

**One Woman,  
Standing Up  
for Others**

"We may never fully stomp out hurtful online behavior," says Lewinsky. "But I do believe we can get to a place where it's rarer and less harmful, specifically that a bully's words are drowned out by more supportive voices."



HAIR: TIM ROGERS FOR LIVING PROOF; MAKEUP: CHRISTOPHER ARDOFF FOR DIOR; BALENCIAGA DRESS; EF COLLECTION EARRINGS. SEE GLAMOUR SHOPPER FOR MORE INFORMATION

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# Stop the Social Savagery

The trolling. The shaming. The name-calling. The threats. How did social media get so vicious? Our exclusive poll has answers. Plus, a look at how crusaders (among them Monica Lewinsky) are fighting back. Blaire Briody reports.

Photograph by **Pamela Hanson** Fashion editor: **Jessica Sailer Van Lith**

**I**t's a Monday afternoon, and I stare at the number on my phone as it vibrates. I'm nervous about picking it up. "Hi, this is Max," the man says. "Thank you for calling," I answer. "Yeah," he says, "I'm not even sure why I called you back." Max looked like an upstanding guy on his Facebook profile, but he's actually an Internet troll—a person who harasses others online by name-calling, body shaming, or worse. I'd reached out to him after he told feminist blogger Joni Edelman that she should "just go under a rock and die."

That kind of comment is not uncommon for Edelman, 41, who frequently writes about body issues. A recent appearance on the *Today* show, on which she defended her plus-size frame, earned her ugly comments all over the Internet about her children, her husband, her sex life, and whether her weight would make it impossible for her to survive the end of the world. "I feel sorry for your husband," posted one commenter. Another wrote, "No one's ever going to want to f--k your fat ass."

I'd called Max with two questions in mind: What had motivated him—what motivates *anyone*—to spew such hatred? And what would it take for him, or any troll, to stop?

Let me back up.

In many ways social media has empowered women—from catapulting the careers of female entrepreneurs to fueling movements like #BringBackOurGirls. But with all the networking and freedom of expression, this cyber world has also delivered a new way to silence us, via everything from snarky Instagram comments to vile Twitter threats.

To find out exactly how hostile the Internet is, *Glamour* polled 1,000 women ages 18 to 59, asking how they've been treated. Although the major social media platforms have recently made efforts to address harassment and bullying, only 7 percent of women we surveyed think things have gotten any better in the past year, and a full 35 percent say it's gotten worse.

How much worse? More than half of women—57 percent—report getting hurtful comments; 25 percent say they've been called an offensive name like "bitch." Some women face much worse: 4 percent of women say they've received sexually dangerous messages like "You should be raped"; 8 percent of women report receiving physical threats like "You deserve to die." The survey also paints a disturbing landscape of online gangs. Twenty-eight percent of cyberbullied women report being attacked by "troll mobs,"

## Meet the Women Fighting Back for All of Us!

They've got some brilliant ideas.

### *She Cultivates Compassion*

**Monica Lewinsky, social activist; ambassador to Bystander Revolution, an antibullying organization; and *Vanity Fair* contributing editor**

If anyone knows the burn of being publicly shamed, it's Lewinsky, who became "patient zero," as she calls it, of Internet bullying after her 1990s relationship with then president Bill Clinton. Now, at 42, she's made fighting to end hateful dialogue her personal crusade. Speaking around the world on the issue (including a TED talk that has 6 million views), she stopped to talk to *Glamour* about what it will really take to change the virtual culture.

**GLAMOUR:** In our survey one out of five women admitted to criticizing a celebrity online. Is that disturbing to you?

**MONICA LEWINSKY:** Constructive criticism is legitimate,

but when it escalates to vitriol, it affects us all, because celebrities and influencers are part of the collective consciousness. Women need to support other women, not cut them down. And that goes for recognizable women too.

**GLAMOUR:** So how can women distinguish between criticizing and bullying?

**ML:** Shaming, harassing, and bullying cut deeply and can scar. It's the difference between saying "That's not my style" and "She looks like a whore."

**GLAMOUR:** Our survey also found that 57 percent of women reported receiving negative comments. Is Internet shaming the price of living in the fully wired twenty-first century?

**ML:** Acceptance of and adaptation to this deplorable behavior is not an option. Full stop. But as painful and destructive as they are, the hateful comments allow us to map the underlying beliefs of many people in a way we've



which arise when one commenter riles up his or her followers to hurl vitriol at a single target. (See "Social Bullying: How Bad Is It?" opposite page.)

Women aren't the only ones targeted; *Glamour* also polled 1,000 men, and their answers described similar levels of abuse, often name-calling like "stupid" or "moron." But women were twice as likely to be harassed on the basis of their gender, and three times as likely to get unwanted sexual comments. "Women—especially outspoken feminists, journalists, politicians, and actresses—receive the most vicious attacks," says law professor Mary Anne Franks, Ph.D., legislative and tech policy director for the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, which works to fight online harassment, and who advised *Glamour* on this survey. "One of the most troubling aspects of all this harassment is that it can make women afraid to express themselves, not just online but also intimately, personally, professionally, or politically." Among women who reported getting negative comments, one in three say that the attacks had caused them to censor themselves online.

That's exactly what experts say we can't let happen. "We don't want women to go dark," says Michelle Ferrier, Ph.D., an associate dean at the Scripps College of Communication at Ohio University, who researches online harassment. "We don't want them to stay offline because they fear for their lives or for bodily harm. We need them to have strong voices and opinions."

## Who Are These Jerks?

When I started looking into the trolls who attacked Edelman and other women, experts told me that the worst abuse often originates in "men's rights" sites like A Voice for Men and Return of Kings. "Many other harassers are loners and get power from what they do online," says attorney Parry Aftab, founder of WiredSafety, a network that assists cyber-abuse victims.

Perhaps shockingly, half the respondents in our survey who reported being targeted online said the hateful comments came from *women*. "We see this kind of bullying all the time in teenage girls," says Robin Stern, Ph.D., associate director for the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. "And many take it into the rest of their lives." For some people, trolling may even be a form of online bonding, says Zoë Quinn, 28, a game developer who has received



### The Trolled Life

To expose cruelty, artist Lindsay Bottos, 23, posted her selfies on Tumblr—complete with the comments she'd received on them. "It's comforting to hear my project made other women feel empowered," she says.

anonymous asked:

you're honestly one of the ugliest people i've ever seen in my whole entire life. its funny because you think you're cute but its really just sad. sorry, the truth hurts

some of the most vicious recent public harassment in what became known as Gamergate in 2014 (see "She Helps in the Moment of Crisis," below). Since first being targeted, she has talked to roughly 300 former harassers to better understand their motives. What has she learned? That they brag about their bullying to one another on social media "as if they're high-fiving, trying to get the best score on messing with this person they've dehumanized," she says. "They don't see the people they're harassing as *people*."

The Internet itself makes it harder to be empathetic, Stern says. "When you are face-to-face, you see other people's reactions," she notes. "When you're online, you see only yourself. It's easy to say whatever you want because there are no consequences, except to your sense of self and integrity. The more you're out there being nasty and calling each other names, the more you *are* that person."

## The Best Ways to Fight Back

Every situation is different, and experts agree there's no one "right way" to shut down trolls. Some options to consider if you've been bullied on any platform:

**Ignore, ignore, ignore:** Almost three quarters of the survey respondents who just went about their usual business and ignored a troll say the bullying died down. What was even more effective? Blocking a troll from their feed. Most platforms have such tools (on Twitter you can block whole lists of offenders, which can be effective against mobs). One caveat: Blocking won't allow you to easily

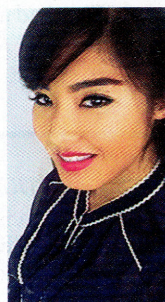
never been able to before. It's almost as if all of the negativity and misogyny needs to come to the surface so we can fully understand what it is, and how deep it goes, before we can begin to shift it. Of course, I wish it weren't there.

**GLAMOUR:** So many women—even the most confident or accomplished—feel ashamed when we are confronted by cruel comments or critiques online. What advice would you give them?

**ML:** The first and most important thing sounds easy but can be challenging to do when we feel vulnerable: Reach out to someone—a friend, a relative, a mentor, or a professional—and share what happened. One reason I'm working with Bystander Revolution (bystanderrevolution.org) is precisely because it offers help in these situations. Feeling alone and unseen can intensify the experience of being harassed, shamed, or bullied. Also, if you can—and believe me, I know this is asking a lot—try and have neutral compassion toward the perpetrator. Step outside the sting of the incident and realize that this person is trying to erase their own inadequacy or unhappiness by transferring it to you. It won't make the incident go away, but it's one thing you can do to reduce the pain.

**GLAMOUR:** What can we all do to make the Internet a better place?

**ML:** The most potent thing we can do is to bring more compassion online. When you see anyone being targeted, support her or him with a positive comment or emoji. Be mindful of clickbait—sensational stories designed to humiliate. Click with compassion.



## She Exposes Trolls

Mia Matsumiya, @perv\_magnet on Instagram

A rock violinist who often plays with avant-garde bands, Matsumiya says she started getting harassed online more than a decade ago. As a saver of everything, she began filing the dirty posts and messages—from harmless "hey baby"s and weird fetish requests to full-on rape threats—in a folder she titled

Creepiness. "Over the years it just kept growing and growing," she says. The sheer volume was a wake-up call to her. "People accept this stuff as normal. This is not normal," she says. "People don't act like this offline. Why is it OK online?" Matsumiya got so enraged she decided to publish almost every post she'd saved on Instagram. Her @perv\_magnet account made news all over the Internet, and soon other women added the scuzzy comments they'd gotten. "Women are punished for having any visibility at all," says Matsumiya. "I want every woman to know she doesn't have to hide."

BOTTOS: MATSUMIYA, FERRIER, AND QUINN: COURTESY OF SUBJECT SURVEY DATA COLLECTED FROM 1,023 WOMEN AGES 18 TO 69, OCTOBER 9-12, 2016, AND 1,016 MEN AGES 18 TO 69, OCTOBER 9-11, 2016, USING SURVEY MONKEY AUDIENCE



monitor an abuser or collect evidence for the police, and it may antagonize a troll. "They'll just go create a new account and come back with tenfold energy," says Cindy Southworth, founder of the Safety Net Tech Project, a resource for victims of cyber abuse at the National Network to End Domestic Violence. She often recommends a "hide, not delete" approach (like on Facebook and Twitter). The troll can still see his post, she says, "but the emotional impact is minimized for you." Plus, you'll be able to make screen grabs if needed. Which you might, because the next step is...

**Report:** Among our survey takers, 73 percent who reported a social media bully to a platform say doing so stopped the abuse. All the major social media sites say they will take down accounts if they find their policies have been violated, and experts say many have gotten better at helping a woman report a potential criminal to the police. Whether law enforcement will pursue the case is another question. "We still have judges who say 'The Twitter' and 'The Intertubes,' and cops who say, 'Why doesn't she just get off the computer?'" notes Southworth, who trains police departments across the country. "But harassment and stalking are crimes." If you think there is a real risk that someone could physically harm you, if your personal information or photos are released, if a bully just won't leave you alone, you should report it to your local police.

**Improve your "social" security:** To help prevent getting trolled in the first place, adjust your privacy settings to limit who sees your feed. If you are trolled, two-factor authentication log-ins (systems that require a password and a code from, say, your cell phone) can help keep a bully from hacking your personal information.

**If you see something, say something:** When you spot a woman getting attacked or unfairly criticized, consider writing on her feed a simple "ouch" or "Please, have respect." Those words, especially "ouch," put a troll on notice, says Southworth—without, most likely, inciting him or her to turn on you. She also urges you to get your male buddies to do the same. "There's such power in men holding other men accountable," she says. Sometimes posting directly to the troll, "Hey, this makes me feel really [hurt, embarrassed—insert emotion]," works too. Early research has found that when teens took that step, "in many cases the troubling material was taken down," says Zorana Ivcevic Pringle, Ph.D., an associate research scientist at Yale. The point: Remind people #letsbehuman.

Making direct contact worked for Alanah Pearce, a 22-year-old gaming journalist. After getting the message "i'll rape u if i ever see u c--t" on Facebook, she started **continued** on page 99 ►

# Social Bullying: How Bad Is It?

Surprising findings from *Glamour's* survey of 1,000 women

## 1 in 3

women say harassment on social media in the last year has gotten worse.

### **The comments are pretty hurtful.**

A full **57%** of women say they've received negative comments online.

**25%** of women say they've been called an offensive name like "bitch" or "slut."

**10%** say they've been stalked online.

**19%** say someone made unwanted sexual comments.

**8%** say they've gotten physical threats like "You deserve to die."

### **Trolls aren't always who you'd think.**

**66%** of women who've been bullied say the attacker was a stranger.

**52%** say the troll was someone they knew.

**49%** report their bully was a woman.

And **10%** of women we polled admit that

they've criticized a friend; **19%** confess to posting harsh comments about a celeb.

### **Women feel safer on some sites than others.**

Of the top five most popular sites among our survey takers, women say **PINTEREST** is the friendliest site and rank **TWITTER** and **YOUTUBE** as the least. "Video makes it more tempting to attack a woman's appearance," says CCRI's Franks. "Seeing her say or do something pushes even more buttons than reading it."

### **Virtual bullying has major impact IRL.**

Among women who've had negative feedback: **34%** say, "I censor myself, posting fewer comments or photos."

## 19%

say they feel more insecure in their daily life.



## She Lifts Women Up

**Michelle Ferrier, Ph.D., founder of TrollBusters**

Ferrier started getting racist messages by snail mail 10 years ago, when she was one of the first African American columnists at a Florida newspaper. Even though one anonymous writer made references to lynching, Ferrier says she couldn't get the police, FBI, or anyone else to step in. Resolved to help others like her, especially as she saw harassment escalating on the Internet, she launched TrollBusters (troll-busters.com) in 2015. "We jokingly call ourselves online pest control for women journalists," says Ferrier, now an associate dean at the Scripps College of Communication at Ohio University. When a woman tells TrollBusters she's being attacked, they send a stream of positive messages into her feed—inspirational quotes, funny visuals to make her laugh, advice on protecting herself. "Our goal is to support each woman emotionally to make sure she keeps expressing her ideas," Ferrier says. "We don't respond to the trolls, because they want the attention, but they do see we're watching and hopefully think twice about continuing. So far it's working."



## She Helps in the Moment of Crisis

**Zoë Quinn, cofounder of Crash Override Network**

Trying to break up troll mobs "isn't exactly what I saw myself doing with my life," admits Quinn, a game developer. But after surviving what became known as Gamergate in 2014 (in which mobs from the gaming community terrorized Quinn with such venom she was forced to leave her home), she knew she had to help keep others safe. So she launched Crash Override (crashoverridenetwork.com), a highly specialized, tech-savvy task force. Their crisis team helps people being cyber-attacked learn to protect themselves; their network of lawyers, counselors, and other professionals addresses the long-term fallout. "We're getting nearly 100 cases a month," she says. "Stalking, hacking, revenge porn—the really nasty, scary stuff." Quinn has also briefed Congress and spoken at the U.N. about the issue; her memoir is set to come out this year. And yep, her life story is being made into a movie. "We always hear, 'Oh, it's just the Internet,'" she says. "No. Not when trolls are telling people to die."



# The Get-It Guide

All the info you need to buy the stuff you love in this month's issue

## Cover

On Fey: Jumpsuit, \$2,470, Roland Mouret, NYC. Ear jacket, \$350, vita fede.com. Bracelet, select Chloé stores. On Poehler: Top, \$776, Neiman Marcus. Earring, \$175, net-a-porter.com.

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## Stop the Social Savagery

Page 94: Earrings, \$625, efcollection.com.

## CORRECTION

On page 100 of the December issue, the price for the Brooks Brothers dress is \$398.

All prices are approximate.

## Stop the Social Savagery

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sleuthing and discovered the message had been sent by a teenage boy. So she did what most of us would do in real life: She told his mom. “I was wondering if you might be interested in discussing [this] with him,” she messaged. The mom responded: “omg little sh-t. IM SO SORRY. YES I WILL TALK TO HIM!!!” Afterward, the boy stopped harassing Pearce.

With all this in mind, I tightened up my privacy settings and, after seeing so many trolls on Joni Edelman's stories, asked if she would mind my reaching out to some of them. She told me to go for it.

Max, the first one I got on the phone, who'd told Edelman to “go under a rock and die,” said he was a journalism student in Florida—and apologized profusely. “I'm not really sure *why* I said something so hateful,” he told me. “It's definitely easier to be mean when it's not face-to-face.” Then I contacted a Facebook user named Jesse. After Edelman had appeared on the *Today* show, he'd posted, “As there are people starving around the world this chick is proud of being fat—how disgusting.”

Turns out, Jesse is in his forties, a single dad working in construction to support his kids. When I confronted him on the phone, he was defensive. “Well, she glamorized that she overeats, when she's actually killing herself,” he said. “There are a lot of people who would love to be eating that food and they're starving.” He paused. “I mean, it was kind of rude. I'll admit that.”

I asked him whether he'd ever struggled with his weight, and he said no, but revealed that he'd gone hungry before. He'd lost his job during the recession and didn't always have enough money to buy food. He guessed that's why Edelman's piece hit a nerve. “I want to apologize,” he said. “I didn't mean to offend anybody.”

I relayed my conversation with Jesse to Edelman. “It helps me understand,” she said. “And the whole point of me writing is to reach out to people who are dealing with emotional issues, or trying to find peace. But just because you struggle doesn't give you carte blanche to be mean to people.”

So far, Edelman hasn't heard from him, or Max. “People bully for all kinds of reasons,” says Stern. “But many who do it are just careless with the words they use and haven't stopped to think about how those hurtful comments are being received—or nobody's ever told them. If you do tell them, it can shift everything. But if none of us says anything, nothing will change.”

*Blaire Briody has written for The New York Times and Popular Science.*

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