

Tuesday, June 4 2019

To the members of the Justice Committee

RE: Submission on my own behalf, Nora Loreto

Neoliberalism and the Internet — two powerful forces that have fundamentally shifted how people understand themselves in relation to others — have created global networks for people to find each other like never before. Any interest, fear, desire or rage can find a community to call home. At the same time, people in the West report experiencing a crushing isolation that as far as we know, humanity has never before experienced.

At the nexus of these two forces are online communities, support groups, forums, direct message chats and video hangouts. They bring people together to play or talk, to learn or debate. At best, they create the community that we lack — the community that we used to find in church or temple halls, community clubs, rec centres or along our downtowns' main drags.

At worst, online communities bring out the most destructive elements of both forces. Crushing loneliness is an accelerant and online forums are a spark. They meet one another and explode.

That's the only way to understand how the far right is organizing itself and rising, both online and in real life. Ever since I was first targeted by white supremacists in Toronto in 2006, I've watched their movements grow and evolve: their confidence build, buoyed by the acceptable racist discourses that flow from characters like Donald Trump. As their confidence has grown, so too has the sophistication. Sophisticated racist tropes have become mainstream — so mainstream, that sometimes the person who shares the trope doesn't even understand why it's racist.

This has been broadly documented and I expect you've read everything written by Mack Lamoureux at Vice, at least to start.

I start there because it's critical to put into context why I became an international whipping post in April 2018. As one of Canada's few white writers who writes about racism and white supremacy, I'm an easy target for hate. Anyone who poses a threat to the status quo, whether it's because of what they write, or whether it's because their very existence stands in opposition to the Canadian state, is a target for online hate.

Whenever some orders go out to attack, and I'm not always sure where those orders come from, my feed is swarmed by trolls and bots, and a real person here and there. It's happened consistently over the past five years, but nothing compared to April 2018.

After Canadians had donated \$4 million to the victims of the Humboldt Broncos hockey team disaster, I dared to question our collective generosity when tragedy strikes. Despite the overwhelming evidence to support the fact that we Canadians give less to people who are socially marginalized, I was called many things for my infamous four tweets, which challenged Canadians to be as generous in all times of tragedy, not just when tragedy hits what we understand to be the perfect victim: innocent white, young, male, hockey players. The bus

accident in April 2018 was horrifying. No parent, no team, no community should have to experience this. But it's also true that Canadians have a hard time being equally generous — a reality that was proven just a few weeks later when the Toronto van attack happened and 11 people were murdered.

Thanks to the work of many people to promote these tweets, from online conservative activists to some staff at the Toronto Sun, and monetized by groups like The Rebel and Ontario Proud, the tweets were turned into something with which to teach me a lesson — to not talk about systemic inequality. The tweets were put in front of the faces of people in mourning. They were broadcast. Now-premier Jason Kenney wrote a Facebook status about how terrible I am for having said what I said, and thousands of people commented about how horrible and miserable I must be. Sarah Palin weighed in. Arguably, it was the perfect wedge issue to solidify and grow their political base, or their readership: self-hating white girl makes the tragedy about gender and race. Except, in Canada, everything is about gender and race, as the Toronto Sun, Jason Kenney, Ontario Proud and The Rebel well know.

I became “Canada’s most hated person” — the same day that Alexandre Bissonnette’s sentencing trial heard about the cold, calculated manner in which he murdered six and injured dozens of my *concitoyens*. The irony wasn’t lost on me.

The tweet launched me into the stratosphere. I had to turn my phone off for a week. I received a barrage of phone calls from people telling me all manner of things. Every boss that The Mob decided I had worked for received phone calls telling them to fire me (this included people I had never had any contact with). My family members were targeted. My grandmother received messages that she thankfully couldn’t see because she’s not yet perfect at Facebook. I received hundreds of threats. I lost contracts. I was publicly denounced and blacklisted by Maclean’s Magazine. I had very few public champions with any power. The mob pretty much won.

My twitter feed had 27 million interactions that week. Combined with the barrage on Facebook, I received a message once every eight seconds or so.

The messages had the clear intent of isolating me (socially, professionally) and then push me to suicide. It was a tsunami of non-stop insults and harassment that touched on how I look, my gender, whether or not I’m Jewish and all the ways in which I should suffer for having the gall to state a simple matter of fact. Had the threats worked and my family, friends and employers had agreed with these harassers, I honestly don’t know how I would have survived it.

Key to generating this hate were online groups, both groups explicitly dedicated to hate and conservative meme generators who need soft content to rile up their members and be engaged.

In the aftermath of that event, I’m now marked. I know that everything I write is monitored by folks who are looking for the right moment to seize on my words, contort them, and profit off my misery. God forbid I ever have a bad day and write something regrettable. Whether these groups are profiting literally, in the case of The Rebel fundraising off of me, or figuratively by solidifying their political supporters, it has the same effect, and therefore serves the same purpose. The internet hate machine generates hate and then profits off hate. It profits off causing misery to others. Politicians leverage this machine to win elections by inventing a monster and using that monster to stroke egos or scare souls, all to consolidate supporters.

Since April 2018, the threats have continued. The Metacanada subreddit has often promoted something I've written to corral people towards my social media feeds and attack me. A comment I made about children gathering pitchforks to go after oil execs for destroying the planet (which was, so obviously, satire), was promoted by Jason Kenney, whose trolls mobilized to have my twitter account suspended. Indeed, I've been suspended three times in the past year from Twitter, and never was it over comments that were threatening, inciting hate or violent.

These are coordinated attacks. I can see the waves as they rise and fall in my newsfeeds. Just this week, a comment I made about how philanthropy used to launder someone's reputation has resulted in another barrage of hate. When I posed the question: what church is ultra-Catholic crusader and white nationalist Faith Goldy a member of, photos of where I live were circulated online. I had a child services complaint made against me in September 2018.

These waves are coordinated and directly linked to online forums where hateful people gather. There is not much distance between the Yellow Vests Canada, for example, a group that espouses racism freely and openly, and the Conservative Party and its provincial counterpoints, where sitting politicians welcomed and embraced the United We Roll convoy, co-organized by the Yellow Vests. What accounts for this connection? Are there racists among elected conservative politicians? Or is it just another way to profit off of an issue by consolidating support and using a disaffected group of people, a horde who is willing to kneecap your opposition by harassing them into silence, and off social media? It's a nice way to keep your hands clean while your critics are dealt body blows.

The worst impact isn't what they do to me, or what they will do to me. I'm not scared or hurt by these tactics (though my employment is very clearly impacted). But swarming critics with intense harassment isn't just about silencing critics of the status quo. It's also about scaring potential critics into staying silent. Coordinating harassment towards writers and activists who challenge the status quo intends to reform what is acceptable in Canadian discourse and what is abhorrent. The goal posts move so far to the right that basic, true critiques of Canadian nationalism or politics or society are made to be dangerous: they're dangerous to write, dangerous to publish, dangerous to give a platform to. That's the insidious impact of online hate — that in addition to the real-world violence that we know spills from it, and I know my friends from the *Centre culture Islamique de Québec* have already addressed this committee — our collective ability to challenge power and challenge inequity becomes dangerous. Literally dangerous.

And whose interests does that serve?

Attached to this letter a small number of the violent threats I received in the aftermath of the April 2018 tweets. I've received many more since, but these are what I saved. For every one of these, there are hundreds more comments telling me I suck in some uncreative way. The attached images contain vile, violent and racist comments, and lewd photos.

Should you have any questions, or require anything further, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Sincerely,

Nora Loreto
Quebec City



Kevvers
@Kevvvisa



You're a low life piece of shit for your comments about those boys. Go fuck yourself with a cactus you stupid cunt. Fucking mutt, I hope someone spits on your dog face you miserable birch.

Apr 10



You're a low life piece of shit for your comments about those boys. Go fuck yourself with a cactus you stupid cunt. Fucking mutt, I hope someone spits on your dog face you miserable bitch. Don't wake up. You fucking dumb twat.



Apr 10

You made the Toronto sun! Congratulatlons! You're so fucked 😂



TommyBerrafato

@tommy_berrafato



You are a fucking moron

Apr 11



How the fuck do you make such a stupid ass comment and STILL be enough of a fuckin cunt to try standing by it

Apr 11



You deserve to rot in hell ya fucking low life. Think about how much that money is going to help those who are grieving and the families of the victims and the entire hockey community that was effected by this. You're just fucking dumb. There's really no articulate way to say it, you are a fucking idiot. How do you find this as something to do with race??

Apr 11



You just wait bitch, imma guarantee someone runs up on you and beats your ass

Apr 11



Joseph Lopez

@Fuck_Taxes



I hope someone shoves a cactus up your ass and it kills you

Apr 10



I hope someone shoves a cactus up your ass and it kills you

Apr 11



I hope someone shoves a cactus up your ass and it kills you

Apr 11



I hope someone shoves a cactus up your ass and it kills you

Apr 12



Juulz Santana

@harrysweezey

jobs over this, no matter how twisted my words become by these freaks.

Freedom Tolerance and Love @DeGriffith_Can

Replying to @NoLore

I agree no one will silence Nora... She's too self absorbed. However we will follow her wherever she goes... We will campaign against @macleans or any other publication that prints her vile ugliness.

35 3 37



Nora Loreto @NoLore · 6h

What a statement. @macleans thinks that talking about systemic racism and calling for love and support to be extended to all victims "incredibly inappropriate."

Thanks for feeding the abuse when you could have easily helped to starve it.



Statement from Maclean's - Macleans.ca

macleans.ca

182 82 255



and boom goes the dynamite

Apr 12



Jeff Young

You and Jeff Young aren't connected on Facebook

10 APRIL 20:01

Disgustingly evil, opportunistic, radical extremist, misandrist, feminazi twat.

And, that is me being kind.



It will be delightful to watch karma have its way with you.

11 APRIL 18:18



Another victim has passed, a female this time. Not quite as "maley", this time...you vile and filthy cunt.



Jeff Young

Facebook profile

<https://facebook.com/JD1985>



Eric Prybylski

You and Eric Prybylski aren't connected on Facebook

11 APRIL 18:37

You're trash. You deserve everything coming towards you. It definitely isn't pretty either. Hope you're ready for it, you piece of shit



Eric Prybylski

Facebook profile

<https://facebook.com/eprybylski>



Cody Charles Dow Connors

You and Cody Charles Dow Connors aren't connected on Facebook

11 APRIL 01:16

Just wondering how you could write something so erroneously stupid about the 15 people killed you are a complete embarrassment to this country why am I not surprised your hiding in Quebec



11 APRIL 18:17



What to important to reply



Cody Charles Dow Connors

Facebook profile

<https://facebook.com/profile.php?id=100004556438507>



Alex Williams
@alexwilliams_2



Ur a piece of fuckin trash

Apr 10

I hope one day something happens to you and your and no one fuckin helps you cause ur white. Shit id pay to make that happen so you know how it feels you fuckin cunt



No good to fuckin society, waste of fuckin space

Apr 10



LIKEEE how many retweet's for you to delete ya twitter

Apr 10

You should be dead, the Humboldt boys shouldn't be

I hope someone kills you



Id fuckin pay to have it done. Ur a useless piece of skin

Apr 10



Terry Ostashek

You and Terry Ostashek aren't connected on Facebook

10 APRIL 21:52

Posted to Facebook: She is noted as a contributor on various websites! Call the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (BC Phone # 604-801-5121) to demand that they remove all mention of her from their website and that they disassociate themselves from her altogether! Call Maclean's Magazine as well (1-800-268-6811) to demand that they completely disassociate their publication from her and never publish her again! Call Lorimer Publishers (416) 362-4762! She is an editor at Canadian Association of Labour Media. Call them at (647) 428-8028! Call the Globe and Mail as well at (416) 585-5000! Call every organization that she is associated with and demand that they end any association with her! Let's see if she hates unemployment as much as she seems to hate young Canadian hockey players!



10 APRIL 23:33



David Stewart

You and David Stewart aren't connected on Facebook

Former Operator at MJR contracting
Studied at Olds College

11 APRIL 17:59

Despicable human u are politicizing such a tragedy. U should take your head out of your own ass cause all I see is a pile of shit pouring out of your mouth. And I hope a truck runs u down some day so you know how it feels. Hope u die ASAP. No one will care.



Backwards smile

@smile_backwards



Hey you white piece of shit you look like a man....I never met anyone so disgusting in my life you please for all that is right and holy end your self it will be the only thing that makes your family happy I promise you..

Apr 11



Your entire life is a cancer I wish nothing but the worst punishment for you and your family fuck you,your the real problem in this world your ducking kind your white white and French leave our country you worthless cunt leave for fuck sakes

Apr 11



Simon Butler

You and Simon Butler aren't connected on Facebook
Went to St. Thomas Aquinas High School

11 APRIL 16:18

How dare you make that comment about the Humbolt hockey players. It wouldnt matter if they were black, brown or purple. Young or old, male or female tragic life loss is not your place to judge in amy way shape or form. I hope you loose you damn job for such a stupid comment, you deserve much worse.



Jared Lea

You and Jared Lea aren't connected on Facebook

11 APRIL 16:34

You're a scum bag piece of shit for your twitter post. Go hang yourself you fuckin Twat. I can't wait till we all find out you're dead





Mike Robinson

You and Mike Robinson aren't connected on Facebook

11 APRIL 09:27

Kill yourself bitch



How does it feel to be hated by millions of people



Facebook User

10 APRIL 23:16

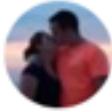
You're quite a twisted individual. Really? Playing identity politics while families are grieving at the loss of children at the hands of a serious tragedy!

Do you think the first people on scene, (Indigenous First Nations people) were thinking about race, creed or privilege? Probably pre-occupied with trying to save the lives of young innocent children dying on the side of the road in a horrific accident! An entire nation put all their thoughts, time, and effort to help alleviate the stress, heartache and anguish these families are going through! Except you! You write a trash piece about you out to lunch personal view on this!

I bet you are the kind of garbage that would see this happen, keep on driving and never look back. By the time your twisted sense of reporting gets around you will more than likely looking for another line of work or in the back of the welfare line. Get some professional help in the mean time!

11 APRIL 09:22

What's the matter you ignorant cunt? Don't have nothing to say you fucking piece of shit! Hope you get raped!



Jean-Michel Routhier

You and Jean-Michel Routhier aren't connected on Facebook

opérateur at Papiers White Birch and Monteur d'acier at Chantier Davie Canada Inc.
Lives in Quebec, Quebec

11 APRIL 05:02



That's a nice looking plant isn't it?

You should apologize to that plant

For breathing the same oxygen that it requires in order to stay alive.



Wanted the attention? Good. Now fucking choke on it. Must feels great to be the most hated "writer" in Canada right now ain't it?

Best regards,

A white privileged young man.

#whiteprivilege #allmensarepigs

You cannot reply to this conversation.