

NEW HOMES The Best New Homes All in One Place.
guide



VISIT OUR SITE

Opinions

Amber Heard: I spoke up against sexual violence — and faced our culture’s wrath. That has to change.



Amber Heard arrives at the premiere of "Aquaman" on Dec. 12 in Los Angeles. Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP
 By Amber Heard
 December 18, 2018

NEW HOMES The Best New Homes All in One Place.
guide



See the bigger, better new home search experience on our new enhanced website!
 VISIT OUR SITE

PLT/ Def: 1

Date: 04/11/2022

Judge: PSA

Case: CL-2019-0002911

Amber Heard is an actress and ambassador on women's rights at the American Civil Liberties Union.

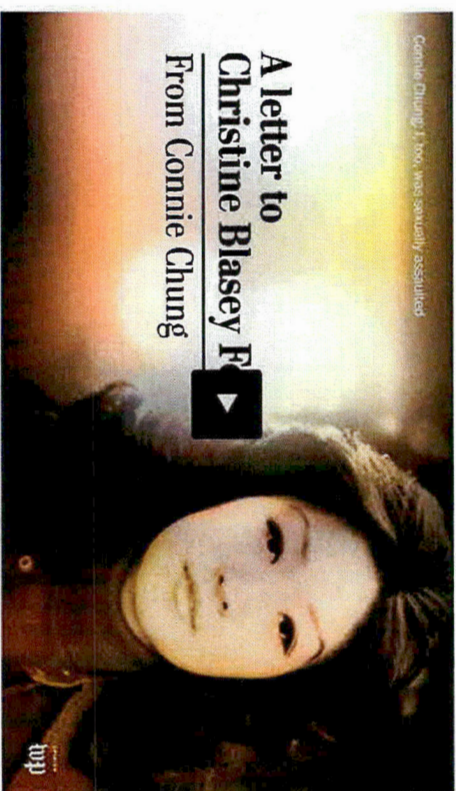
I was exposed to abuse at a very young age. I knew certain things early on, without ever having to be told. I knew that men have the power — physically, socially and financially — and that a lot of institutions support that arrangement. I knew this long before I had the words to articulate it, and I bet you learned it young, too.

Like many women, I had been harassed and sexually assaulted by the time I was of college age. But I kept quiet — I did not expect filing complaints to bring justice. And I didn't see myself as a victim.

Then two years ago, I became a public figure representing domestic abuse, and I felt the full force of our culture's wrath for women who speak out.

Friends and advisers told me I would never again work as an actress — that I would be blacklisted. A movie I was attached to recast my role. I had just shot a two-year campaign as the face of a global fashion brand, and the company dropped me. Questions arose as to whether I would be able to keep my role of Mera in the movies "Justice League" and "Aquaman."

I had the rare vantage point of seeing, in real time, how institutions protect men accused of abuse.



Listen to broadcast journalist Connie Chung read a letter to Christine Blasey Ford, acknowledging publicly for the first time that she was sexually abused. (Kase Woodson/ABC, Danielle Kuntz/The Washington Post)

Imagine a powerful man as a ship, like the Titanic. That ship is a huge enterprise. When it strikes an iceberg, there are a lot of people on board desperate to patch up holes — not because they believe in or even care about the ship, but because their own fates depend on the enterprise.

New Homes:
All in One Place.

See the blog, better new home search experience on our new enhanced website!

[Visit Our Site](#)

Most Read Opinions

- Opinion**
The most revealing insight of Michael Cohen's testimony
- Opinion**
Trump's utterly unsurprising diplomatic debacle
- Opinion**
The case for getting Trump's tax returns just got stronger — and more urgent
- Perspective**
Yes, Michael Cohen's liar and a criminal. So how come you believed him?
- Opinion**
The Republican Senate majority is imperiled

Post REPORTS

Latest episode
"I'm here to tell the truth about Mr. Trump."
▶ Listen 22:16

Unparalleled reporting. Expert insight. Clear analysis. Everything you've come to expect from the reporters of The Post — for your cars.

Michael Tuman like "Speaker" explains how "I'm here to tell the truth about Mr. Trump."

TRAVELING WHILE BLACK
Has your idea of the perfect vacation ever been a vacation? The world's most diverse cities.

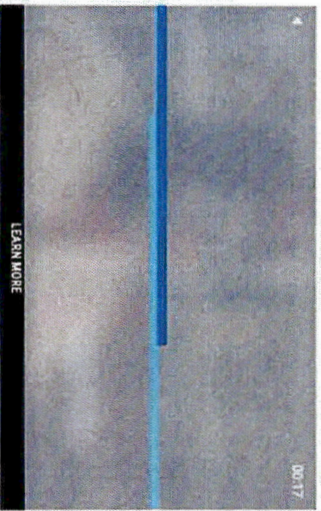
Now! At the What Matters



In recent years, the #MeToo movement has taught us about how power like this works, not just in Hollywood but in all kinds of institutions — workplaces, places of worship or simply in particular communities. In every walk of life, women are confronting these men who are buoyed by social, economic and cultural power. And these institutions are beginning to change.

We are in a transformative political moment. The president of our country has been accused by more than a dozen women of sexual misconduct, including assault and harassment. Outrage over his statements and behavior has energized a female-led opposition. #MeToo started a conversation about just how profoundly sexual violence affects women in every area of our lives. And last month, more women were elected to Congress than ever in our history, with a mandate to take women's issues seriously. Women's rage and determination to end sexual violence are turning into a political force.

We have an opening now to bolster and build institutions protective of women. For starters, Congress can reauthorize and strengthen the Violence Against Women Act. First passed in 1994, the act is one of the most effective pieces of legislation enacted to fight domestic violence and sexual assault. It creates support systems for people who report abuse, and provides funding for rape crisis centers, legal assistance programs and other critical services. It improves responses by law enforcement, and it prohibits discrimination against LGBTQ survivors. Funding for the act expired in September and has only been temporarily extended.



Get the **Mind Research** newsletter
[SIGN UP NOW](#)
On **Washington Post**

Stories from **The Lily**
The Lily, a publication of The Washington Post, shares stories about women.

Perspectives
The Standing Rock protest, a landmark moment in the fight to end pipeline construction, is covered in our new special report. Sign up to receive it.

A landmark policy reversal in Congress will now allow pregnant women to receive the Ebola vaccine.

As abortion restrictions increase, these ID states are sending a new route to access.

D District, Maryland and Virginia headlines and alerts
Delivered FREE to your inbox to help you stay on top of the news.
[SIGN UP NOW](#)
On **Washington Post**

Read These Comments newsletter
The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

We should continue to fight sexual assault on college campuses, while simultaneously insisting on fair processes for adjudicating complaints. Last month, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos proposed changes to Title IX rules governing the treatment of sexual harassment and assault in schools. While some changes would make the process for handling complaints more fair, others would weaken protections for sexual assault survivors. For example, the new rules would require schools to investigate only the most extreme complaints, and then only when they are made to designated officials. Women on campuses already have trouble coming forward about sexual violence — why would we allow institutions to scale back supports?

I write this as a woman who had to change my phone number weekly because I was getting death threats. For months, I rarely left my apartment, and when I did, I was pursued by camera drones and photographers on foot, on motorcycles and in cars. Tabloid outlets that posted pictures of me spun them in a negative light. I felt as though I was on trial in the court of public opinion — and my life and livelihood depended on myriad judgments far beyond my control.

I want to ensure that women who come forward to talk about violence receive more support. We are electing representatives who know how deeply we care about these issues. We can work together to demand changes to laws and rules and social norms — and to right the imbalances that have shaped our lives.

Read more:

The Post's View: What Betsy DeVos's new Title IX changes get right — and wrong

Betsy DeVos: It's time we balance the scales of justice in our schools

Janet Napolitano: Don't let the Trump administration undermine Title IX

Mill Mirra: The most horrifying part of the Dartmouth sexual harassment case

710 Comments



Read These Comments newsletter

The best comments and conversations at The Washington Post, delivered every Friday. Join the conversation.

Sign me up

By signing up you agree to our Terms of Use and Privacy Policy

Sign me up

washingtonpost.com
© 1996-2019 The Washington Post

- Help and Contact Us
- Policies and Standards
- Terms of Service
- Privacy Policy
- Print Products Terms of Sale
- Digital Products Terms of Sale
- Submissions and Discretion Policy
- RSS Terms of Service
- Ad Choices

NEW HOMES
The Best New Homes.
All in One Place.

See the biggest, hottest new home search experience on our new enhanced website!

[VISIT OUR SITE](#)