

# Predator In Chief: President Trump And The Glorification Of Sexual Violence

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Whether Trump is a predatory misogynist or just plays one on TV, he embodies the blathering id of rape culture.

Donald Trump's own statements about women and the proliferation of accusations against him all point to the conclusion that he is not only a misogynist, but a sexual predator. Now, barring unprecedented action by the electoral college, he will also be the president of the United States of America.

What effect will a Trump presidency have on sexual assault survivors and the protections that our laws afford them? In terms of policy, it is difficult to predict. On this, like many issues, Trump's campaign platform was devoid of specifics. We do know that Trump will control policies throughout the executive branch. He will have broad discretionary power over the expenditure of substantial funding allocated for sexual assault prevention and victim services programs, under the auspices of the Department of Justice. In his role as commander of the armed forces, Trump will oversee the military's response to sexual assault, which has faced recent criticism. What Trump will do with these powers is unclear.

What is clear is the enormous failure in leadership that a Trump presidency represents on the issue of sexual

violence. [Survivors have watched in horror](#) as Trump's misogyny and lechery have been not only condoned, but rewarded in this election. Those of us working to end sexual violence are recognizing that, because of what he represents, the very fact of Trump's presidency will make our jobs more difficult. His success suggests that his behavior is acceptable.

Apparently, Trump was right when he told Billy Bush, "when you're a star, they let you do it. You can do anything." This was, of course, part of the [taped conversation](#) in which Trump could be heard bragging about "automatically" kissing women and grabbing them "by the pussy." The subsequent effort by members of the Republican party to minimize Trump's statements, calling them "locker room talk," proved just how far down Trump had already dragged our political discourse—and that was before he was president.

Sadly, by all accounts, Trump *has* gotten away with it. That is what survivors and the sexual assault advocacy community find so sickening.

Trump has been accused of sexually assaulting twelve women and a thirteen-year-old girl. The [allegations](#) range from groping and kissing women on the lips without their consent to ripping out chunks of his ex-wife Ivana's hair while raping her. Although Trump has denied the accusations, his own words provide critical context for his denials. At a campaign rally in October, Trump invoked a classic rape culture trope by suggesting that one accuser was not attractive enough to assault. "Believe me," [he said](#), "she would not be my first choice, that I can tell you. Man, you don't know. That would not be my first choice."

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In addition to kissing and grabbing women, Trump has bragged about going backstage at beauty pageants to ogle naked contestants changing clothes. He [told Howard Stern](#), "I sort of get away with things like that." Several former contestants have confirmed that is exactly what Trump did to women and girls as young as fourteen, who were competing in his pageants. A former Miss Arizona [reported](#) that contestants were physically vulnerable and felt powerless to challenge Trump's authority.

Abusers often test the boundaries of propriety and explore what transgressions their privilege affords. Among other areas, Trump has done this with his own daughters. When Tiffany was just one year old, her father made suggestive [comments and gestures](#) about her legs and breasts. Trump has repeatedly joked about dating Ivanka. In a [2015 Rolling Stone interview](#), he said, "Yeah, [Ivanka]'s really something, and what a beauty, that one. If I weren't happily married and, ya know, her father..." he trailed off. When Ivanka was just 22, Howard Stern asked if he could call Trump's daughter a "[piece of ass](#)," Trump responded, "yeah." At best, he uses his daughter's sexuality as a prop, humiliating her for his own amusement.

Men who harass and abuse women often have fragile egos and fixations with power. Some believe their actions are justified because they serve to avenge some real or imagined slight. Throughout his career, Trump has aggressively demeaned women whom he perceived as threats to his power or his ego. His campaign was no different. Last year, Trump [suggested](#) that Megyn Kelly was unfair to him during a Republican primary debate because she had "blood coming out of her wherever." At both a [primary](#) and a [general](#) debate, Trump assured the American people that Rosie O'Donnell deserved to be called fat and disgusting. He also doubled down on calling former Miss Universe Alicia Machado "Miss Piggy" and "Miss Housekeeping," specifically targeting her Latina identity.

The woman who most threatened Trump during his campaign was Hillary Clinton. Trump attacked Clinton's appearance, publicly assaying her body as though she existed for his sexual amusement. After the second presidential debate, Trump [told a crowd](#) of his supporters he "wasn't impressed" by the backside of his rival, Clinton, a woman who has served the United States as Secretary of State, senator, and the first lady. His lasciviousness

knows no bounds.

On January 20, 2017, a man who has violated and humiliated so many women will be exalted to the highest elected office in our government. In the meantime, all Americans must grapple with what that says about our culture and what it teaches our young people. The threat of Trump's presidency is not only normalization, but glorification of misogyny and sexual violence—just as Trump has normalized and glorified bigotry and vitriol against immigrants, Muslims, Mexican-Americans, people with disabilities, and people of color.

The day after the election, Hillary Clinton [told girls](#) to “never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams.” But this election has given us all reason to doubt. If we want girls to believe they are valuable and powerful, Americans must aggressively challenge the notion that Trump's behavior is acceptable, no matter what office he holds.

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