



Excerpt from an interview with a man who has been stalked in the past

Transcript, English translation: Johanna Stadlbauer. The interview was edited in order to preserve anonymity of persons and localities.

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When it became clear that I had a problem with a student, the first thing I did was go to the Equal Opportunity Officer and describe my problem to her. I became very disillusioned very quickly because as a reaction, as the very first reaction, since I came as a man and said that I was being stalked by a woman, she said I should take that as a compliment, and that it's actually not a problem. And it was relatively difficult for me to make it clear to the equal opportunities officer how big the problem was for me and at how many different levels this woman was already stalking me. Not just inside the university but also outside the university. And then she dutifully accepted my case, well, and we had a conversation and she also assured me that she would invite the lady in question, who was still a student at the university, to the interview. Of course, you couldn't say exactly when, but okay. That happened, too. The lady was there too and admitted to everything to almost the full extent. And just said that she was in love and that we were soul mates, and I didn't understand all of this and she was then told by the equal opportunities officer that she should leave me alone now. And this result was passed on to me with the note that the process is now complete for them. Nothing else could be done other than saying to the lady that she should please not do this. But she didn't stop, the problem continued. And was increased by the fact that this lady changed from student status to employee status at my institute. Then I approached my boss, who was also my doctoral supervisor, about the problem, and said: So that's that and the history is there and how do we want to deal with it? And I was also met with resistance there; I know that he didn't buy this story like that. I had letters from the woman in my mail compartment and I showed them to him, which he then compared with other documents from her to see if it was the same handwriting. That was also a signal like "I'll check that out first." He finally hired her, so that was the problem anyway, she also had the office next to me, so I went to the dean's office. And I said: I've got here, now I have two problems, a problem with this lady and a problem with my supervisor who doesn't take me seriously in this case. Then there was a conversation between the dean's office and my supervisor, which was obviously also unsuccessful and as a last option I had to change floors within the institute with my office. I put my courses on days when I knew that she didn't have any courses, and I did the same with the office hours, I didn't

take part in institute meetings anymore and I also communicated clearly to my supervisor: These are the things I think I must do now to avoid the woman. And that was, so to speak, all the helpful structures that I got.

First of all, I would have liked to feel that someone believed me and took it seriously. It may be that I was the first male case for the equal opportunities officer at the time, but that was no reason for me not to take the matter seriously. This feeling was missing for me the entire time. Because this sentence from the beginning, it is actually a compliment, was taken up by lady quite well, she was very virulent and then turned the story around and spread the variant in the institute that I had changed my office and changed my appointment hours because I was rejected by her. That made this story very credible and so I was put on the sidelines. And finally I left the institute; I had no on site help. And the court trial just found that I was right and that the woman's actions went far beyond any reasonable action, but the institute refused to acknowledge that as a problem. And there was no such thing as an Equal Opportunity Office or Equal Opportunity Office, no institution that would have stood by my side and said, de-escalating, we'll do it together. Instead, the professor was on his own. Maybe he was overwhelmed with it too.

Processed, well, I personally processed it so that I got the info, the lady moved away, but if someone in the city looks like her I still twitch today. She had come too close to me for that. And I would have needed someone who would have accompanied me from start to finish in this process, who would have said: I am the first point of contact, I invite the dean to an interview, I invite your superiors to a conversation, I bring everyone to a table, I stay here all the time and keep the case with me on the table until it is somehow clear who is telling nonsense here. And that just didn't happen. The equal opportunities officer finished her work early, and then I had to look myself to whom I could turn to. I had no guidelines, no experience, no central contact point. And regardless of whether it is stalking or any other thing related to sexual discrimination, the knowledge of communication within the university - where I can go and where I am taken seriously, where I also, how do you say, where I enjoy anonymity, that wasn't there at the time, I think that's the best icebreaker you can have. The culture that ideally results from this is twofold, namely that ideally the perpetrated actions would be reduced because it is clear that there is this contact point, but people like me or many others would also have known at the time if something went wrong here, in ten minutes I'll stand on the mat and then the case will be documented. And also communicate this in every introductory event and in every info flyer. And hang it on every corridor. I find this information as important as where is the

cafeteria and how can I get a student loan. I need to know where can I go if I have such a delicate problem. Which is very important, especially for people who come for the first time, that the feeling is conveyed: we will develop a plan for how to proceed now. So the knowledge that my contact person is now by my side. Almost a bit lawyer-like, I would say. That would be my wish or advice to convey this feeling and to show options. Would you like the professor to be there? Yes or no, you decide that. When do we go to the dean's office, you decide that. It is a kind of guideline that I can help determine. So we must somehow succeed in communicating the value and scope of what the equality office does, for example, to the university. I think such a culture of visibility would be necessary, and the visibility of aid measures. That it somehow always is visible that there are such places.

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