

No Trouble For Trudeau?

A report of sexual misconduct involving Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, resurfaced after 18 years. It seems to have resulted in a gridlock of political correctness.

You may not have heard about this. It has not been on the front page. In fact, a quick Google search of his name produced these [top stories](#).

The incident resurfaced when a Canadian commenter [tweeted a picture](#) of the original report.

Um, what? [#cdnpoli](#) [#loc](#) [#MeToo](#) [pic.twitter.com/6P7iiPQRZA](#)

– Warren Kinsella (@kinsellawarren) [June 6, 2018](#)

The unsigned editorial states that a young woman was groped by the future prime minister at a music festival fundraiser. He was attending as a sort of celebrity guest (his father was a former prime minister), she was present as a journalist for the Creston Valley Advance. National Post [reports](#) she informed her supervisors of the interaction immediately and one [stated](#), "I had no reason to doubt what the reporter told me about what happened.. nor to doubt the credibility of the editorial that was written about it.."

In the wake of the tweet containing this editorial, the woman, Rose Knight, issued this statement:

The woman who made the groping allegation against Justin

Trudeau in 2000 has issued a statement, including her name.
[#cndpoli pic.twitter.com/W9u0ziNh3m](#)

– Catherine Cullen (@cath_cullen) [July 6, 2018](#)

Why Rose Knight didn't press the issue is hard to tell. But here are four questions we should be asking.

1. What's going on with the media coverage?

Trending news stories about Trudeau are not dominated by this scandal. Most discuss [his visits](#) abroad and the NATO summit. Sprinkled in are reports and critiques of his sexual misconduct, but it does not overshadow other stories in the news.

Some articles that are reporting on the issue offer subtle defenses of Trudeau. Some examples?

Here is BuzzFeed's [headline](#) of the incident:



Using quotations around the word groping is uncharacteristic of BuzzFeed compared to [articles](#) on similar incidents. They tend to leave out the ambiguity of placing the allegations in quotation marks.

Now check out a [piece](#) National Post ran:



It cites the timeline as an issue and blames the drive to

resurrect the editorial on a political ploy to slander Trudeau. All this may be true, but why the sudden qualifications around what constitutes a #MeToo moment?

2. If she has moved on, should we move on?

Rose Knight's statement remained civil and straightforward. Her words indicate a desire for distance from any political debate about her situation. But what does this mean for our response? Is Trudeau's behavior forgivable because she has put it behind her?

3. Is Trudeau guilty of a double standard?

As a self-described feminist, Trudeau is known as a champion of women's issues. Famously, he hired an [equal number](#) of men and women for his cabinet. He even ran a [gender analysis](#) of his budget.

He also had a zero-tolerance policy when it came to sexual misconduct. He [suspended](#) two members of parliament accused of inappropriate behavior, saying, [“We have no tolerance for this – we will not brush things under the rug, but we will take action on it immediately.”](#) His office later assured the press [“Any allegation brought forward to this office is taken extremely seriously.”](#)

But when questioned about allegations, his first response was to dismiss it saying, [“I don't remember any negative interactions...”](#)

Below is an interview days later:

It seems he *does* remember a negative interaction, negative enough for him to apologize to the woman. In the video he says *if* he apologized it was because he sensed she was uncomfortable. He later defends himself for not apologizing now because he apologized at the time of the incident. Does he remember apologizing or not? Keep in mind, the editorial reported his apology was, "I'm sorry. If I had known you were reporting for a national paper, I never would have been so forward."

4. Have we become desensitized to these cases?

Since Harvey Weinstein, over [200 high profile individuals](#) have been accused of sexual misconduct, some allegations more serious than others. So why has the response to Trudeau's case been muted? Is it allegation's fatigue? Have we run out of righteous indignation?

Trudeau's popularity may keep him from ruin. Maybe his good works for social justice outshine his misstep. But since public figures have been ruined for less, one could wonder; is he going to come out unscathed? Should he?

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[Image Credit: [EthicsMedia](#)]