out because they didn't know she existed. But many of the people who supported her really have little or no standing in the community – they're loud on Twitter and, because they tend to suffer from an exaggerated sense of their own self importance, they think they do, but really, they're very marginal. I think there are some starting-out and midlist authors who have behaved very stupidly over this, but when I got the notifications on Twitter with my

name in them (it comes to my email account, but otherwise I don't use Twitter), it was the usual handful of sanctimonious individuals. Now that this has come to wider attention, a lot of comments I've seen or received have indicated that enabling abuse does not in fact reflect the prevailing genre culture.

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## Colum Paget

November 8, 2014 at 12:22 pm

# And what I generally want to say is this: we all fail. Sometimes a little, sometimes epically. Christians have the let he who is  
# without sin cast the first stone. I can just say, comrades, I've been there. I was prejudiced I still am. I was a bully, granted  
# when my frontal cortex hadn't completely come on line yet. I have waved a pitchfork. I am in no position to issue dogmatic  
# and everlasting condemnations, although I have to say that for the sake of the community I am going to be mightily  
# suspicious of a couple of enablers for a long time.

Well said. We need to focus on how we prevent this next time, and not on settling old scores.

# I have waved a pitchfork.

This is a little off topic, but does anyone else think it's ironic that the pitchfork, a rural implement, has become the symbol of revolutionary urban mobs?

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## Bryn

November 8, 2014 at 1:23 pm

RH was also active (and vile) on the Ferretbrain forum as valse de la lune

<http://ferretbrain.com/contributors/81/playpen>

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## Tanya Avakian

November 8, 2014 at 1:31 pm

Azarias makes a good point about the difference between the discourse now and a few weeks ago. I understand why the issue is coalescing for some people around lines of "She's bad, but it's not white people's business." There's more I could say than this, but I certainly don't want to be the person who opens the door to a gigawank about Social Justice Bad or Good rather than a serious, precise discussion about serious, precise issues. I think the more to say involves some further serious and precise issues as opposed to, say, BeesFail, but it needs to be entered into with care and sensitivity and it does need ideally (and voluntarily) to be led by people who identify more with Sriduangkaew than I do. This time around, however, I believe it has gone beyond that, and here is why.

A few weeks ago people were accusing the victims of lying. When people do that, it gets beyond, "Our circus, our wild lions and tigers and bears." There is a huge difference between wanting the space to deal emotionally, rhetorically, intellectually and ethically with the shock waves of a delicate internal issue, on an individual and on an institutional level, and abetting criminal behavior. The first is understandable and should be respected, as defined within reason by those within the issue. The second is not excusable and opens the floor to all responsible people to step in.

Generally speaking, communities that conflate the two do not do well.

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## Liz Williams

November 8, 2014 at 2:05 pm

It becomes the business of anyone who is on the receiving end of death threats, and it also becomes the business of the law. Some of the more vocal POC in fandom have significantly failed to protect their peers – have, in fact, thrown those people to the wolf, and continue to do so for reasons which seem to me to be mainly concerned with their own egos.

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## Tanya Avakian

November 8, 2014 at 2:22 pm

To Kari: I know how you feel, I think, because I have been involved in a few wanks, and I had a little hesitation yesterday about posting at all for fear of tarring the victims with guilt by association. If I can inject a personal note, I largely faded off LJ because of that fear of guilt by association.

I agree with many people that the best way to deal with a loud, aggravating correspondent online is to ignore them if you can. Which is actually much of what is being requested one way or another by people who are disgusted with what Sriduangkaew was able to do to a lot of people. She'll do what she'll do, one way or another. Most obnoxious online people end up doing it alone. She however ended up in a culture in which it was seen as being complicated. This is because many of us in this culture do try to do the right thing and thus not to judge behavior that may come about because of reasons we think we can or should empathize with.

We also tend to be people who are dealing chronically with some personal pain, and so when we see pain in others, we empathize. When we find that people have been told what horrible people we are by people in pain, we tend to think we should put our big girl panties on and deal with it alone and honorably. When we find we have believed negative talk about other people because of third parties' self-interest, it undermines our sense of ourselves enough to bring about silence, not a clear reassessment and reaffirmation of our own values. We do not blame the people who spread the negative talk. They were in pain. We do not look objectively at the people who now blame us. They are in pain. And they all overlap with other people we care about socially, and we don't want to compromise people we care about.

Up to a point all this is noble, but when it enables predators, it has to stop. It can be bad enough when it enables an excess of wank. I fear this predator found the sff community awfully easy prey in the corners of it where she hunted, because people here want to do the right thing. Which is fine, but it stops being the right thing when the right thing becomes justification of others' abuse. People have gone years thinking they were the only ones, it's just wank and they probably had it coming. This might be the place to say that there is much in the culture of online wank that abets such self-undermining. I still have not fully recovered from getting private emails headed "OK, Tanya, this is it," and "Stop it right now. Final warning." I have not recovered from being accused of stalking, boundary violations, harassing people who never saw me as friends, etc. I have not recovered from being told, when I begged someone at least to keep confidential all I had told them about my private life, that "keeping secrets" was typical of pathological people. And this was in a more or less strictly private wank, and from someone who so far as I know is not a blooded, strategic online harasser. So how much more undermining from someone who is.

It's especially undermining when it comes from people you thought you knew and trusted and it happens overnight, as it can. Like you, I blamed myself; I still blame myself on some level. I still feel on some level that I am bad and dangerous to know. I still feel solicitous of the parties involved. It's a very common response to the way people talk to each other in wanks. So how much more when it goes well beyond wankiness.

There is no reason to feel guilty for not coming forward. In the first place, her treatment of you was well known, so there was no need. I do hope that some gentle disagreement about how much to feel sorry for Sriduangkaew is not to be taken as criticism of anything you have done or said.

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## Dolorosa

November 8, 2014 at 2:25 pm

@Kari, I am in awe at the kindness and empathy you are showing here, and in how you have been processing and dealing with these revelations, and your own history with RHB. What you have written here touches on something I wanted to raise as well.

I think there has got to be room in all this for those who have tangled with RHB (I'm using the word 'tangled' to try and avoid naming other people's experiences in a way that they would not) to react in the way that they want, and to name their experiences in language that is most helpful and healing for them. I also feel that their interlocutors – here and elsewhere – should support them by following their lead in using language that makes them comfortable. I think it's clear that I have found it most helpful and healing to call RHB's behaviour abusive, and to think of those people who suffered at her hands (and, crucially, who name themselves as such) as victims or survivors. It has mattered to me that people whose opinion I respect and whose role in the community I value have supported me by using similar language. Others who had dealings with RHB may not perceive her treatment as such, and may not want to identify as victims or survivors, and we need to support them in that.

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## Tanya Avakian

November 8, 2014 at 2:58 pm

To Liz: I agree. Illegal behavior becomes everybody's business.

Final note to Kari: I hesitated again whether to reveal details of what I've been accused of in the course of wanks, being sure that some people who I don't even know may well read it and think "Well, so long as you're not actually doing any of those things, you have nothing to worry about, right?" Which made me think I had to, because that's what ensures our silence. Not that we always have to turn everyone who crosses a line over to the police, but that we become silent to ourselves about our true selves, what we know to be the model for behavior toward which we work and which we should remain confident we can inhabit when we're with others. Having been silenced in our sense of ourselves, we do not come out for others. I only learned about RHB a couple of years ago, when, as mentioned, I'd faded off LJ. I didn't feel I could come back just to engage with some of what had happened. Part of it was that time had passed. But part of it was that I felt people Knew About Me.

The details of what people accuse you of don't really matter when it accomplishes this. And yet we don't share them for fear of committing butthurt or grudge-wank. We also are protective of other people who we know on some level to be vulnerable. So everybody else thinks they are the only person to have dark secrets that others online mysteriously guessed and revealed to us, and everybody else bears it alone; and then when somebody comes along who is up to much worse, our secret shame keeps us silent.

Taking some of the things that undermine us at random, we may just possibly help someone else; or we may make someone else think "She probably deserved it." After all, it's always possible. Honorable people tend to keep that in mind. Which, however, means that some of the time we need to risk revealing that instead of (or as well as) revealing our shared vulnerability. If enough people do, we will get down to our shared vulnerability and be better able to discount the butthurt, and that seems to me a good thing.

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## Peter Schmitt

November 8, 2014 at 3:33 pm

Being just some small and totally unknown German blogger without a long internet history or any substantial ties to SFF fandom (even the German one), I never had any personal confrontation with RH. I mostly saw her on Ferretbrain, where I was a regular reader (though no member) 2 1/2 years ago. It took me a while to realize the full scope of her total lack of empathy, her cruelty and outright sadism. And I was shocked to see her behaviour being defended (and even applauded) in the name of fighting oppression and injustice. I just couldn't comprehend it. Well, I was rather naive back then ... It was a sad and sobering experience.

I have nothing of value to add to this conversation. I just wanted to tell all the victims of RH (and her supporters): You are extremely courageous in standing up and telling your stories. I applaud you. It makes me sick to read of the things she has done to you.

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## Celestine Angel

November 8, 2014 at 3:38 pm

I've been communicating back and forth with the friend I mentioned in my above comment. Summary for those who don't want to search: friend posted in an LJ comm intended for constructive criticism, Winterfox tore her a new one, other people and I called Winterfox out for being not constructive, my friend and I went "WTF?" shrugged, and moved on.

As it turns out, my friend was far more affected than she showed at the time, or perhaps I was not perceptive enough to see it. In the message I received from her today, she said that while Winterfox's critique did have some valid points (which happened from time to time), the harsh and unforgiving nature of the words did leave my friend unwilling to share her work for a long time afterwards. She says she was nervous about even writing, but luckily she still does. As she put it, it was her "first exposure to online critique--well, any critique, tbh [...]." She was very new, and Winterfox could very well have bullied and frightened her away from ever writing again; she certainly tried.

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## Nth Anon

November 8, 2014 at 4:12 pm

Yet another anon, fueled by paranoia.

Thanks for putting this all together, I can't imagine how much mental fortitude that took. All my gratefulness to you.

I had a very close call myself. I had the chance to interact professionally with BS. I started reading her works, was at first taken in, and then after the fourth or so piece, something starting pinging on my radar and I got the gut feeling that there was a disturbing undercurrent in the stories. That whatever was motivating these stories deep down inside was Not OK. So I ran away at light speed. We did have a brief interaction, so I am now, of course, terrified for what the future holds. (I fall into some categories of people she liked to smack around.)

I have to say that I believe my previous very bad judgement/experiences — in my case, a history of emotionally abusive relationships — led to my dodging this particular bullet ... at least, mostly. I don't expect people who haven't been manipulated on this level before to know what those red flags are. So if my words can help those who are hurting about being taken in, even a little bit — it's not your fault in any way. RH/BS did it to you. Her choices, not yours.

When it all came out, I was surprised that BS turned out to be RH (whom I knew about by reputation, though I was never in any of those communities), but not at all surprised that BS was doing gross things, given the hints I personally perceived in her stories.

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## **Anna Feruglio**

November 8, 2014 at 4:38 pm

Yes, I have been reading her fiction and being as disturbed as Nth Anon was. I think this is not the forum to discuss this though.

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## **Liz Williams**

November 8, 2014 at 4:42 pm

I'm glad that you came to no harm at her hands.

The general position among the pros to whom I've spoken since this came out, both writers and editors. There's no suggestion that she be blackballed, although some of the people she's slandered (and there is quite a lot of proof) have decided not to work with her in her current persona, which is entirely their prerogative. I would not choose to work with her myself, as her behaviour to date has been so staggeringly unprofessional, to put it mildly, and would be likely, in my opinion, to impact on things like deadlines etc. Would I read her work? Probably, yes. My comments above regarding separating writers from their work still stands.

I have been on a number of award juries, both the Clarke and the World Fantasy, and will promote work by people whom I personally despise (there are not many of these within the industry, in fact). However, those people are still within the bounds of the law; once that is overstepped, I would be reluctant to deal with them in any capacity.

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## **Jordan**

November 8, 2014 at 4:48 pm

To those saying things like "well, she'd never last a minute in any forum I moderated" — don't be so sure. If she suddenly barged in talking about throwing acid on people, sure, you'd give her the insta-boot. Anyone would. But that's not how she does it. She is very good at calibrating her tone to exactly the level of abrasiveness that a community is willing to tolerate, and working in enough valid points that you can't just dismiss her posts as garbage. The escalation comes later.

It is easy to say "I'd never fall for that". It feels good to think it. But it's a dangerous thing to let yourself believe.

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## **Tanya Avakian**



November 8, 2014 at 5:07 pm

I would not identify the work with the person myself, either. That way lies derail.

I think she's talented, and yes, her stories can be disturbing. But as soon as we go there we risk losing perspective. Is this disturbing content worse than that disturbing content, can you tell from reading a story about a mermaid whether a person is a horrible human being, etc. Not that we can't ever talk about such things—but it's about something else.

At issue for the professional community is her professionalism—to put it generously—and that created a need to know.

Jordan: those are excellent points. It feels good to say “I'd never fall for that” and it's a dangerous thing to let yourself believe. I agree that her *modus operandi* has been calibrated to exactly how much a person or community will put up with, which for me puts her in provocateur rather than activist territory. Activists break the envelopes open rather than riding cunningly along the edges.

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## Kari

November 8, 2014 at 5:44 pm

Tanya: I think, broadly, you're right about finding the limits of empathy and about how to find that elusive sense of self. And I'm so sorry that you have had such painful experiences. I'm not sure I'm noble: I just have a stern social conscience and a Welsh mother (Welsh mothers value kindness over everything). I can't help thinking that online culture, with its lack of apparent affect, sometimes fosters misunderstanding and pain where a face-to-face discussion would have avoided or at least mitigated it. I did not set out to hurt RHB; I did, however, snipe at someone else, and hurt them badly, and that was out of line of me: Cat, I've said this before, but if you're reading this, I'm genuinely sorry about that. It was an empathy fail on my part, fueled by protectiveness of a friend, and I should have been more thoughtful.

Dolorosa: yes, and yes and yes on finding a language of healing. We are a community built on words and language. Surely we can do this?

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## ModeratorY

November 8, 2014 at 6:49 pm

### Gentle Mod Note:

Folks, we've left unpublished a small number of comments that seem much more focused on RHB, her proponents, and speculating/hoping to see punishment/blackballing/"come-uppance" and so forth.

Going forward, we will continue to disallow those sorts of comments in general, in the interest of not seeing the discussion derailed from healing and to prevent diverting attention from the personal experiences of people who need community support.

After all, there really is no “them” and “us” here — there is only our community. And our community badly needs some healing.  
#requireslove (with a HT to @nalo\_hopkinson)

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## Meredith L. Patterson

November 8, 2014 at 6:50 pm

Kari, I didn't know that about Welsh mothers. I'm Welsh on my mom's side, and while we've had our differences over the years, a fundamental kindness she has about her has always helped bring about reconciliation. Her ancestors came over some generations back, so we've no real connexion to Welsh experience per se — except I do wonder what kinds of memetic traits, if you will, ancestral cultures select for. My mom married a kind man, and all our lives they've encouraged my sisters and me to find partners who are kind (and curious, and a few other traits); I can say the same for both sets of grandparents, and beyond that I don't know.

I bring this up mainly because it's so unusual to see a swarm of emotionally keyed-up people, e.g., this thread, pouring that emotional energy into *kindness*. It's taking raw material that could become anger at someone *who has already demonstrated that they thrive on riling other people up at them* and funneling it into support for the people that person affected instead. It's really quite beautiful.

But, then, I am also aspie, and my flat affect in person sometimes fosters misunderstanding and pain in face-to-face discussion. With the rise of Twitter/Facebook, realtime social media flamewars have made the Internet [uncomfortably more like meatspace](#) for those of us for whom an overall blunting of affect levels the playing field, as it were. So it's really good to see people finally talking about how to operate cooperatively under conditions of less affect than they're used to.

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## Chang Terhune

November 8, 2014 at 6:59 pm

Thank you Laura for what must have been an exhausting amount of research on any subject let alone this one. I had an immense amount of respect for you before but now that's broken the floodgates. You are an amazing woman.

Here's my sad tale of woe:

I met Alex Daly McFarlane in 2011 or 2012 when she was visiting Cat Valente in Maine and we were at an Interstitial Arts Salon in Brunswick. I found Alex pleasant, bought her and apple soda and enjoyed her company in the few times I saw her.

In June of 2012 I tweeted a link to a post on my blog about a picture that inspired a story of mine ([SUN DAYS which you can listen to here](#)) [in this post](#). Later in the day I noticed a few replies to my tweet from Alex McFarlane, RH and someone else (possibly Winterfox or Cracked Moon which means it was RH using another guise). It took a while to figure out how they found out about the post.

It turns out Alex McFarlane sent it to RH and it all blew up from there. RH said she would send the link to "feminist editors" so I would be blacklisted. One of the others called me sexist, chauvinist and host of other things. At the time it really shook me. I knew who RH was and that she'd attacked some of my friends and favorite authors. I was aware of the damage she'd done and that those who engaged with her were excoriated at the very least.

I tried to reason with them to no avail. In my haste I forgot you do no engage with trolls in any manner. The experience left me scarred and skittish for a long time. As a new writer trying to break out into the world I was terrified. I thought RH had the power to carry this out at the time. I asked friends who had been beset by her and they told me it would pass.

Two years down it has. I quickly cut off all ties with Alex McFarlane on social media as I knew she was bad news. I never stopped writing but I was wary of setting out writing anything other than white male characters because of any criticism I might receive. But I know in my heart of hearts that a writer has to write what they feel regardless of what others might say.

I saw Alex last year at Readercon – probably around the time she was harassing Athena – and it was not pleasant. I made sure to steer clear of her and some mutual friends because they might be with her.

I can honestly say I'm glad her part in this is coming to light. RH/BS is bad enough but her acolytes need to be held accountable. For what it's worth I think anyone who goes by the RH moniker needs to be pitied since they choose to engage the world with hate. Hate is not talking truth to power. Hate is Hate. Mother Teresa didn't use hate. Aung San Suu Kyi didn't use it. Nor did many others speaking truth to power.

If we want to get rid of bullies and abusers we need to accept that bullies and abusers come in all shapes and sizes. What really shock me about this is that RH/BS pattern of attacking POC and female POC over others is appalling at the very least. My first thought is that this was a predator thinning the field of competition. My second is that RH/BS may just be Alex McFarlane.

Thank you again, Laura, for making space for this conversation to be had. Bless you.

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## Mod10

November 8, 2014 at 7:16 pm

Just a gentle reminder: we're not here to speculate on RH's identity. We're here to support victims so that they can be heard in a safe place. Thanks.

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## Tanya Avakian

November 8, 2014 at 7:18 pm

Kari: I appreciate your kindness, and want to empathize that I'm not seeking sympathy for myself. Even as I have written this I've felt bad about the possibility of its being read that way. After all, it's always more complicated...etc. I also don't necessarily want to be holding forth upon online culture in general. There is a lot of potential for misunderstanding and snowballing, etc., but there is also a great deal of potential for real communication and there are many spaces within which some of the dysfunctions that have occurred on LJ and elsewhere are less likely. I think myself that especially in feminist sff online culture, there is an 80% of the time in which people want to be careful with each other and want to own our mistakes bravely. Part of what I think goes on when it all turns ugly is that we want to be careful with each other and want to own our mistakes bravely. It is also a space in which people tend to be very honest. The dishonesty tends to be on the level of being sufficiently aware of ourselves and others that we are more conscious of being role models and using the right boilerplate. At the same time there is a level of self-disclosure and owning-up that is very rarely seen in the world outside. Online wank culture can be stressful, but when it's strictly personal or is between people who in their different ways are trying to bring their real selves to social issues, I would not put it on the RHB level for one minute. That wasn't the point, and I'm glad to have this chance to say it wasn't and I am not, for one minute, wanting to present sff feminist people as frail woobies or RHB as about "those mean girls in high school." Sff feminist people are not frail woobies, we are prepared to bear a lot for the sake of what we believe, including our ongoing, inevitable self-doubt, and while the stakes can be daunting I believe by and large the debates are sincere, not about "those mean girls in high school." Liz makes the additional point that RHB and her swath are outside the awareness and habits of a great majority of professionals in the field.

I would say rather, a creepy and negative person—which I don't think is too harsh a portrayal of RHB—can easily fasten upon the basic good will of the great majority of people in this community, the determination to have a thick skin, to keep private kerfuffles private, to suck it up and accept responsibility, to accept that other people are unpredictable and may go off on you, accuse you of things you deeply abhor, break confidence, etc., and all with some fortitude. And she may use all those things as her fuel.

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## **Tanya Avakian**

November 8, 2014 at 7:33 pm

I won't dwell further on online culture in general or Why I Sometimes Need To Get Off The Internet because pursued too long, it could become another derail that will probably happen anyway, like the Social Justice derail, and it seems as well to prevent it happening here. The point was really that it's not the point. We live with these things voluntarily for the sake of our community and examine our consciences likewise, and are motivated to do so by what strikes me today as overall a commitment to trust. Not a perfect one to be sure, but enough of one that we can go online and speak from our hearts as we do. When the community as a whole gets very angry, it is often over the sense that a person's behavior violated that trust. Sometimes there is room for debate about how severe or intentional the violation was. In this case there is none. That seems to me a bottom line.

All of this is primarily for the benefit of the victims who may still be questioning themselves on some deep level or fearing that others will. As I see Kari doing. There are grey areas in many, many cases—but not in this one. The vulnerability to self-questioning that we keep open as a moral practice has here been cynically exploited. That's what I would most want people to take away who in any way blame themselves.

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## **Michael Roberts**

November 8, 2014 at 8:05 pm

Wow! Excellent work! I know this kind of thing is an inordinate drain on time, but seriously, the results are so very impressive! If there is any technical or organizational task at all you would like any help with, please feel free to email me.

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## **Stevie**

November 8, 2014 at 9:22 pm

It seems to me that, given the way in which the 'apology' on BS's blog has morphed into an attack on James Worrada, who is included alongside a man she alleges admitted being guilty of attempted murder and sexual abuse, it is unsurprising that people may be afraid of what else she may do.

On the other hand, this tactic is so repugnant that it may bring some comfort to those who worry about whether they were in some way to

blame in their interactions with her...

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## Erik

November 8, 2014 at 9:35 pm

You people are way too nice, These kinds of people are not as uncommon as people think, alot of bullies gravitate towards SJ because its often an effective shield/weapon, There are even forums where people share tips and tricks on bullying, share stories about destroying people (and laughing about it), even in some cases sharing info on people who are easy to agitate and freak out (they call them LoLCows, because they can be continually “milked for laughs”), often people who suffer from mental illness or a vulnerable for some other reason. I had a brush with that sub-culture when I was younger (as a troll, not a victim) but quickly found out that it was not a place to make friends.

People who think these kinds of people are sad or disturbed are wrong, they are more likely to be psychopaths who have had this kind of thing as their favorite hobby for many years, they are simply bad people who find enjoyment in causing conflict and making other people miserable, and sometimes compete with each other in much the same way as hackers do, mostly for bragging rights. The twitter tag #EndFathersDay was started by a group of such people for example.

I am an indie game developer and we have had similar problems both with dedicated trolls and with people who get away with harassing and destroying competition under the flag of social justice.

Hope my input had some value.

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## Edel Blau

November 8, 2014 at 10:19 pm

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to you, Laura, for the work you have done in compiling this information, and for the courage so many of the victims have shown in sharing their stories publicly. And I’d particularly like to express my deepest admiration and sympathy to Kari for speaking up on such a painful and private matter with such compassion and grace.

I am not one of Winterfox’s victims, thankfully. But some of her victims and attempted targets have been friends or friendly online acquaintances of mine, and so I have been a witness to some of her now-carefully-deleted activities that are documented here, most notably in relation to the 50books-POC Livejournal community. I am also one of the many regular participants on the [Fail\\_Fandomanon](#) LJ and DW discussions of Winterfox/RequiresHate, and one of the editors of the unofficial FFA wiki entry on her. And for the record, since WF/RH and her supporters have often tried to paint FFA as a wretched hive full of racist stalkers, I am a queer WOC; my grudge against WF/RH has nothing to do with political disagreements — more often than not I agreed with many of the actual critical points she raised about sexist/racist/colonialist/etc. elements within works under review — and everything to do with the viciousness and persistence of her personal attacks, the chilling effect her vitriol and harassment has had upon numerous communities, and the self-serving hypocrisy with which she used social justice concepts as bludgeons to tear people down and “win” arguments.

I’m here primarily to bear additional witness to the accounts you’ve already seen of her actions on 50books-POC. She first came to my attention there in 2010, when I saw her popping up out of the blue in comments on a friend’s review of a N.K. Jemisin book, lambasting Jemisin’s writing and insinuating my friend was lacking in taste and intelligence for liking Jemisin’s work. I was so taken aback by this random vitriol in a community that did not normally lean towards this style of discourse that I became suspicious there was a troll in the dungeon, so to speak, and kept a wary eye out for more material by this commenter. Sure enough, when I looked at older posts on the comm I found more drive-by attacks in the same vein left as comments to positive reviews of books by Jemisin and Cindy Pon, and more were forthcoming as new reviews were posted. This was the point at which I first did a cursory Googling to see if she was noted for such behavior, and quickly found multiple references to her being or having been a notoriously argumentative participant on fannish gossip/mockery communities like [Fandom\\_Wank](#) on JournalFen and [SF-Drama](#) on Livejournal and “sporking” communities like the [God Awful Fan Fiction](#) forums. What’s particularly notable to me now in retrospect, given RH’s recurring pattern of extended and recurring harassment of her favorite targets du jour, is how several of these discussions I found of Winterfox’s earlier online notoriety noted her not just for being mean-spirited and aggressive in general, but for the sheer obsessive persistence with which she kept attacking one particular fanfic writer. The pattern of behavior described in [this 2011 comment thread from the FFRantsAnon community](#) — a spinoff of the [FanficRants comm](#), neither of them associated with FFA — is in hindsight rather chillingly familiar:

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*“It didn’t matter if posters were discussing Tolkien or discussing the real life ramifications of a drought in Africa, she’d find some way to derail any discussion to focus on her utter hatred of Link’s Queen and that fic. [...]”*

*Anyone with an ounce of compassion and common sense could figure out that Link’s Queen was (and probably still is bat-shit insane just from the stuff she’d post, but give her some credit for being about five years ahead of those HP astral plane Snape wives). But not Winterfox. She derived such fun from bullying and rallying the dogpiling of someone with so little grip on reality that for a lot of people she lost any credibility as far as her speil about being so far above any of those lowly little immature fanfic writers and readers.*

*There’s arguing and heated disagreements with people you don’t like, and there’s flaming an unarmed opponent; Winterfox loved to engage in the latter especially with someone like Link’s Queen who didn’t have the sense to just shut up and let the wank die down on its own. And it wasn’t like Link’s Queen could have even done that, Winterfox was *\*always\** bringing it up at every opportunity.”*

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I was still reading 50books-POC actively when the 2011 implosion happened, before Winterfox deleted her LiveJournal and all of her comments left on other journals on the site. I saw her “stupid fuck” comment about Cindy Pon. I saw her escalating personal insults towards any commenters who disagreed with her opinions or behavior. I saw the comments described [here](#), where one of her recurring responses to disagreement was to question the racial identity of commenters who failed to fall into lockstep with her. (You can see a subtler example in an after-the-fact discussion of the 50books-POC fallout [here](#), where an anonymous commenter identifying herself as WF tries to associate a statement she dislikes to a moderator she believes to be white, only to drop the subject when she is informed that both of the active mods were POC.) And I saw her silently, selectively [editing/deleting the “white women’s tears”](#) and [“are you white then”](#) remarks aimed at Hesychasm, which were also witnessed and specifically noted at the time by multiple observers, as noted in these discussion threads: <http://fail-fandomanon.dreamwidth.org/17508.html?thread=72441188&style=site#cmt72441188>, <http://fail-fandomanon.dreamwidth.org/17508.html?thread=72440932&style=site#cmt72440932>, [http://www.journalfen.net/community/wank\\_report/888.html?thread=7266680#t7266680](http://www.journalfen.net/community/wank_report/888.html?thread=7266680#t7266680). (The links presented above are not my own comments; I am including them as references to other people who witnessed the same things I saw at the time.)

Outside of the 50books-POC affair, I am also one of many people who can vouch that the connections between several of her identities – winterfox, acrackmoon, pyrofenec, and RequiresHate – were never a secret that required any sort of deliberate stalking or invasions of privacy to connect. While most of the LJ/DW/Wordpress comments that once would have easily proven this have now been deleted, under those identities she was in the habit of freely linking to comments or posts she’d left under the alternate names on different sites, openly identifying them as her own words. You’re unlikely to find anyone who will have thought to screencap any of the places where WF/RH crossed the streams in this way because it was such common knowledge that these were all different names for the same person and the connection was not any sort of privileged, secret information. (There is at least still some tangential evidence of this on the various extant webforums where she also used the winterfox handle – anyone who cares to spend enough time exploring old comment threads can find examples of forum-user-winterfox linking to material on her winterfox Livejournal, the now-deleted badfic-mocking LJ community she founded, and various other now-deleted accounts, openly claiming them as her own works.)

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## Had Enough

November 8, 2014 at 10:25 pm

There is something disturbing that I’m seeing happen, so I’m going to speak up here. RH hurt a *lot* of people in the name of social justice, there is no doubt about that. But that doesn’t invalidate criticism of problematic texts (even particular criticisms she had), nor does it mean we don’t need social justice. I said above I’m a brown woman, and we very much still need social justice and people to call out problems. I don’t want to see all the work marginalized people and their allies have done be swept aside and some privileged people ignore all criticism of their work because “oh, it’s just bullying.” Bullying (what RH and her cronies did) and true social justice analysis and activism are two completely different things. I do the latter, and I will continue to, and I hope all of you will, too.

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## Alter Hase

November 8, 2014 at 10:55 pm

Colum:

#This is a little off topic, but does anyone else think it’s ironic that the pitchfork, a rural implement, has become the symbol of revolutionary urban mobs?

It's from the powerful visuals at the end of the original Frankenstein movie, where the rural *mitteleuropa* villagers attacked the windmill armed with pitchforks and torches, setting the mill ablaze and dispatching the monster through collective effort.

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Having surfed in from Prof. Glen Reynolds' Instapundit, I expected something different. I stopped reading SF and Fantasy decades ago, but started up a few years ago, when I got a kindle for Christmas, and started to plow back into binge reading like I did in college. However in the years that I wasn't reading fiction, I was mostly online. I've seen this pattern over and over again. harassment in the newsgroups, harassment in MUD's. And of those cases, I remember I think three that fit this pattern to a T. and the above mentioned studies of the frequency of sociopathy/ sadism on the internet, couple with that piece on the "terrible Triad of personalities" would lead people to be more cautious, but direct about their actions against trolls on online forums. But it also seems that the subtlety of the attacks, and language use, specifically along political and ideological lines hamstrung the moderators of those forums.

In the past cases I have seen that fit this pattern, one was on an old Usenet forum, and being a mod then, after the death threats were made, their account was blocked from the groups. and subsequent account, were also blocked. we did not put up with harassment or death threats (and emotions ran high as this was within hours and days of 9-11). their supporters and apologists were given one warning to drop the matter or their accounts would follow suit. this preserved the harmony of the board, at the time. A much more insidious, and more equivalent form occurred on an online game environment a few years ago, one where No one had mod powers and the game establishment was disinterested in involving themselves with player interpersonal disagreements. The Manipulator was expert at buttering up player admins in certain spaces and making himself at home, where upon he would isolate, and then troll his victims, some of who were friends, and he would use the language of fairness, to his groomed admins, when others would make claims of harassment against him. He had a couple of alternate accounts as spies/ sock puppets that he used to gather info, or to inflate the numbers of his supporters, but he did have supporters. eventually not one, but two of the online communities he insinuated himself into detonated due to acrimony. All I could do was support, and back up my friends verbally and emotionally, and let them know that they were not alone and what ever the abuser said I still liked them. eventually RL factors removed him from the game, but even to this day, a lot of the acrimony remains, and I lost a number of online 'friends' over this. In examining it, afterwards the man was a master manipulator, and enjoyed the power he got from not only abusing his isolated victims, but hobnobbing with the wizards (admins), as it were. The Third instance was an RL club, and the manipulation resulted in the club shedding many members, but the abuser having to leave the state under threat of lawsuit (and possible charges of theft and embezzlement).

What I learned from these, that may be of help in the future is, if you have the power to, shut down harassing and abusive language immediately, and block alternate avenues of communication if need be. Craft policies for your moderators where there is no allowance for personal attacks, or threats, and make it clear. Hyperbolic language is one thing, but directed attacks are not to be excused for any reason. (Give them a warning for name calling as the only warning they get) If you do NOT have any sort of mod power or recourse, publically stand with your friends. My best tactic was assuming an air of icy, bureaucratic, politeness, and then dropping the politeness, but never dropping into swearing or rage filled cant. Give them little to grab on to. Sure, at times I was vibrating with rage at the keyboard, but the tone was most important. Finally, as Liz, above mentioned, don't be afraid to get the law involved, if you have standing. a lot of local politicians give lip service to stopping on line bullying, give their new programs a chance to actually do the work.

I don't share any progressive ideals, or goals. I am one of those that thinks that Social Justice is just another form of Gramscian cultural damage, but that being said, there really isn't an excuse to give someone else a shitty day (who doesn't deserve it), and picking on starting authors is just cruel. I'm up for a good story. That being said, what ever happened to reviews that said "This is a good piece of work, but it's not my cup of tea, or Technically brilliant, but characters i all wish would walk themselves into a running wood chipper"? There doesn't seem to be much allowance for tastes or different trope preferences as much as their used to be. as it is I will still loiter about the Kindle \$2.99 and below section looking at descriptions that pique my interest.

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## Alter Hase

November 8, 2014 at 11:20 pm

Oh, and Ms. Mixon, that is some outstanding detective work on your part. I've seen similar, but they were on some fairly obsessive LJ's.

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## Nicole J. LeBoeuf-Little

November 9, 2014 at 12:43 am

On moderators: I recall TNH once saying that if you get one seeming troll, you can tolerate them for a time in hopes they will come around

to being productive members of the community. But if you see two troll-like posters egging each other on, they both have to go. Ban them immediately. Which on the surface sounds like a productive strategy against bullies who work primarily through the loud loyalty of their followers... but if the bullies are organizing their clique via back-channels, it becomes much, much more difficult.

@Azarius: Thank you for your thoughtful reply. I can understand wanting to keep people on the “defending abuse” list who flat-out called victims liars. My only problem is that the links on one or two of those names simply don’t support the accusation. I wish that the links could be changed to point to a better example of that person “defending abuse,” if such is available. But it’s your post, and your prerogative, and I understand that maybe you don’t want to keep updating the page now that the community is over here. So I’ll leave it at that.

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## Ann Somerville

November 9, 2014 at 12:46 am

[trying again]

“the ‘apology’ on BS’s blog has morphed into an attack on James Worrad”

While claims of stalking are unsubstantiated, Worrad \*did\* point VD at RH. Given VD’s racism and misogyny, that was an evil thing to do (not that it in any way excuses an iota of RH’s behaviour.)

I am concerned that with all the focus on RH herself, this community doesn’t seem all that concerned about Alex Dally McFarlane’s actions which in many ways, in service to RH’s reputation, did as much harm to people like Rochita Loenen-Ruiz, Athena Andreadis and Chang Terhune. After the exposure of James Frenkel and the way he used his editing position at Tor, it would be nice to know that up and coming writers and creators had a way of talking about people in the industry misusing their influence to stifle the careers of other people – especially the careers of \*women\*. Women writers of any race have enough difficulty breaking into SFF and facing hostility from the angry straight white male contingent, without having their effort sabotaged by heinous whisper campaigns.

This isn’t about MacFarlane, or even RH. It’s about a mechanism for exposing this when it happens again. Because it will.

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## Emma Bull

November 9, 2014 at 12:50 am

Y’know, I think it might not be off-topic to say this here. The next time any of us sees someone ridiculing someone else with “The lurkers support you in e-mail,” or if, heaven help us, we feel the urge to say it ourselves, let’s remember that during this abuse, sometimes the only comfort the victims got was that there were lurkers who supported them in e-mail, or in other private communications. When someone makes fun of someone else using that phrase, it’s cruel and painful. It’s an attempt—often successful—to devalue that little solace and rob it of its power to comfort. It’s been used on me, and on my friends. Please, don’t let it be used again.

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## Emma Bull

November 9, 2014 at 1:00 am

\*You people are way too nice\*

Erik, I want that to always be true of me. Yes, RHB’s tactics take advantage of people who extend the benefit of the doubt, who are kind, who try to think of others—the “nice” people. I don’t think being taken advantage of is an inevitable result of kindness, though. And being good to other people still seems to me like the only way to counterbalance the cruelty of bullies.

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 9, 2014 at 1:04 am

Thanks. Erik. Thank was interesting.

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## Azarias

November 9, 2014 at 1:07 am

Just a thought I had, not in response to anyone:

I think it's important to emphasize here that WF/RHB/BS's trolling in the name of social justice is a fairly recent phenomena. Most of her early exploits were trolling in the name of nothing in particular. Roughly coincident with RaceFail '09, she adopted the language of social justice while continuing to use the same tactics she had before. It gave her a new vocabulary and a new set of communities to wreck, but did not change her standard operating procedures nor her apparent goal of chaos and self-aggrandizement. As someone here characterized it, this was a hacker exploiting a vulnerability in a social code, rather than a person who began with good intentions but went astray. How or if that influences how this case is dealt with versus future cases, I'm unsure.

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## Emma Bull

November 9, 2014 at 1:25 am

Ann, I think if you follow the links in Laura's analysis and read the (admittedly overwhelming number!) of comments here, you'll see that RH's followers are named and held responsible. But I think you'll also see that the focus, for the most part, isn't on attacking the bullies, but supporting the victims. I may have misunderstood the purpose of this comment thread, but for my part, I'd rather do that right now than add layers of blame. Work is being done elsewhere to hold the abuser/s accountable.

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## Patrick Nielsen Hayden

November 9, 2014 at 1:29 am

Emma, as I'm sure you know, the reason "the lurkers support me in email" is a shorthand for a certain kind of self-valorizing flounce — and the reason Jo Walton's song about it is funny — is that all too often, claiming vast support from a cloud of invisible friends \*is\* a tool used by people who are clearly in the conversation in order to disrupt and derail it.

Your point is well taken — sometimes, the outsider really \*is\* the person with right on their side, and sometimes that brave outsider is holding it together only thanks to the support of a not-publicly-visible support network. The fact is, there aren't any short cuts for figuring out who's right and who's not-so-right. Sometimes the awkward outsider is a courageous truth-teller and the group is a mob of idiots reinforcing one another's foolish prejudices. And sometimes the awkward outsider is a toxic twit and the group's outlook is wisdom born of shared experience. There's no substitute for careful consideration of the specifics. Meanwhile, if this particular rodeo teaches us anything, it's should be that we all need to be alive to the ways in which our sentiments (insider vs outsider, strong vs weak, privileged vs underprivileged, etc) can be gamed by people whose only interest in us is in how we can be controlled.

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## Ann Somerville

November 9, 2014 at 1:48 am

"Work is being done elsewhere to hold the abuser/s accountable."

Fine. But as someone not privy to this high level activity among the fortunate few, I can be excused for wanting to know how the community plans to protect itself in the \*future\*. When the next RH happens. When the next editor uses their position improperly. When the next con colludes to protect an abuser.

How can people be allowed to speak up about what's happening, without being hounded and trashed? It's happening now to victims and to those posting in support of them, even with Laura's detail report. It's happening to \*me\* just for rounding up links. Every time an abuser is revealed, the wagons are circled. And every time, some of the victims are never given their day in court, so to speak. The SWFA can only help if you're a member, but the SFF is much much bigger than the SWFA.

"Jam tomorrow" isn't much of an answer. It's still only a comfort to those in the know right now.

If you promise things will change, then you better make sure they do. Just saying.



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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 1:53 am

The same was also true of her Lesifoere identity—she made no secret of her connection with Winterfox.

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 1:55 am

I can't, myself, promise things will change, Ann. What I can do is promise that I will continue working hard toward that goal.

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 2:06 am

This is a thorough and helpful set of links and information, Edel. Thank you!

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 2:09 am

This is a very important point. I think the same thing can be said of the use of anonymity/ pseudonymity. We've seen how horribly anon/pseud accounts can be abused. But they have also enabled people who haven't felt safe, for whatever reason, to speak up. Context matters. And while I'm at it, I think I'll get a tattoo that says "There's no substitute for careful consideration of the specifics." 😊

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**Tanya Avakian**

November 9, 2014 at 2:31 am

"This was a hacker exploiting a vulnerability in a social code." Azarias, that is the most perfect way of putting the core problem that I could ever imagine.

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 3:03 am

Chang, I am very, very sorry to hear about what happened to you. I heard your name as someone who might have been targeted, but it came after I'd decided I needed to stop collecting names if I wanted to get the report out anytime before the winter holidays, so I didn't follow up. (I didn't want the report to come out any later than the end of November—and preferably sooner; I felt it would make for a really miserable winter holiday for everyone.)

I deeply appreciate your sharing, and I hope you can take some comfort in knowing you were by no means alone.

-l.

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 3:04 am

Azarias, that is an excellent read. Thanks for that.

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**laurajmixon**

November 9, 2014 at 3:07 am

PS- my comment starting “This is a very important point” was responding to PNH’s response to EmmaB. Now that I turned off threading, it may not be as obvious.

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## Azarias

November 9, 2014 at 3:35 am

@Tanya, I was paraphrasing this post: <http://www.kalyr.com/weblog/sf-and-gaming/sf/requires-hate-hostile-exploits-of-cultural-vulnerabilities/> Tim Hall isn’t someone I otherwise agree with — I don’t even agree with half the contents of that post — but it’s a handy turn of phrase.

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## Deirdre Saoirse Moen

November 9, 2014 at 3:38 am

My condolences to anyone who’s suffered at the hands of RH or her allies. I’m sorry I wasn’t there for you.

Ever since I first heard about her (last month), I’ve been wondering why I hadn’t run into her. Clearly, we’ve hung out in some of the same places, and I know several of the people she’s attacked (including my Viable Paradise roommate, N. K. Jemisin).

I think it’s just that I’ve not been as engaged in the comment threads themselves, especially when it came to book reviews, unless the post was about how someone failed in some way that I didn’t understand (in which case, I was there up until I understood, typically).

Huge thanks to Laura and to all the people who’ve spoken up, anonymous or otherwise.

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## Alexis Gervais

November 9, 2014 at 5:12 am

This. Is. Insane.

The emphatic responses, I mean.

Incredible number of soulful responses in three days, many it would seem from people — like me — not following this blog; social media and plain old email and phone calls to people who know people that have suffered, I’m sure.

@Laura: Since you talked about statistics, have you had to delete attacks / block people in these very comments in the past few days, or has the comment section been otherwise spared from retaliation? In other words, have you been extra busy while making it all appear seamless?

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## ModeratorY

November 9, 2014 at 5:20 am

Alexis, I’m not Laura — but I can answer your questions.

We have not so far blocked anyone. We have chosen not to publish around forty comments — and mostly those commenters have rephrased their original post, and had the revision published.

Now I have a request: Would you please, in the future, attempt to phrase your observations about the situation without using language that stigmatizes mental illness? I do realize that such language “This is insane!” “Wow, that’s just crazy!” is deeply embedded in our culture, and it can take some real effort to find other effective ways to express ourselves.

Thanks.

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## Alexis Gervais

November 9, 2014 at 5:47 am

I'm glad the internet hasn't tried to destroy this safe house, but it seems under good hands!

About the request: Apologies, and thanks for the head's up 😊 One strives to never use objectionable, double entendre, or otherwise imprecise words, but a few slip here and there.

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## Emily

November 9, 2014 at 8:20 am

Hey there... I just got linked to this by a friend of mine. While I've never been on the receiving end of this specific person's vitriol as far as I know, I have had similar treatment by another woman who decided to bully me out of the convention community where I live, after I came forward about domestic abuse. I can sympathize with being treated awfully for no good reason.

Anyway. I just wanted to let you know that I stand with you and with everyone who has been harassed. Much love to you all. <3

---

## Kari

November 9, 2014 at 9:52 am

@Had Enough

I share your concern about this. The last thing I want is for this to harm PoC in the sff community or to make people even more afraid to write and post necessary commentary about problematic themes, issues, books, ideas. Social justice and critical commentary are essential and must be preserved, fostered and protected. I, for one, am open to all and any suggestions as to how we do this, and in particular how we do much better than we have in the past. I tend to see my own role in this in terms of signal boosting, making space, listening and trying to be better. But I suspect I can do more. We all could. Maybe we need a forum for this of some kind or a working party (if you can have a working party in this diverse, scattered and very varied community we call sff) or something like that. I don't know (I wish I did). And the thing I hate most about this is that some PoC feel less safe, less welcome. That's the opposite to what is needed.

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## Pat Cadigan

November 9, 2014 at 12:03 pm

Anne Leonard said:

...as someone not privy to this high level activity among the fortunate few, I can be excused for wanting to know how the community plans to protect itself in the \*future\*. When the next RH happens. When the next editor uses their position improperly. When the next con colludes to protect an abuser. How can people be allowed to speak up about what's happening, without being hounded and trashed?"

The short answer is, there's no way to completely prevent this in a free society. The price of freedom is eternal vigilance, as the saying goes. We have to look out for each other. We can't heal the world but we can look out for our particular little corner of it. In a free society, you can't make everywhere a safe place, but you can listen when someone yells, "Help!"

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## James Worrada

November 9, 2014 at 12:20 pm

I'd just like to commend everyone of this person's victims who have stood up to tell their story. The community is here for you.

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 9, 2014 at 12:37 pm

Since we are avoiding *dysfunctional language* here (a term I take from [J.W. Wiley](#), a philosophy professor at SUNY Plattsburgh, I suggest we also try not to use the word *troll*, as it dehumanizes. I made this argument in more detail [HERE](#) a few weeks ago.

Secondly, even as we try for an affirming response, we are setting the bar awfully low. The problem is not just isolated — if systematic — harm caused by a single individual and her clique. The larger problem is that the science fiction field has come to tolerate an increasingly hostile working environment. While there is some recognition of the need for protection against a hostile working environment in the movement toward harassment policies for conventions, Internet spaces in which we engage professionally need that kind of love.

While RH is perhaps the most extreme, there are a number of writers in our field who make the Internet a hostile working environment for their peers. Most are not systematic about it, but some are. This cuts off access for targeted writers to other members of our community and to their audiences. Once you are chosen as a LOLCow (thanks, Erik for that word), you can go years without having full use of the Internet as a means of professional communication. That dynamic was already in place when RH came into prominence. (I discuss that more [HERE](#).) She exploited and refined it.

Here are some nice things you can do for other writers today. If they have a Facebook Page, like it and invite others to like it. Not only might this make them feel good, but it increases their access to receptive audiences when they go out there to talk about their work. If other writers announce book events, share or retweet their event posts. Check Kickstarter to see what projects in our field are seeking funding. Find ones you like. Contribute and boost their signal by sharing and retweeting. And it is especially important to try to be helpful to writers outside your immediate social circle. There is a lot we can do to make our field less of a zero sum game.

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## Kathryn Cramer

November 9, 2014 at 12:43 pm

Speaking to Had Enough's point, it should be possible to do social justice analysis without creating a hostile working environment for writers. And if it isn't why isn't it?

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## Colum Paget

November 9, 2014 at 12:58 pm

@ Chang Terhune

# Heres my sad tale of woe:... Later in the day I noticed a a few replies to my tweet from Alex McFarlane, RH and someone else  
# (possibly Winterfox or Cracked Moon which means it was RH using another guise). It took a while to figure out how they found  
# out about the post... It turns out Alex McFarlane sent it to RH and it all blew up from there. RH said she would send the link to  
# feminist editors so I would be blacklisted. One of the others called me sexist, chauvinist and host of other things. At the time it  
# really shook me. I knew who RH was and that she'd attacked some of my friends and favorite authors. I was aware of the damage  
# she'd done and that those who engaged with her were excoriated at the very least.

This maps very strongly onto my experience too. I think I'm going to write out my experience in another post.

# I tried to reason with them to no avail. In my haste I forgot you do no engage with trolls in any manner. The experience left  
# me scarred and skittish for a long time. As a new writer trying to break out into the world I was terrified. I thought RH had the  
# power to carry this out at the time. I asked friends who had been beset by her and they told me it would pass. Two years down it has.

This was exactly how I felt too. I've pretty much stopped writing because of it. Stories recently published under my name are mostly re-prints that I sent to Kasma SF (because I like Kasma, they seem like okay people). It hasn't gone away for me yet, but I think it will with all this coming out now. Still, the whole experience has changed me very profoundly.

# I never stopped writing but I was wary of setting out writing anything other than white male characters because of any  
# criticism I might receive. But I know in my heart of hearts that a writer has to write what they feel regardless of what others might say.

Ditto, although this has left me feeling more that I can't write at all, than that I can write white male characters (perhaps because I've always tended to write female characters, because it gives me authorial distance). But I think that maybe I will be able to write again pretty soon.

# If we want to get rid of bullies and abusers we need to accept that bullies and abusers come in all shapes and sizes.  
# What really shock me about this is that RH/BS pattern of attacking POC and female POC over others is appalling at the  
# very least. My first thought is that this was a predator thinning the field of competition. My second is that RH/BS may just be  
# Alex McFarlane.

I agree with your first thought, but I'm a bit wary of your second. We've all got our own ideas of who RH might be, but if we can't prove it, I think we shouldn't say it. RH had an incredible persuasive power that was almost mind-control, and a lot of people fell under that spell. In some ways those people are as much her victims as anyone. I'm not sure we should point fingers at them, especially because RH's actions might well have legal consequences (a direction I've opposed up till now, but I must admit that I'm starting to change my thinking on that).

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## Pat Bowne

November 9, 2014 at 1:05 pm

"In a free society, you can't make everywhere a safe place, but you can listen when someone yells, "Help!" "

This is true, but not enough – because it puts the onus on the victim to yell for help. Someone who's been accused before a group of people who said nothing will think all those people agree, so to whom is s/he going to yell for help? The moderators who found nothing wrong with what went down? The progressive wing that uses the same kind of rhetoric? The larger community, that's been silent about the issue for years and even nominated the perp for awards?

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## Teresa Frohock

November 9, 2014 at 1:08 pm

I have resisted posting here, because I wanted this to be a very safe place for victims. I've said what I wanted to say on my blog.

First of all, thank you, Laura, for making this report available. I was aware of some of the abuses, but not all of them. I find the whole thing utterly horrifying. I blocked RH because I couldn't stand the hate, and when I found out that BS was RH, I blocked that one too. Someone (please forgive me, I can't remember who) above mentioned that in hindsight blocking might not have been a good idea, because it blinded us to the abuses going on around us. I think she is right and I will consider carefully before doing something like that again.

The second thing is simply this: Pat Cadigan suggested a mentoring group for people who were abused by RH/BS. I am a member of the SFWA and I would like to volunteer as well. For what it is worth, I agree with Elizabeth and think that we should offer this to people who may not be members. That is all.

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## Pat Cadigan

November 9, 2014 at 1:35 pm

Pat Browne:

Not *every* person who was victimised by RH was silent. Some *did* yell for help. That's how we got this report. It's horrifying to see how many people had to suffer before something happened.

Still, I doubt any of them would want to live in a world so moderated that people's actions and words are carefully watched to make sure they conform to a standard that guarantees total absence of abuse and malign intent.

The way to try to make sure this doesn't happen again is a change that comes from within ourselves, not from a governing standard imposed by an outside force.

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## Pat Cadigan

November 9, 2014 at 1:43 pm

Teresa Frohock:

Actually, my suggestion was for a mentoring group for all new writers, particularly those in more danger of being marginalised than most, not just those writers who were victimised by RHB. I feel it's one way that we can try to make sure that writers who are starting out don't find themselves in a situation where they have no one to turn to if they are bullied.

Pat Browne:

Perhaps my idea for a mentoring program is the sort of thing you were thinking of, a support program that doesn't require anyone yelling "Help!" first?

---

## Teresa Frohock

November 9, 2014 at 1:59 pm

"Actually, my suggestion was for a mentoring group for all new writers, particularly those in more danger of being marginalised than most, not just those writers who were victimised by RHB."

Pat, I would be delighted to be a part of that type of mentoring group as well if you need more people. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I am willing to help. You have my email address through the comments and I will be watching the SFWA forum and other places if you put out a call for volunteers. Thanks again.

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## Pat Bowne

November 9, 2014 at 2:14 pm

I do have a constructive suggestion – though perhaps that's off topic for this particular discussion. Feel free not to post, in that case.

In academia some faculty take special training on how to be supportive to GLBT students. They might then post a sign on their doors to the effect that 'this office is a friendly space.' Why shouldn't the SFF community develop some training on identifying and stopping the early stages of bullying behavior and create an associated safety standard, something like what has already been developed for several cons? Bloggers or forum moderators could then choose to go through the training and post their intention to adhere to the safety standard on their home pages.

We use this strategy a lot in my department and it takes the heat off individual faculty when they can point to our honesty standards, for example, and say 'Look, I didn't make this up last night just to pick on you. You all signed on to it at the beginning of class – I'm holding you to it.'

In addition, it would be a sign to commenters of which blogs and forums are safe spaces, at least on the forum itself — this would do nothing to prevent a troll from harassing people independently through email or in tweets, but would deny the troll the silent, apparently approving forum audience which is such an integral part of much of this abuse.

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## Stevie

November 9, 2014 at 3:38 pm

Pat Bowne

I think the difficulty with your suggestion is that we already have the testimony of those who moderated on, and took part in, the 50 books\_poc Live Journal; I really don't think that the moderators there would have benefited from a course in how to approach bullying. Indeed, describing what RH did to that community as bullying seems to me to understate the reality; she destroyed the community. I'm sure you didn't intend to imply that it would have been different if the moderators had done a better job but it may be spun that way, and RH is incredibly good at spinning; she has already done enough damage without providing her with another faux excuse for her behaviour.

I entirely agree that structured learning can be helpful but there is a difference between dealing with ordinary fallible human behaviour and identifying and tackling one or more sociopaths. Expecting people who are already at a disadvantage to shoulder another burden seems, at least to me, to be capable of inflicting a lot more harm. And in reality there would be nothing to stop a sociopath sticking up a sign saying safe space without the slightest intention of adhering to it; that's the sort of thing which sociopaths do...

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## Tanya Avakian

November 9, 2014 at 4:00 pm

Had Enough and Kari: Obviously, there is a very strong need for liberty to discuss and promote social justice in the sff community, without fear of dire consequences.

To build on the analogy with software and hacking, I believe it's a structural fix, not a subjective one. I have believed this from the beginning, including RaceFail and its now-neglected predecessor in the Cultural Appropriation of Doom discussion. I was involved both times in conversations where I opposed the discussion turning into grudgebunk around personalities. This was an easily wank-inducing point of view in either case, and I would regret any misunderstanding as to how I feel about conversations about social justice, but I stand by questioning why and how it should be personality-based in the first place. And both episodes led to some early structural fixes, not perfect but important. For instance, despite the lasting grudgebunk, RaceFail also saw several initiatives such as those led by Mary Anne Mohanraj and John Scalzi to fix the logistics as well as the logic of the conversation. That is to say, if professionals responded to the challenge in a less than professional fashion, and they did, the first thing to do is obviously to define what would be a professional response—away from subjectively based conversations (OK perhaps in a consciousness-raising group, but not in a professional setting) and toward moderated conversations aligned with a sense of realism about the objective validity of the issues. 50 Books POC was a fan-based version of the same thing.

The same thing needs to happen again now. There is now a lot of focus on Sriduangkaew's, shall we say unique personality. But that leads nowhere, or it leads to dead ends regarding her right to be published, to be harsh, whatever. The one thing on which I'd agree with Mamatas at this point is that fiction is a better use of her time than harassment. And fiction is a better use of any professional's time if they cannot be professional about the rest of what today constitutes an author's public life. My saying this does not represent a waffling on what I still believe about the pointlessness, and potentially the grotesqueness, of personality-based grudgebunk as a way of rising to political challenges. It confirms it. Precisely the problem with much of the white sff discourse on social justice pre-Racefail was that we wrote as if our introspection defined the issues. I did, probably most people did in one way or another. We learned that "You know, none of this matters if NOT EVERYONE CAN EVEN BE HEARD. Stop looking at your white self in the mirror to make it look nicer." That is quite fair. Likewise, it is quite fair to say that if the way this community monitors itself and mirrors itself at least on a fan level is by social capital, the criteria for being heard will be ego-driven and arbitrary.

The answer to that is not to say it's not allowed, because social-capital-driven discourse is not possible to monitor fairly; it's going to do what it's going to do. The bottom line just has to be different. I don't know, myself, what would constitute that different bottom line, but history indicates some reason for optimism that it can be found. I believe as a beginning we could consider building an ethic whereby there is some disapproval of believing negative rumors about others if they can't pass certain tests of evidence. For instance, just as an example—if someone says in a blog post "X said that horrible thing," and nobody even goes to the original thing X said and in what context, or if it cannot be found because it never was public in the first place—in most settings that would not be admissible evidence. A huge amount of what RHB used to destroy other people's lives was not based on admissible evidence. But people believed it because it was cool to do so. Well, if they do, so be it. I've learned since 10-ish years ago that you don't need to treat online discourse like RL in terms of what a "friend" is and so I would hope I don't make some of the same annoying mistakes; but if you don't need to worry about online friends like RL friends (they want to be gone or talk trash, they're gone or talk trash, forget about it), at least let's give people the same impersonal space to let the admissible evidence speak for themselves. If we bring forward evidence of their saying something unfortunate, let's also bring forward the evidence of their taking it back if it's there. If the evidence isn't complete, let's assume we don't necessarily know someone is horrible. If you're not willing to disentangle an online conversation yourself to establish who said what, don't just take your favorite BNF's word for it. You owe other people and you owe yourself that much.

I once would not have said these things (much) because of being young and earnest enough to fear being told I was silencing discourse on social justice. I now feel somewhat confident in saying that such a bottom line would absolutely not silence discourse; it would prevent a lot of silencing. Quite simply, this is how professional discourse works in most places outside the sff community. It does not and will not necessarily work that way ever in paraprofessional communities such as fandom, but it does define professionalism. Now that Sriduangkaew is a professional she and her readers—which I can assume also means her supporters—are to be held to that standard. Too, a great many of her supporters when she was not a professional were indeed professionals in the sense of having published work, and so they should have been and are to be held to that standard.

There is of course a lot more to be said on the topic, and this is only a beginning. But I would be more comfortable as a whole with approaches that took a logistical approach to communications rather than "when does social justice go too far," "have I ever responded with politically correct boilerplate and why," "when can you call a person a stupid fuck," etc., etc. Not because there may not be times and places

to have some of these conversations, but because they don't address why people are being hurt. And not in the interests of stifling discourse, but in the interests of naming when and how conversations fall below a standard that defines professionalism. Decency would help, of course; but the history shows that decency rises when professionals take the responsibility for their own professionalism.

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## Chris Lawson

November 9, 2014 at 4:03 pm

Jordan: I suspect it was my post that prompted you to write. May I point out that I am not and have never been one of the moderators at Making Light? Nor am I a frequent commenter, although I read it almost every day. So I'm not beating my own drum here. And I'm certainly not suggesting that Making Light is perfect, nor that the moderators on communities that were destroyed by RH/BS were incompetent fools. But when I say that RH/BS wouldn't last on Making Light, that's based on observing the community there for many years. Another good example: the AV Club. There was a stage about 2 years ago where I nearly abandoned the AVC comments section because every story involving any female actor or singer would have a huge comment subthread all about how sexually desirable said person was, often to the point of completely derailing any defensible conversation. The AVC changed their moderation policy, in large part to stop this, and the result was that many commenters left the site, often with a flounce...and lo and behold the "how much would I like to screw the woman in this story?" comments virtually disappeared and the tone improved dramatically. It's not perfect, of course, but it's become a much better place (even though I still hate the clunkitude of Disqus—GAH!).

The point I'm trying to make is not about the moral superiority or ultra-refined awareness of Making Light/AV Club, it's that safe spaces online require active, often highly-interventionist moderation. And I still feel very confident in saying that if RH/BS had tried to escalate her rhetoric on Making Light, she wouldn't have lasted more than a few posts. TNH and PNH have put a lot of thought into their moderation policies and one of the strengths of their community-centred approach is that it doesn't rely on the perceptive awareness of one person. Most importantly, ML and AVC are good examples of how to create safe (well, *safer*) spaces. And I think it's worth discussing as part of the fallout of the RH/BS story.

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## Had Enough

November 9, 2014 at 4:46 pm

For the mods:

Following this has been a huge drain on me, as you can imagine, especially seeing the phenomenon this woman of color reports, so I think I am going to bow out after this. However, because I am less cynical than she and do believe you care about us, I'm making you aware of it so you can decide what to do next.

The comment is here, but the entire conversation it belongs to is worth reading: <http://silence-without.blogspot.com/2014/11/the-long-campaign-against-racism-bogged.html?showComment=1415515122206#c8567536683546264421>

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## Had Enough

November 9, 2014 at 5:14 pm

Er, that was *not* meant to sound like I think the WOC referenced is wrong to be cynical! She's absolutely not. I am probably too idealistic.

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## ModeratorY

November 9, 2014 at 5:23 pm

Had Enough,

Thank you. That's the kind of concern that really worries me, too. I can't speak for anyone else, of course, but I very much appreciate that you've spent the time and energy to broaden and strengthen this conversation.



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## Liz Williams

November 9, 2014 at 5:55 pm

It's been a concern throughout all of this, and I can see where the blogger is coming from. Can I point out, however, that some of this post is factually inaccurate: neither Tricia Sullivan nor I doxxed RH, nor was there a whispering campaign. We raised concerns with some of our colleagues, because someone with highly problematic behaviour was engaging with those colleagues. Most people would do this in, for instance, an office environment. However, emailing one editor regarding this, privately, does not count as doxxing. Sean Wallace at Prime told Nick Mamatas about the link, but Nick appears to have known already. I am getting rather tired of being blamed for the doxxing: for the record, I worked for a women's centre which had as part of it, a domestic violence unit. It is ingrained in my working practice that one does not reveal private contact details to the general public, and I have not done so in this instance.

I believe that Tessa herself is acting in good faith, and on information that she believes to be accurate. Nonetheless, it isn't.

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## Colum Paget

November 9, 2014 at 6:38 pm

Okay, this is my story in a bit more detail. Firstly I must thank Laura for this incredible effort of research, which can't have been easy. Just reading this stuff produces a strong reaction in me, having to handle all this material to build a report like this must have been very unpleasant work: I wouldn't have been able to do it. There's things in this report that still shock and surprise me after all I've experienced.

I'm also going to say a thank you to a number of people, who I'll leave nameless, who in one way or another were supportive of me through this experience. If you come by and see this post, and you're one of those people who was supportive of me on my blog or on twitter, or who took the time to write emails detailing your own experiences with RH and other trolls, then thank you because you did a lot to make me feel less isolated and crazy.

There's an issue that I want to mention up front, though I won't go too deep into it, but I don't want to misrepresent myself. I'm a white guy and I don't agree with most of the politics I've experienced in SF, and I believe that politics had a large part to play in enabling requires\_hate. For a start I'm very opposed to any statements that generalize from the actions of a criminal few to the broader community or identity of which they are a part. I have this attitude because, as I've perhaps mentioned too often, I grew up of catholic and of Irish descent in Birmingham in the wake of the Birmingham pub Bombings, when many people were generalizing from the actions of the IRA to all catholics. Thus, when I was attacked by requires\_hate, I never thought that I was being attacked by women, Thais, lesbians, people of color, bloggers, etc, etc. But, as a white man in SF&F, it's my consistent experience that most people in the community habitually generalize in this way about people of my race and gender (even though they themselves tend to be of my race and gender) and will not tolerate any objection raised against this bigotry (and it *is* bigotry). If you think that my politics in this regard justifies attacks upon me, well, I wouldn't want you not to know the situation from the get-go.

My first encounter with RH was on twitter when they called for me to be beheaded for a comment (taken completely out of context) I'd made in an old blogpost. This was the first time someone's publicly called for my murder, (yep, despite the whole Birmingham Pub Bombings thing) and it kept me awake for two nights wondering what was going on. I made the problem worse by attempting to converse with requires\_hate later, because at the time I still believed that problems between people could be solved by talking them through (this has never, in my whole life, ever worked, but it's a hard delusion to give up). I was never impolite or angry with her, I was trying to get through to her. I didn't. At some point during the discussion, RH declared that I'd walked into a 'trap', and I do believe that now, that the whole event on twitter was somehow pre-planned.

That may have been my big mistake. Or it may have been the blogpost that I wrote in which I stated that I thought she was some kind of right-wing false-flag operation intended to discredit left-wing positions by making them look fascist. Or it may be that nothing I said or did made any difference, that RH was out to get me and would do so sooner or later. Unfortunately by this point I was freaking out, because I had never encountered this kind of 'kill whitey' or 'all men are rapists' politics before, and frankly didn't think it was real. This kind of rhetoric is normally something that the right-wing press in the UK accuses the left of, and up till my encounter with RH, I'd always thought those allegations were false, and spent a lot of time telling people they were false. Encountering such attitudes alive and well in the real world was not something I was prepared for.

I should say here that my experience of RH was that she was pushing an anti-white racist agenda, and also an anti-male agenda, but it may

be that she tailored the rhetoric to the target to a great degree. Others may have seen other agendas being used to attack them. It still amazes me that she was mostly attacking women, and that she attacked so many people-of-color. It amazes me that she was allowed to get away with that. She shouldn't have been allowed to get away with attacking anyone, in my opinion: I see far too many people making the case that "Big name authors can look after themselves", but I've got an issue with it if she's attacking Neil Gaiman, George RR Martin or the Queen of England, to be honest. If we'd have acted to stop her attacking anyone, we'd have defended the 'more vulnerable' before she even got to them.

I should also say that I was coming into the community from outside, I've read SF for a long time, but not been otherwise involved in it. This means I don't know all the language that's used in here, even terms like "person-of-color" were new to me (and also to my Brother's Sikh girlfriend at the time) and this too doesn't help for new arrivals into SF&F, particularly if they're not from quite the same class background as most SF&F people.

Anyways, in my blog post I also speculated that RH could be a ticking 'tar baby' intended to cause people to 'stick to' her, before she eventually blew up. This would be quite an effective means of reputation destruction, where someone operating from an anonymous account befriends people and over time draws them into an ever more extreme rhetoric, before finally saying or doing something that attracts a lot of negative attention, at which point the 'tar baby' closes their account, and the people who've been trapped in the web have to deal with the fallout, which falls upon their 'real world' personas (because they didn't use anonymous or pseudonymous accounts). It should be noted that this scenario is pretty much in play now, and I think we have to consider that some of RHs victims are among those who fell for her rhetoric, because they now find themselves in an embarrassing position. Witchhunts won't help. Something needs to be done, and people need to stop supporting and making excuses for RH, but attempts to 'punish' anyone for their involvement in the whole sorry mess will, I think, only make things worse.

Anyways, my attempts to talk with RH, and my blogpost, only made matters worse and eventually resulted in a couple of supremely nasty posts on her blog where she attacked me and all the other James White Award shortlisters in the most unpleasant terms. She went back through what she could discover of my published works and 'found' stuff in there and posted comments about it onto twitter. In one day, more people visited my blog from reading those posts than in years before, and most of them seemed to buy all she'd said. I didn't understand any of what was going on, and seeing people supporting RH's hateful and racist comments totally blew my mind. In many ways it wasn't the threats and insults that \*really\* bothered me (though they did) it was the discovery that so many people would support them, and worse still, would support a worldview that to me seemed pretty much fascist.

I see a lot of people saying that RH was 'making good points' or 'Challenging xxxism in fiction'. There's something that these people aren't seeing. RH was an elite mistress of the dark art of going into what someone had written and 'finding stuff' in there. She accused me of 'exotification' and (if I recall correctly) orientalism because in the opening line of a my JWA story a character was sitting on a Batik cushion. She hadn't read the whole story, she was just operating on the basis of 'teaser' lines of the shortlisted stories that the award published. Cardinal Richelieu reputedly said "Give me six lines written by the hand of an honest man, and I shall find therein some reason to hang him." Requires Hate went one better because, as we now see in the graphs that Laura has provided, she didn't just target men (and I think in some cases she managed with less than six lines). 'Course, when I was attacked, my race and gender were foregrounded, and I'd seen attacks on Peter Watts and others, so I did think she just attacked men, and the women no doubt thought she just attacked women, and the people-of-color no doubt thought she only attacked them, and this is what we call "Divide and Rule".

Other people, likely having their viewpoints effected by RH's rhetoric, also critiqued my work. One accused me of racial stereotyping in my James White Award story. This shows how an attack by RH would have reverberations and consequences far wider than the initial attack, because other people, believing the things that were said, add their weight to the attack. Fortunately in the case of this accusation I was able to defend myself and my work by pointing to two lines in the piece that clearly showed the reviewer was wrong, and they accepted that. But what if I'd cut those two lines out of the story? Arguably I should have, they didn't carry much weight. Thank heavens I didn't.

There's a very educational game that you can play to illustrate this point. Take the work of your favorite writer, or perhaps some of your own work, and attempt to attack it in the style of requires\_hate. If you've been paying attention, then it should be easy. Now try to re-jig the story to avoid the particular issues you found in it. Now attempt to attack it again, using new angles of attack as necessary. Repeat. With sufficient imagination anything can be attacked in the strongest terms.

When I tried to speak to people about this, I was surprised at the reaction. Very many of them spoke out in support of RH and what she was doing. If I objected that she was pushing a racist agenda, they told me "There's no such thing as racism towards white people." People trivialized her attacks or told me that I must have deserved them. When I said that she'd been misreading my stories, and seeing things in them that weren't there, people told me they must have been there and that I wasn't dealing with my issues.

From now on everything I said would be misconstrued by various people online. Personally I think that a lot of the time people are doing the equivalent of loudly denouncing witches in order not to be accused of being witches themselves. When I expressed my doubts that RH was what she appeared to be, the conclusion was made by many people that I was saying that on account of her command of the English language: the idea being that my comments were motivated by some kind of racist belief that a Thai person couldn't speak/write good English. Never mind that I'd never said anything of the sort, and that I'd stated the reasons for my disbelief already: That I didn't believe her political agenda was real, and that I thought she was a false flag operation. I'd stated my reasons for suspecting her, but it seemed that many people in SF&F couldn't hear me over the color of my skin.

I should mention here, as I did above, that a number of people were supportive of me through this situation. I'm not going to mention them because there could still be reprisals of some form: I don't see any reason why RH couldn't come back under another pseudonym and start all over again, and many of her followers are still loyal, I think. But, yes, there's good people in SF, but they don't know what to do or say when confronted by something like the RH situation.

I'd also like to point out that just because I experienced, and still experience, a pervasive attitude that it's okay to generalize about or target white men because of 'privilege', that in no way discredits the fact that women or people-of-color or any other group also experience prejudice in this community and in others. The two things are not mutually exclusive, in fact they support and feed each other. If someone hits you, your reaction is to hit them back. If someone calls you names, you'll respond in kind. However, in hitting back you'll often hit some innocent bystander, and then they'll start hitting back, and the whole thing will grow in a chain reaction. SF&F has fallen into a politics of identity, which means sides, and having fallen into that it's going to be tough to climb back out. RH, in my opinion, used this situation to make people of all types feel isolated and unsafe within the community. Until the community starts to think in terms of people as people, and of standards that should apply to everyone, there will continue to be division and a war of words with a lot of innocent people being hit in the crossfire between various ideological groups.

It's very hard to make anyone who has not experienced RH's attacks appreciate the effect they have on you. You start to think people were avoiding you, or not wanting to be seen with you. You wonder if your rejection-rate is going up. Are people talking about you behind your back? To be honest I'll never know if I was imagining all that or not. The effect of the attack lives on long after it's been committed, both in the mind of the victim, and, I think, in the minds of the people who've heard negative things about the victim on the grapevine. Your behavior changes, you start avoiding people thinking they don't want to be around you. You unavoidably act in ways that make the situation worse.

The experience was severe enough to give me a number of strange emotional twitches that could be triggered by unexpected things. I'd experience unexpected flashes of fear or anger, sometimes just writing the word 'requires' would be enough to produce an unexpected physical reaction. Reading some of the stuff she wrote, listed in this report, would Nothing was the same for me afterwards, I felt out of phase with the world and kept getting into trouble of one form or another in the SF community. Eventually I began to believe it must all be my fault, I deleted my blog and left twitter. It was some days before friends managed to snap me out of the weird cycle of self-recrimination I'd entered into. RH's attacks of me have done more to change me than anything else in the last twenty years, they've certainly affected my politics. As for the writing, like many others I see posting here, I've pretty much dried up, it's not a conscious choice but more a bodily reaction to avoid something that might be harmful.

I didn't go to this year's eastercon because, in the week running up to the con, someone took the light-sensor out of the streetlight outside my house, plunging the whole front of the house into darkness. This isn't something that could happen by accident, you'd have to climb up the lamp-post and pull out the plug-in unit. The timing, so close to a con, seemed significant to me, and I realized I'd put my name on the list of attendees (since the whole RH thing I've started asking not to be listed as an attending member). It may seem crazy, but to be honest the whole RH experience seems crazy, and people who I speak to often have trouble believing it. So, I decided that I couldn't rule anything out, and that someone might be sending me a message not to attend the con, so I didn't go. When, days later and despite getting the light fixed, I was broken into, I was actually relieved, because it was just simple robbery.

Overall my experiences in SF&F have been very bad, and it's not just RH. Time and again I've considered having nothing more to do with the community. But there's two things that always pull me back: one is the fact that there are quite a few people who I think well of and who I want to stay in touch with. The other is the fact that I feel if I walk away from this, I'll be walking away from everything always. To be honest, all my life, or at least since school, I seem to be someone who attracts trouble and abuse, and constantly moving around doesn't do anything to solve this problem, I don't think, it just leaves you rootless.

So, that's my situation. It's nothing like as bad as some people have suffered, and the major cause of distress for me has been more ideological than personal: it's been seeing that causes that I thought I supported appear to be horribly and irresolvably corrupted and self-defeating.

## Edel Blau

November 9, 2014 at 9:25 pm

I'm happy the links were useful, Laura.

And I would like to whole-heartedly agree with this recent comment upthread by azarias:

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*"I think it's important to emphasize here that WF/RHB/BS's trolling in the name of social justice is a fairly recent phenomena. Most of her early exploits were trolling in the name of nothing in particular. Roughly coincident with RaceFail '09, she adopted the language of social justice while continuing to use the same tactics she had before. It gave her a new vocabulary and a new set of communities to wreck, but did not change her standard operating procedures nor her apparent goal of chaos and self-aggrandizement."*

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This is essentially the same point I have made about WF/RH many times in discussions on FFA; after having read numerous threads she was participating in on multiple online forums over the last decade, her pattern of intense flamebaiting arguments and personal attacks is remarkably consistent, and all that has changed is her increasing reliance on social-justice buzzwords to bolster her own credibility and paint her targets in the worst possible light. Long before she professed any particular interest in social justice issues, she was already well-known in multiple communities for arguing at great length about the utter worthlessness of books/games/fanfic that she deemed unworthy, and for escalating personal insults aimed at both the creators of such inferior works and any commenters who disagreed with her opinions. All that's really changed over the years is that where once she'd relentlessly mock something merely for being in her opinion badly-written and stupid, with at most a passing side remark or two if it was also particularly sexist or racist, in more recent years she increasingly emphasized her purported righteous anger over any elements that could be construed as "problematic" in targeted works, and accused authors or supporters of the works in question of racism/sexism/etc. on top of her usual sneering jibes about their stupidity and tastelessness.

Beneath the buzzwords, the underlying pattern was the same: WF/RH is better [smarter/more tasteful and sophisticated/more socially-conscious] than you and her opinions are always correct. If she deems a work inferior, then the creator of that work is an inferior human being and both work and creator deserve all of the mockery she cares to dish out. If you disagree with her superior opinions, then you are also clearly just as inferior [stupid/tasteless and unsophisticated/sexist and-or racist] as the work and creator she is mocking, and equally deserving of her public skewering – if you/they didn't want to take the heat, you should never have put out the work or commented publicly in the first place; anyone doing so is fair game. Her addition of social justice buzzwords to this repertoire proved to be a powerful weapon in her arsenal, because "this is stupid and worthless because I say so and I'm smart and well-read and have superior taste" didn't seem to sway as many people towards agreement nearly as readily as "this is racist/sexist/culturally appropriative etc. because I say so, and I'm a queer WOC living in a non-Western country so anyone more privileged than me is unqualified to question me in any way"; and where the "performative rage" aspects of her online personas once struck many observers as strangely overinvested when leveled at obscure targets like teenage badfic writers, now it may have looked to some of her new readers like proof of her passionate sincerity for her purported causes.

I don't know how much, if any, of her social justice talk was sincere. Maybe she does actually care about some of the social justice issues she raised and maybe she doesn't – all I do know is that there are years upon years of evidence to show that long before she jumped on that bandwagon, she was arguing just as heatedly and prolifically when all that was at stake was winning arguments for their own sake and tearing her opponents down in order to better build herself up. I personally find it impossible to believe that she suddenly completely stopped caring about the sort of ego-boosting attention-seeking trolly she'd been practicing for years and years and completely turned over a new leaf as a selfless activist just because she was tacking more and more SJ buzzwords onto her same old patterns of attack.

The overall patterns of her online behavior isn't the only thing that's remained consistent over the years, either; some of her pet targets have overlapped from her pre-SJ-focused and post-SJ-focused eras. For one particularly blatant example, just compare [this 2011 RequiresHate screed about Ed Greenwood](#), complete with namechecking of supporters she implies to be sockpuppets, with these [2003](#), [2004](#) and [2005](#) forum threads on Greenwood, just a handful of the many that can still be found with her commentary- her utter disdain for the author and books in question remains consistent, but as RH she places a much heavier emphasis on how she is so deeply disgusted by the author's sexism, while the older forum postings devote very little if any space to calling out \*isms and her primary focus is just on the badness of the writing in general.

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## Elaine Isaak

November 9, 2014 at 10:51 pm

Thank you, Laura, for compiling all of this, and to the targets for being willing to stand up.

I am acquainted with many of the targets, though not close with them, and knew only that some of these individuals had been going through an (unspecified) rough patch. I am dismayed at what you have had to go through. I hope that the increasingly broad and vocal support shown here and elsewhere will help to bolster your courage. It would be a loss for your words to go unread, your voices unheard.

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## Andrea Hairston

November 10, 2014 at 12:44 am

Thanks to Laura for her bravery, wisdom, and compassion. She inspires community. She makes us feel whole in the face of devastating brutality. We talk to one another, try to solve the problems, try to repair the damage because of the hard work Laura has done.

We can stand with the ones who have been attacked. We can figure out a way to deal with the bullies. We can work to create the internet community we want. It is part of our real lives and this virtual real world will be how we imagine it, how we reinvent it everyday. Thanks to everyone who has posted here for their thoughts and insights. Critique should stimulate growth, change, and health. And I feel that going on in the 400 plus comments.

I am a theatre person and I imagine saying what I write to flesh and blood bodies, to people I can smell and taste, they are so close to me. I imagine their hearts pounding and their breath catching. I don't do this to be nice. I do it to be human.

Laura got us together with her careful research and painstaking analysis.

We are the ones who recognize our complex history, our multiple identities, and our power differentials, and we won't stand for bullying, bigotry, or silencing. Standing together, there is much power! (Like believing in ourselves or loving ourselves when many have said we aren't worth believing in, we aren't worth love...) Let everyone who has been attacked or afraid to speak or write another story or who is trying to figure out what to say or do, or what not to say or not to do **FEEL OUR POWER AND LOVE WITH THEM NOW!**

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## S.M. Stirling

November 10, 2014 at 1:31 am

Kudos to Laura for going to all this trouble and emotional grind in order to expose this stuff. This person is pretty loathsome, and has caused a lot of pain.

There's a broader lesson; never enable or join in a mobbing attack, no matter how much you dislike the target, or what the target is purported to be. If what someone is doing would feel wrong when directed at you or those you love, it's wrong -tout court-.

Righteousness and ruthlessness are always profoundly suspect and when they come together bad faith should simply be assumed until exhaustively proven otherwise.

As Nietzsche put it: "Mistrust all those in whom the will to punish is strong. They are of a base sort and kind; the bloodhound and the hangman look out of their faces. Mistrust all those who speak much of their justice! Indeed, their souls lack more than honey. And when they speak of themselves as "the good and the just", do not forget that all they lack to be pharisees [persecutors] is — power."

The internet gives them power, if you allow it.

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## laurajmixon

November 10, 2014 at 2:56 am

Thank you, Steve (SMStirling). Yes, this is a very good reminder to pause when being rallied to any cause.

Andrea, I was moved to tears by your comment. I feel this in my marrow, too. I stand with you, and with everyone, hand in hand. Let's be human, let's be imperfect, let's be complex, and let's love each other.

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## Christopher Long

November 10, 2014 at 5:34 am

Wow. Ma'am, speaking as a man with a degree in Criminal Justice, and as someone who has volunteered to work with victims of stalking, let me just say this:

After reading your work here, I find myself thinking that every single prosecutor in the nation should, by all appearances, be required to also be trained as an engineer. Your care and attention to detail make me think that it would do the courts of this country a serious favor to require those in the legal field to have your training.

Bravo!

I have never encountered this BS/RH person myself, to my knowledge, but now? Now I feel warned, and like I know what to watch for. Thank you very much.

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## Anon

November 10, 2014 at 8:56 am

Forgive me if I'm a bit awkward, my language skills aren't the best.

I have seen a few people speculating that RH is not actually Thai. I would like to request that any such talk stop. It is very dangerous.

I was emotionally abused by a non-standard source. Teachers. All around me, people were saying "if there is a problem at school with name calling and bullying, always go to the teacher. The teacher will fix it." So when I was abused by a teacher, I couldn't make the connection between the behavior and being abused. Because a teacher fixes problems. They don't cause them. Right?

By saying "I don't think RH can be a Thai woman, she sounds like those crazy racist skinheads" you are effectively saying "a real Thai woman wouldn't say such things." "A Thai woman wouldn't be abusive." "A Thai woman can't be the source of the problem."

What are people being abused by Thai women going to think?

People have been abused by Thai women before, and will be again. Because Thai woman CAN be this abusive. ANY human being of ANY nationality can be this abusive. By implying otherwise, you open the door to exactly the kind of abuse RH thrives on. "I couldn't be in the wrong, see? I'm Thai! A Thai person would never be abusive. So whatever I said to you wasn't THAT bad. And you probably deserved it anyway."

The reason she sounds like the stereotypical racist is because she IS a stereotypical racist: someone filled with hate and looking for an easy target. To make a somewhat awkward analogy, it is like painters. Monet and Pissarro do not make works that look similar because of their sex, they make works that are similar because they are Impressionists. It is their style, their means of expression. And RH's means of expression is racism and abuse.

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## Chris Lawson

November 10, 2014 at 11:19 am

By sheer serendipity, I was directed to this fantastic speech by Gene Luen Yang on diversity in superhero comics. I think it speaks to a lot of the story here.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2014/09/01/read-this-gene-luen-yangs-rousing-comics-speech-at-the-national-book-festival-gala/>

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## Dolorosa

November 10, 2014 at 2:38 pm

This might not be the time and place to raise such ideas, but a thought occurred to me.

Many of the comments on this issue on this post and elsewhere have mentioned either that RH's reviews sometimes had valid concerns buried within the vitriol, or that criticism of SFF literature from a perspective of social justice (pointing out problems of racism, sexism, homophobia and so on in works) is incredibly valuable, particularly when such criticism is carried out by people who are marginalised along various axes. I would add that just as important, even more so, are efforts to draw readers' attention to works that get it right, particularly when such works are written by marginalised individuals. (This is why, for example, RHB's actions in 50bookspoc were so destructive: she shut down an arena in which discussions of this nature had been taking place.)

There is already good work taking place in various corners of the community in this regard: anthologies of works of LGBT writers, of writers of colour and so on, campaigns such as We Need Diverse Books, mentoring programmes, etc. Some people in this very comment section have offered other suggestions as to how they could help amplify the voices of those who have traditionally been marginalised. I wondered if I might make a suggestion of my own.

If I am anything in the SFF community, I am a reader and reviewer (albeit a very small one). And what I would love is for a dedicated space for reviewers – *particularly* reviewers of colour in the first instance – to talk about works written by authors of their own various racial and/or cultural backgrounds that represent those backgrounds well. I am of course aware that there are reviewers writing such reviews already, either on personal blogs or as part of a stable of reviewers on larger sites, but to my knowledge there aren't any sites dedicated to hosting reviews by reviewers of colour talking about works that excite them and that represent the multiplicity of their diverse perspectives.\* (If such sites exist, my ignorance is entirely my own fault and I apologise.)

Now, I'm a white woman and am mindful of the fact that it is not my place to tell reviewers of colour what and how to review. If people were interested in getting something along these lines started, I would be very happy to provide a platform in my own blog, although again that might not be appropriate (and apart from anything else, there are much larger platforms that would amplify reviewers' voices much more). This should be taken as a suggestion inspired by the discussion that has emerged from Laura's report and the accounts of others about RHB's behaviour, rather than an attempt to dictate the terms of others' reviews. But it does strike me that a great deal of the harm caused by RHB was her ability to silence the voices of writers of colour (or those otherwise marginalised), and particularly to shut down discussion on, and celebration of, works by writers of colour.

In the face of all this silence and negativity, it would be nice to amplify silenced voices and give people space to talk about something positive, you know?

\*A good example of a site that hosts such reviews, but in terms of works by and about women is the Ladybusiness Dreamwidth community. The focus is on positivity and works that the reviewers enjoy.

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## Kari

November 10, 2014 at 2:56 pm

Dear Anon who has written of her abuse at the hands of teachers: I just wanted to say how sorry I am that this happened to you. That is a betrayal of a particularly vile kind and no child should ever have to endure it. I'm awed by your courage in talking about it and I wish you all the best. I hope nothing like this ever happens to you again and that you always in future receive the support and respect you deserve. Your point about identity is very important: people of all nationalities, genders, ages, backgrounds, sexualities can be abusers and we have a responsibility to recognise that, in order to support their victims. No-one should be protected from reproach simply on the grounds of who they are.

Dolorosa: I agree. That space for criticism of things that are problematic must be there, and must be supported. And the voices of writers who come from outside of the dominant culture must be supported and amplified and, above all, listened to with respect. It worries me that this discussion may be harming this: I hope we can find a way to protect it.

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## Tanya Avakian

November 10, 2014 at 3:05 pm

Dolorosa: I agree wholeheartedly.

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We cannot help but be aware that it would be tragic if the use of serious intentions for cynical purposes resulted in the perception that those intentions must always be cynical. Which is why I've tried to refrain from saying anything that could sound like "this episode shows how we need to be nice to each other on the internet rather than harsh anybody's squees. All those nasty SJWs are out of the picture now and we can all have fun again." We need to be pretty careful about that.

Which is also why I feel a strong need to reiterate that RHB does not fit the description of anyone working for social justice, or even SJ. Yes, there can be some unconstructive behavior in activist communities. Yes, there's competition and trash talk. No, it's not necessarily always OK because the intentions are good. But that is not the category into which RHB falls. She got her way because of the basic idealism of her target group and the allowances made for everyone's being human, and that is really bothersome and needs to be seen for what it is.

It's inevitable that the only way out of this is to accept that some behavior is not OK despite intent. It needs to be defined in terms that are impossible to misunderstand. The penalty for it is that one will be known to have behaved in a way that falls below a certain minimal standard. These are pretty much the social justice criteria, after all, and they need to be applied consistently.

It's inevitable, also, that this will harsh a few squees. So be it. Anything else will just as inevitably end up with a defense of the cynicism. This is never how it begins, but intent in such cases is not magical at all; it's a foolproof progression from not wanting to believe people one looked up to (or people who sounded like them) could ever be capable of such things, to a climate in which what one looked up to is hopelessly tangled up with the cynicism and the rationalizations of it. The whole point of having ideals and role models is that one can say "Not me." "Not me, maybe" describes reality all too often, but not when the reason for it is supposedly protecting an ideal.

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## Dolorosa

November 10, 2014 at 3:20 pm

Kari: I share some of your concerns, and I am particularly worried that criticism of works (for racism, sexism and so on) by reviewers outside the dominant culture may become devalued as a result of RHB's actions and the discussion about them. However, while I don't think we should be patting ourselves on the back, I do see a lot of people – in these comments and elsewhere – raising this concern and trying to make space for dissenting voices. That's important while this discussion is ongoing, and into the future.

What I am talking about, though, are actions to take later to *prevent a similar situation happening again*. And I feel really strongly that a dedicated space to talk positively about works *by and about* people from outside the dominant culture (in this case people of colour) would be tremendously helpful. I would like to do what I can to create a community in which reviews pointing out problematic elements of works can sit alongside reviews celebrating works that get it right and offer representation of the experiences of those who don't often see themselves in fiction. I don't want to say much more because I am mindful it could sound like I'm trying to dictate to people of colour (whether victims of RHB or not) what would be best for them, so I'll drop this issue in this space for now unless others want to participate in the discussion.

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## Stevie

November 10, 2014 at 3:22 pm

Colum

I was at the University of Birmingham 1969-1972; I was in one of the Halls of Residence in my first year, but after that we fended for ourselves, and there were plenty of signs up then saying 'No Blacks, no Irish, no dogs'. That was bad enough, but it must have got a great deal worse following the Pub Bombings in 1974.

I mentioned up thread that I developed PTSD after I got blown up by an exploding oxygen regulator, and that I have no doubt that psychological trauma can equally give rise to PTSD; reading your comments reinforces that view. It's the apparently small things which trigger reactions; most people would, I think, understand why I hate being around oxygen cylinders, but not so much why the can of hairspray would completely freak me out. Your response to the word 'requires' seems much like my own experience.

I had a lot of therapy, which helped; I have a lung disease which puts me into hospital quite often, and hospitals are knee deep in oxygen cylinders, so it was something I needed to do if I wanted to survive. I don't know whether you have considered therapy; there are lots of different ways to tackle PTSD, and if one isn't working for you then there are alternatives.



Perhaps most of all, you need to understand that this is not your fault; when bad things happen people with consciences are likely to question themselves, which is why sociopaths find it easy to manipulate people with consciences...

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## Anon of Yore

November 10, 2014 at 3:48 pm

We all know RHB et al. was able to play the system and create a scenario where she could harass, insult, attack (and worse) a host of people for a number of years.

It might be worthwhile to remember that the PoC and others who are/were allied with her are also being played. I understand how frustrating it is to see people defend RHB, but they're people who subscribe to a particular type of social justice that most in SF/F are not familiar with. There are a lot of people who believe harsh attacks on the sociocultural base that holds the power is one of the few, if not only, ways of getting their voice heard. They lack the same power as, say, a straight white male of influence, and their polite voices have been marginalized and silenced too often; anger, often justified, is the only way to even start a dialogue.

RHB absolutely took advantage of that cultural theory. She cleverly sandwiched her unreasonable, violent and inappropriate rhetoric between moments of legitimate criticism, under the guise of social justice. As Edel Blau points out above, using social justice rhetoric was just one way to get away with what she did, probably to achieve what Meredith L. Patterson called the "sociopath-empath-apat triad." While I reserve most of my sympathy for those who have told their harrowing stories, those who can't tell them, and those who lost things very important to them because of RHB, I also sympathize with the PoC and social justice people taken in by RHB. They have a lot to lose, too. They're humans, and flawed and vulnerable and capable of denial and bad decisions, and I feel terribly for the few who think that they have to keep hurting others or sacrifice some of their values to remain loyal to the values RHB espoused. I'm not a person of color and I can't even imagine what it must be like to be in that situation right now.

That's why I'm not really keen on people who aren't involved in sociocultural studies or social justice being so harsh on PoC. It all seems to be tinged with some old Racefail grudges, and implying RHB was the inevitable product of Racefail, too. I am also particularly disturbed by someone bringing up a time when he referred to RHB as a "tar baby." I think some agendas are starting to show that don't have any benefit for RHB's victims, and some people who want their individual voices privileged over that of the victims' voices, and I'm pretty uncomfortable with that.

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## Athena Andreadis

November 10, 2014 at 3:58 pm

I have not participated in this vital conversation beyond my first comment, because I had told my story and felt strongly that now I had to make space for others to tell theirs. Now that we're moving into constructing the future, I'd like to add a few bricks to the new dwelling.

To a large extent, we have to become and remain sensitive to nuances, to infinite shades of colors. Lumping works well as an agenda soundbite, but it's a blunt tool that often leads to Procrustean measures even with the best of intent. It's easy to say "there's no racism against whites" — except that in Australia all people from the Mediterranean are called "wogs" (to give but one example).

Another issue used to divide people who could/would construct bridges is "real natives" (Asian-Asians, to use one of RH's terms) versus diasporans. People who leave their natal culture acquire double vision from walking between worlds — often at the cost of remaining lifelong exiles. Yet they can act as liaisons and interpreters, provided they're not discounted as "not pure enough."

One more axis is that of age. The prevailing feeling that all will be repaired when the "old dinosaurs of SFF die" erases the contributions, knowledge and memories of older women in SFF, who are systematically ignored with the exception of one or two tokens. Again, such women are willing and able to act as bridges, bards and mentors. It's up to the community to bring them into the sky-roofed tent.

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## Elizabeth Bear

November 10, 2014 at 4:38 pm

I'm checking in to signal boost a post by Sunita at [Vacuousminx](#):

## **C.J. Gerrick**

November 10, 2014 at 5:22 pm

I just want to echo what Ann Somerville says at 1:48 am on November 9. Assurances that “work is being done elsewhere to hold the abuser/s accountable” has for me the unlovely savor of the discreet warnings that, passed from person to person, have protected women against letting themselves be alone with well-known sf convention sexual harassers – unless, of course, a woman happened not to be part of the grapevine, in which case, tough luck, I guess. Many of RH’s victims weren’t and aren’t part of that grapevine – but they’re reading this comment section and others, and they deserve to know what measures are being taken to prevent this kind of thing from happening the next time a sociopath decides s/he’s found a good hunting ground.

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## **alarmed anon**

November 10, 2014 at 10:51 pm

Hoping an edited version of my comments will pass moderation, as this is important to me...

I would really welcome a safe space where people can discuss the merits of POC writing or writing from a social justice perspective in a calm, nuanced, non-abusive manner. However, the emphasis needs to be on “safe.” I request that people please be very careful in making recommendations of “safe” communities, as they may not, in fact, be safe. RH’s style of attack has influenced many bloggers and reviewers within the genre community, and I feel that whilst these people do not hold the majority view, they are the dominant cultural force and few people want to publicly oppose them, particularly as those on the receiving end of attacks tend to be authors and they are gagged by professionalism. I suspect the fight for safe, positive discussion environments has only just begun, and the issue we are facing as a community is much bigger than RH herself, as she has left a significant mark on the culture of our online discussions. Bullying, abuse, and shaming have become far too normal, where positive criticism and schooling in cultural sensitivity would work much more effectively for those authors who genuinely strive to do better.

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## **LMM**

November 11, 2014 at 12:38 am

This may or may not be relevant (and it’s about a day late); feel free to discard it if you think it’s a tangent.

My interactions with RH have been limited. One of her pseudonyms sounds vaguely familiar; I wouldn’t be surprised if she led to the demise of at least one forum I read back in the day. As far as the fallout goes, I’m a relative bystander.

\*However\*, years ago, I was roommates with another reasonably notorious sf troll, several years before ze’s actions became public. It was miserable. Ze was a nasty person, both online and in real life, and I was (and am) insecure enough that I blamed myself for the fallout. When I found out about ze’s actions (years after the fact), I wasn’t surprised, but I did feel a real sense of closure — for the first time, I was able to accept that much of what went on wasn’t my fault.

By then, ze also had defenders. Few thought ze’s actions were justified, but I saw some make the same arguments we’ve seen with RH — ze was young at the time, ze had issues ze was dealing with, and the community backlash was excessive. The first was false (though the confusion was understandable), the second partially true but essentially irrelevant, and the third assumed (falsely) that ze’s acts were isolated. What was most frustrating was that none of ze’s defenders had ever met zir in person. There are times when context helps to clarify an individual’s actions, but there are also times when the context makes them all the more reprehensible, and in ze’s instance, it’s the latter. From my experience, trolls and bullies often do far more damage than any one individual can be aware of, and defending their known actions ultimately trivializes the other behaviors they’ve committed under different names.

And I’m seeing parallels here in a few of the defenses of RH. Prior to this report, I might have been willing to forgive BS for her prior behavior; I might have assumed that BS had willingly chosen to distance herself from her prior rhetoric by creating a new persona because, after all, how many of us are \*really\* willing to sincerely admit to our prior mistakes? But it’s clear that BS’s recent behavior is equally destructive, just perhaps better concealed than before.

Either way, make of this what you will.

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## **A. T. Greenblatt**

November 11, 2014 at 2:53 am

Thank you, Laura, for putting this post together. You did an amazing amount of research and remained as objective as possible while presenting it. For someone who has only heard of RH peripherally and has never had any direct contact with the person in question, this was incredibly valuable to me.

To all the victims, thank you for speaking up and I'm sorry you were subjected to such hatred. In coming months, I'll be buying some of your books.

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## **Malcolm Gin**

November 11, 2014 at 4:54 pm

First I want to say thank you to everyone reviewing and moderating comments, for being very careful with words and meaning, for knowing your contributors and audience, for making this a safe and reassuring place for those who've been able to read and to comment.

Thanks also to Laura for the original write-up. I'm an engineer myself and find it very reassuring to be able to consume information so well organized and thought out.

Back when LJ was more of a thing, I was perigee there and via my ex-partner I knew or knew of many of the folks commenting here and affected by the whole situation. I think I may have had short interactions with winterfox, but I don't remember any lasting damage. Over the years and because of the breakup, I lost touch with many of you, but I have solid regards for all of you whom I wrote and spoke with and met and I'm sorry that this all happened and moreover that it happened to you, such people as I've been very proud to be acquainted with.

I had two remarks/questions:

1. Great suggestion to go buy books of those who were targeted, will do so forthwith.
2. I have prior experience (long ago) as a troller. Though I'm reformed and not interested in reengaging the aggressive parts of that, is there any room to use people of my mettle (our experience, our writing, our presence, our resolve) to help draw fire or strategize or support? I would be willing to help field and attempt to block exposure to toxicity should more bodies be needed for that, to try to protect others. Should the need arise, please keep me in mind.

Thank you again to everyone making this space safe and promoting and supporting the idea that we can relax a little and talk about everything we feel comfortable talking about.

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## **Donna Scott**

November 11, 2014 at 5:55 pm

Hello everyone... and thank you to Laura for compiling this, and her moderators.

I'm not personally a victim of RH, but I've witnessed her attack on a writer's work last year – a friend who is not listed above and I will not name 1) because although he felt hurt, he did not react and that seems to have stopped it 2) it's not my story. But I also know it was not RH's initial idea. Rather sadly, a renowned and esteemed critic in SF messaged her and said it would be a good text to pull apart. From the evidence I can see, it was then wholly unnecessary of RH to have to acquire the whole book... a word search through the kindle sample was enough. I gather this is what she commonly did. Then 'live' tweeted the phrases that would make him seem the most sexist. Some great reviewing, huh?

By the way, I consider the alerting of RH to the writer to be sad and misguided, rather than actually malicious. I think the critic in question may have realised what she'd done after – I do hope so. I think above someone called someone who alerted Vox Day to her as 'evil' – again, I think this was a silly thing to do, but not evil. Both situations were provocative, for different reasons.

Anyway, I'd also like to say sorry. I am so sorry I wasn't there to fight for people who may have needed me to. Reading this thread has made

me feel incredibly sad. I also work in comedy which is undergoing similar bad times at the moment as comedians fight among each other about racism and sexism, but these are conversations most of us feel we shouldn't have needed to have since the 80s. Instead of getting to a point where we can finally improve opportunities for everyone, there are once again some shocking attitudes to counter.

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Pingback: [Trying to stay sorta timely » Death Is Bad](#)

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Pingback: [Links: Tuesday, November 11th | Love in the Margins](#)

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Pingback: [Why Are We Here? | Safe](#)

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## Foxessa

November 12, 2014 at 12:21 am

May I respectfully provide some suggestions to the question of how to make safe spaces online for POC, as well as appropriate language through which to discuss these matters?

Regularly reading at the sites that are run and moderated by POC, such as, of course, Ta-Nehisi Coates's blog, as well as sites such as We Are Respectable Negroes, Latino Rebels, Racialicious and so on can really help with that, just like spending time within communities in which we, as white people, are not the majority.

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## A reader

November 12, 2014 at 12:55 am

I want to mention something that I don't think anyone has pointed out so far and that might be good to keep in mind for the people that the pseudonymous troll attacked for not being "Asian-Asian" like herself, and their friends and supporters.

If we assume that her self-description does have a basic core of truth, then she may be Asian-Asian, but she's not Thai-Thai; she's Chinese-Thai. A huaqiao. An overseas Chinese. In other words, a product of the diaspora, just like Cindy Pon and other people that she was being so ugly to. She may be a bit closer geographically to the Old Country, but she's not actually living there herself any more than her targets are.

I haven't yet read any of her fiction, but from the descriptions, it seems that it is based on traditional Chinese, rather than Thai, culture. That in itself doesn't bother me, since I think that it's fine for anyone to write about whatever culture they want to provided that they do the research and try their best to get it right. (To cite a positive example from a related genre, Laura Joh Rowland is an American of Korean and Chinese ancestry who writes excellent historical mysteries set in Edo-period Japan and Victorian England, places her personal ancestors never set foot in.) But it's pretty outrageous to criticize other people for writing about a culture other than the one they live in, when you yourself are doing the very same thing. So much for (alleged) authenticity.

Please, all you writers, do go on writing English-language SFF about non-European characters and cultures, whether you are white, or hyphenated diaspora, or living in your country of ancestral origin but lucky enough to have received an education that gave you native fluency in English. For every spiteful, jealous person who may attack your work, there are hundreds if not thousands of us readers waiting eagerly to enjoy it right now, and many more to come after us. Write for the future!

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## Carla Hufstedler

November 12, 2014 at 1:11 am

Adding my real name as a token of support and respect, and as a firm stand against such behavior. Such harassment is vile, and Laura, your reasoned, researched response in the face of such rageful flailing is to be highly commended.

If I can do more than this tiny gesture to help, you have my email address and url. Please contact me and let me know.

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## **laurajmixon**

November 12, 2014 at 1:19 am

Foxessa, thanks for weighing in. Of course this thread has people from many backgrounds, ethnicities and reading interests, and many here may already be well familiar with the blogs listed. For those who aren't, it's a helpful to have recommendations list. I can highly recommend Racialicious and Ta-Nehisi Coates, and will check out the others too.

And with that, it's time to end this thread.

The two primary things I wanted when I started my investigation were truth, and healing. I feel we here have contributed to something very important: the truth is starting to come out, and the community is beginning to heal.

Thank you, everyone who took the time and thought to post here. A number of posts were not allowed through but showed thought and care. The tightness of moderation here does not reflect poorly on your efforts. My special thanks to people who were targeted, for sharing their stories. I hope the outpouring of support you've seen here helps break through those walls of isolation that I know have surrounded many of you.

I'm sure we all know, the work isn't over yet. Many people are still hurt and confused and feeling betrayed. Many questions are left to be answered. Many differences remain in our various subcommunities, about why this happened and how to mend our SFF community. I didn't want to try to have those conversations here, because I think the unspooling of BS/RH's hurt is going to be a long journey. But we've made a good beginning. Thanks one last time, to all who put their feet on the path here, and joined this trek with me.

I will continue to have small-ish posts and open threads here for a while, to continue to support people who have been targeted, and I have some amendments and updates to the report that will go up in coming days and weeks, based on feedback I've received. However, I have heard [Rochita Loenen-Ruiz's call](#) for white people to leave room right now for the POC community to process what has happened, and I respect that request. I am standing down from further major statements and blog posts for a while. Life is long and we've got time. Let's let the seasons turn and joy spring back anew.

Meanwhile, SFF writer Tade Thompson has started [a blog for POC SFF folks called \*Safe\*](#). He reports that it will be a moderated blog where people of color who want a place to process and discuss their feelings about everything that has been occurred are welcome.

The rest of us are welcome to read and learn, but for those of us who are white, we have lots of spaces where white voices predominate. Let's be respectful and let his blog be POC-predominant space. Check it out.

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## **ModeratorY**

November 14, 2014 at 7:25 am

There's also [space on SAFE for all of RHB's targets to come together](#), discuss, and hopefully find healing and support.

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