

Authority Easily Leads to Abuse

When I was a freshman in college, the head of the music department at my school (William Hall) took a strong interest in my education for the first couple of months. He had talks with me about my progress, he encouraged me to go into the conducting program (which he headed), he was very kind and welcoming.

After several months the choir went on a trip to Hawaii for an ACDA (American Choral Directors Association) conference. This was in January 2002, my freshman year. During the trip, my director brought me to several of the classes, he personally introduced me to Moses Hogan and Eric Whitacre and talked to me about various concepts and was incredibly friendly.

During one of the evenings of this trip the choir had a big party. At Choir parties in my college, Dr. Hall provided alcohol to everyone (mostly minors) and he got super drunk. Three times this day, two while drunk and one while relatively sober he hit on me very strongly. Once I was in his suite and he asked me to come to his room, but I refused. Once he pulled me physically closer to him as if he was my buddy, but it came off very creepy and I pulled away. The last time he somewhat cornered me, but I moved away and left.

The relationship I had with Dr. Hall after this trip was horrible. He spoke very poorly to others about me (including multiple occasions to the whole choir when I wasn't there). I was rejected for the conducting program, which made sense to no one given various circumstances. He offered me more in scholarship money my freshman year when I told him I needed more otherwise I would have to transfer to CSUF, but later told me he never offered it when it wasn't there my sophomore year. I had a bunch of conflicts with this jerk after my freshman Hawaii trip.

This was a shitty circumstance. It isn't "fair" that it happened. However, this happens with most teachers, and most people in places of unquestioned authority. In fact, the situation that occurred in college was a situation I had vastly more leverage than in previous similar situations.

Of course, I'm not actually saying most teachers and people in positions of authority use their authority to get sex. However, most do use the leverage they have to fuck with people who don't give them what they want. Often these people desire obedience, sometimes it is reverence, sometimes approval, and sometimes it is the illusion of being helpful to validate their existence. The danger of unquestioned authority is that it puts humans with desires in control of other people. These people use the leverage they have to get what they want out of situations.

I have much worse stories than my college experience with teachers. However, our society doesn't give a shit how dickish my teachers were in order to get my obedience. Our society doesn't care that I had no leverage with my third grade teacher, but significantly more leverage with my college professor. Our society largely blames me for my teachers absolute deplorable behavior. Why? Because I didn't give me teachers reverence or obedience.

To most people I would minimize this college experience. This is because I didn't feel nearly as victimized in this circumstance than I did by the many crummy teachers I had K-12. Our society just likes to take adult feelings, and sexual harassment very seriously while they blame the victim with children and/or when sex isn't involved.