Ramdas Lamb believed that his students at the University of Hawaii could handle the most controversial material he could throw at them—until a promising student named Michelle Gretzinger responded by accusing him of sexual harassment. The resulting case made students and professors wonder, Had feminism gone too far?

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Even from this distance—six years later, in the emerald-white light of a patio overlooking Waikiki Beach—Ramdas Lamb insists he has no real understanding of the events that transformed his life. In 1993, following an argument in class, Lamb, then an assistant professor of religion at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, was accused of sexual harassment by Michelle Gretzinger, one of his most devoted students. The accusation led to an extraordinary chain of events—a story that traces the complex evolution of sexual harassment law on college campuses in the ‘90s, its perils and its progress. Everyone on Oahu knows who Lamb is. “It's a small island—there aren't too many rapists,” the bellman at the Hotel Ilikai tells me. “He got away with it, didn't he?”

The outcome is vague to many because the media lost interest in the details. But residents recall the name and the first shocking revelations on the local news. “I don't understand how she could have brought this evil upon us—my family and me,” Lamb says, his body visibly tensing and his eyes, behind sunglasses, darkening with tears. The first question he asks when we meet is whether I’m a feminist. When we part, I hold out my hand. He startles, and takes a half-step backward. “I’m sorry,” he says. “I’m just not that comfortable with women anymore.”

The topic of Lamb's “Religion, Politics, and Society” course on February 25, 1993, was sexual harassment and rape. He had designed Religion 348 to meet his students’ desire for “relevance,” and it addressed such controversial topics as affirmative action, abortion, gay marriage, and animal rights. He wanted the course to produce passionate debate, and he felt he had forewarned the students by explaining on the first day of the semester that each topic would be examined from several perspectives and that if he felt a viewpoint was being excluded he might play devil's advocate and represent it. After that, three students decided to leave the class, but Lamb felt confident about the remainder.

For the discussion of sexual harassment, Lamb had assigned a mixture of standard liberal and conservative critiques. Using a column by Ellen Goodman, Lamb asked his students whether men and women needed to understand each other better. Immediately, Tania Mortensen—a student peer counselor in a women's group called CORE (Creating Options for a Rape Free Environment)—objected to the notion that there was a male side to sexual harassment issues. Rather, she argued, the
definition lay in women's experience. Lamb raised the subject of false accusations of harassment and rape, and Mortensen angrily insisted that women never lie, citing FBI statistics that less than 3 percent of rape accusations are false.

Another student, Shannon Bangan, volunteered that she saw both sides of the issue: She was a rape survivor, but her brother had been falsely accused of rape after he broke up with his fiancée. The discussion quickly took an oddly overwrought tone: Mortensen, joined by two other students—Michelle Gretzinger and Bonita Rai—opposed Lamb and the rest of the class. Other students recall being surprised by how perturbed Gretzinger appeared. She almost never disagreed with Lamb before—she usually seemed to be vying for his approbation—but now her face was red, and she was crying.

Every teacher has had the experience of something happening in class that he or she doesn't understand: Beneath the surface of an intellectual debate, a current of emotions collect and begin to take foreboding form. For the first time in his teaching career, Lamb felt he had lost control of his class. For Lamb, the teaching of religion was a mission and a ministry. Born Ronald Lamb in 1945 to an Italian-Jewish family in the ghetto of Watts, Los Angeles, he had left home at 15 and later joined the Marines. On the eve of the Vietnam War, he embraced nonviolence and was discharged from the military. He moved to India for eight years, learned Hindi, worked with untouchables, and became a Hindu monk, living under a vow of chastity and changing his first name to Ramdas—"servant of God." Returning to the States to care for his parents, he fell in love and married Susan Takahashi, a student at the University of Hawaii, where he too began studying.

After receiving his doctorate in California in 1991, he returned to the University of Hawaii to teach, acquiring a following of students who considered him inspiring and accessible. Serving as an undergraduate religion adviser, Lamb tripled the number of religion concentrators within two years. His goal was to be a moral role model—to teach the precepts of Hinduism by opening students' minds to truth, nonviolence, and tolerance, while continuing the practices he had adopted as a monk, purifying himself through weekly fasts, eating no meat, and wearing no leather.

During the week following the contentious class discussion, Lamb spoke with Gretzinger, Mortensen, and Rai about their reactions. His overtures were met with steadfast hostility. Thereafter, Mortensen and Rai maintained an alienated stance in class, and Gretzinger—most strikingly—refused to participate at all. Lamb had first met Gretzinger the previous June. A married transfer student from a working-class background, she struck Lamb as bright and ambitious (she had a 4.0 average). She began dropping by his office frequently, joining the crowd of students. That fall, she enrolled in one of his courses, added religion to her anthropology major, and chose Lamb as her senior thesis adviser. When her computer broke, he gave her the keys to his office, as he had done for other students. Before long, she was answering his phone, straightening his papers, writing directly onto his calendar ("see Michelle!"), dotting the "i" with a smiley face. She called him at home late at night, annoying his wife. "She desired a much greater part in my life than I wanted to give her," Lamb said, and began to see her as "needy and demanding." For the first time as a teacher, he had to set boundaries, and he wasn't sure how.

Other students say that it was obvious Gretzinger had a crush on Lamb, but Lamb claims that never occurred to him. A small, physically reserved man, he doesn't radiate sexual energy; which is why female students say that they felt especially comfortable with him. Most people would describe Gretzinger as moderately attractive—five-feet-five, 140 pounds, with a chunky athletic build, short dirty-blond curly hair, and a pale complexion. Lamb, however, says he saw her as "plain, extremely plain."

Senior year was a difficult time for Gretzinger. Her friend Ryan Torigoe saw her as "heading toward a deep depression." She was questioning her marriage and sexual identity. Desperate to keep up her grade-point average while applying to law schools, she was falling behind in her thesis. She could no longer hang out in Lamb’s office because she owed him work. By the February 25 class, she had
drifted away from the clique of Lambs students and had begun to volunteer at CORE. She came forward with the revelation that she had been raped at her previous college and wrote about the incident in one course. The March midterm grade in Religion 348 was largely based on class participation. Torigoe recalls seeing the look on Gretzinger's face as she discovered that her grade was the worst she had yet earned at college—a C. A few hours later, Gretzinger, along with Mortensen and Rai, who was also dissatisfied with her grade, made their way to meet with Susan Hippensteele, the sexual harassment victims advocate, to discuss filing a complaint charging that Lamb's class was hostile to women. The three students wanted to know if Hippensteele could keep their claims confidential and revoke Lamb's authority to grade them.

A light, pretty space lined with books on gender politics and sexual orientation, the sexual harassment office presents itself as a haven. An antique silk prom dress shimmers on a Chinese laundry hanger—a piece of feminist art made by Hippensteele's lover, Gaye Chan, a professor in the Art Department. Hippensteele, in her second year of the newly created job of full-time student advocate for victims of sexual harassment, sparkles with pink lipstick, costume jewelry, revealing vintage clothing, and the impassioned confidence of an ideologue. Her classic beach girl looks—blond hair, blue eyes, and lean tanned body—suggest a prettier, more poised version of Gretzinger.

Hippensteele told the three students that her role was to be their advocate and to help them submit their complaint to Mie Watanabe, the director of the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Office, who would conduct an investigation. Hippensteele assured them of the confidentiality of the procedure and arranged for a series of further meetings.

Shortly thereafter, Hippensteele and Watanabe met with George Tanabe, the chairman of the Religion Department, and told him that he should take measures to prevent grade retaliation against the students. They suggested that he consider sitting in on Lamb's class, conducting student evaluations, and not allowing Lamb to grade the students' work. Watanabe stressed that Tanabe could be held personally liable if his department failed to take a proactive stance. Although Tanabe would later come to be a supporter of Lamb's, he acquiesced. Hippensteele informed Tanabe that she would conduct a mandatory sexual harassment workshop for all religion faculty and teaching assistants.

Department members recall arriving for Hippensteele's workshop on April 19 in a state of high anxiety. She informed them that her purpose was to define sexual harassment. She listed a large variety of risky interactions with students of the opposite sex, stressing the dangers of "grooming"—creating a sense of indebtedness by praising one student above others with such comments as "Your paper is fantastic." As to whether social pleasantries—complimenting a student on a new haircut, for example—could be misinterpreted as harassment, she said, "If you're worried, you should be worried" because "intention doesn't matter." Harassment, she explained, is all "in the eye of the beholder." She advocated redacting historically sexist material from classroom curricula—an idea that would have eliminated most religious traditions. If anyone heard rumors of harassment, they had an obligation to report them. Personally, she said, she favored public posting of the names of all those accused of harassment, "because that was the only way we were going to root out this thing."

Lamb was reassured by the stunned looks on his colleagues' faces. Professor Friedrich Seifert, who had grown up in Germany in the 1940s, seemed to speak for the group when he said, "My God, this is like Nazi Germany!" Following the workshop, Lamb retreated to his office and discovered that he had finally received notice from Watanabe of the complaint against him. Her letter stated that he was being accused of having engaged in "discriminatory treatment on the basis of sex..., including offensive language and statements in class regarding women. The complaint alleged that he had also committed "sexual harassment in the form of using your position as undergraduate chair to bribe students into social and/or sexual relationships in exchange for tuition waivers and
scholarships [to] create a sense of indebtedness.” Most ominously, it stated, “One student claims you made sexual advances toward her after various academic favors were offered or promised.”

Lamb says he cannot describe the feelings he had upon receiving the letter, as he sat reading and rereading the terrible phrases. He had asked Tanabe exactly what he was being accused of, but Tanabe had said he wasn’t sure. What Lamb had been trying to dismiss as crazy rumors for seven weeks suddenly assumed a new reality.

Federal law has prohibited sexual harassment in both the workplace and educational institutions since 1972, when it was added to the categories protected against discrimination by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, federal sexual harassment law is more heavily regulated in educational institutions than in the workplace because schools are subject to an additional regulation called Title IX, which is enforced by the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights. Under the Clinton administration, the power and reach of the OCR has expanded dramatically—a trend upheld by recent Supreme Court decisions. Since all schools rely on federal funding, the OCR has powerful leverage: violations can result in OCR oversight and funding cuts. The law requires schools to have programs in place to combat harassment; each school has to determine what would constitute an adequate program. And since schools face no Title IX liability for infringing on academic freedom, they have an incentive to err on the side of overzealousness in sexual harassment cases. Critics claim that the resulting kangaroo courts and self-censorship systems are sometimes far more stringent than the government would ever mandate.

The law divides sexual harassment into two different types. The first is quid pro quo harassment, which forbids sexual blackmail (sex for academic rewards such as better grades). The second is hostile environment harassment: a school atmosphere that discriminates against women in less tangible ways, such as a male professor who stares at female students? breasts instead of answering their questions. Beliefs about the pervasiveness or rarity of sexual harassment on campus tend to reflect the viewer's ideology. Hippensteele says that surveys at the University of Hawaii reveal that one in three students experiences harassment—a statistic that she believes is comparable to that at other schools—a figure that, if true, would make sexual harassment a major disadvantage for women attending coeducational institutions. Critics counter that the high numbers primarily consist of frivolous claims, highly subjective behavior such as jokes and glances that were not previously perceived as harassment.

Although the University of Hawaii prided itself on its sensitivity to minorities, its sexual harassment policy had been lax until the early 1990s. That changed when Hippensteele, then a psychology graduate student sued and won a judgment against the school after her adviser harassed her by making sexual suggestions and, on one occasion, kissing her on the forehead. She became an activist, went on to write her dissertation on sexual harassment, and joined the committee that drafted a new code on campus and created the position of student advocate—a role she was the first to fill. Lamb's was the first major test case of the new policy and the efficacy of Hippensteele's office. The case had the potential to demonstrate that harassment occurred of such a complex, grievous nature that it could not be handled like other disciplinary problems but required the skills of a full-time specialist.

Regardless of the outcome, most professors accused of harassment are virtually bankrupted by the legal cost of defending themselves. At the University of Hawaii, however, the faculty had formed a union. Although Lamb was untenured—and keenly aware that he could be dismissed at any time—he had access to free representation by a union lawyer, Tony Gill. Gill had represented sexual harassment victims as well as defendants. A rangy, slow-speaking 48-year-old, Gill was one of the few in his Yale Law School class to keep his original plan to return to his native state and work in labor relations and civil rights. Although he comes from a prominent Hawaiian family—his father was a congressman—he and his partner work in short-sleeved shirts, with no secretary, out of a squat run-down office in downtown Honolulu.
When Gill examined the complaint against Lamb, he thought he had an easy case. In violation of the university policy, the charges were written in vague, inflammatory language with no dates, locations, circumstances, or specific descriptions of the allegations. Moreover, Watanabe had not included statements from the students who were making the allegations. Gill wrote back, demanding more information. But it was not until June 18, four months after the igniting February class—and many rounds of requests from Gill and responses from Watanabe—that Gretzinger finally provided her own written statement, one that far exceeded Lamb's darkest fears.

During the months that had elapsed, Gretzinger had continued to meet with Hippensteele, and her story had evolved. Gretzinger explained why the controversial class discussion had upset her: “I understood this as his subtle way of telling me that I would have no case against him” if she were ever to complain about sexual harassment. Beginning in August, she stated, Lamb made passes at her, kissing and fondling her, putting his hands down her pants, and once initiating sex but changing his mind because he didn't have a condom. Then, she said, after class on Monday, September 7, “He showed me a box of condoms., and asked if he could drive me home. He followed me upstairs and came into the apartment... He said that he wanted to teach me some yogic breathing exercises.... He climbed on top of me and pushed my shorts off me.... He then penetrated me and had an orgasm quickly.

Friday, September 11, Lamb again entered my apartment and came on to me. This time... he simply guided me into the bedroom and sat me down on the bed.... He pulled his pants down and forced me to perform fellatio, then turned me around, bent me over the bed... and entered me from behind.... Lamb appeared to think he had sexual access rights to me, and pushed for sex, generally twice a week, until about the first week in October... at which point I broke off the relationship.” Overall, Gretzinger said, she and Lamb had intercourse “approximately 16 times.”

Gretzinger's account could be seen as a description of an affair and not as sexual harassment because of the absence of overt coercion, the threat of punishment, or the promise of reward. The quid pro quo, Gretzinger said, took place entirely in her head: She succumbed to Lamb because she believed it would lead to academic advantages for her; the crisis came when her midterm grade made her realize she had been wrong. Hippensteele, however, believed in a much broader, subtler definition of quid pro quo that posits that any sexual relationship between a male professor and a female student cannot, by definition, be consensual. The woman's “unequal” status as female and as a student creates a power imbalance that makes it impossible for her to freely consent, thus making a sexual relation ship the equivalent of statutory rape. In addition to counseling Gretzinger, Hippensteele recommended books to her, such as Michele Paludi's The Lecherous Professor, which, Gretzinger later explained, helped her to reinterpret her experience and realize that she had been a victim of “mentor rape”: “I felt obligated to him because he had done so much to help me out... I had so much respect for him, and I didn't want to disappoint him... I now look on these experiences as repetitive coercive sexual assault.”

Lamb's anger upon reading Gretzinger's claims was mixed with relief: Neither of the two dates Gretzinger, had given for the rapes—September 7 and 11, 1992—was possible. Allegedly, the rapes had taken place when Lamb drove Gretzinger home from school after class. However, September 7 had been a holiday—Labor Day—and on September 11, a hurricane had hit the island. Moreover, Lamb could prove that most of the alleged August sexual advances before the rapes could not have occurred, based on their class schedules and witnesses who could testify to his whereabouts. However, Lamb discovered, there was no forum in which he could refute the charges. He would have to wait for a formal panel to present proof of his innocence. Yet every day, he was becoming more of a pariah on campus. In the spring of 1993, Gretzinger had published an account of a previous rape in Ka Leo, the school newspaper, during Sexual Assault Awareness Week. She gave presentations and speeches about rape and harassment in classes and at CORE meetings. She scrawled LAMB—RELIGION DEPARTMENT—IS A SEXUAL HARASSER in a campus
women's bathroom, and asked other women to give information about him to Hippenstele, whose phone number she listed.

Although Lamb's guilt was widely believed, his own students remained loyal. Torigoe and Davin Weinstein, who had been Gretzinger's closest friends, had been shocked to hear of the charges and had repeatedly tried without success to contact Gretzinger. They both recalled conversations with her in which she expressed her adulation for Lamb during the very period in which she was now saying she had been raped. Weinstein came to believe, she says, that Gretzinger “is the kind of person who would always have a crush on any authority figure if she believed that person could obtain any advantage for her” and that she had simply “switched her affection” from Lamb to Hippenstele. Another friend believes that the harassment charges became mixed up with Gretzinger's decision in June 1994, to become a lesbian and leave her marriage—a decision that Hippenstele, who had previously been married, may have inspired.

The following October—almost eight months after the original incident and nearly five months longer than the university's own sexual harassment guidelines permit—a panel was finally assembled. The panel was headed by Larry Foster, the associate dean of the law school, who, along with the other panel members—an assistant professor and a graduate student—had volunteered and been trained by Hippenstele to evaluate sexual harassment cases. The Foster report provides a rare glimpse into the world of the college justice system. The panel allowed both parties to present a 30-minute statement, with Lamb assisted by Gill and Gretzinger by Hippenstele. They were not permitted to question each other or to call witnesses. The panel did not question either party, though it did allow Gretzinger to change from September 11 to September 18 the date of one of the alleged rapes. This information, however, was not relayed to Lamb, who would also have been able to refute the plausibility of that date by presenting rental-car receipts showing he had been on another island that week. Nor did the panel ask Lamb for any evidence concerning the five alleged August sexual advances.

In December 1993, the panel issued a report that concluded, “While outrageous and insensitive, Dr. Lambs handling of the classroom discussion of the topics of sexual harassment and rape” did not meet the university's criterion for hostile-environment harassment. However, the panel determined that Lamb had had a sexual relationship with Gretzinger, thereby committing quid pro quo harassment. The report states that although both parties seemed sincere, the panel found Gretzinger more credible because while there are “no substantive witnesses or — evidence... the detail provided by Ms. Gretzinger in her June 18, 1993, memo was very persuasive to the panel.... Another factor considered was the fact that Ms. Gretzinger was married. It seemed unlikely to the panel that Ms. Gretzinger would make up something that would be so potentially damaging to her relationship with her husband.” Lamb responded to the report by further withdrawing from both his teaching and his family into a depression. Although he had the trust of his wife, Susan, the case made him feel uneasy about his relationship with all women; he no longer felt comfortable even hugging his 10 year old daughter, Sachi. Kids taunted Sachi at school that her father was a rapist; parents sometimes refused to speak to him “Developmentally, it couldn't have happened at a worse time for Sachi. She started crying a lot, asking if she could sleep with us at night, saying Daddy are we going to lose our house Daddy are you going to be fired”? Lamb consulted a therapist, who suggested that Gretzinger might have been sexually abused as a child and that she was channeling her anger toward him through a deeply felt lie or fantasy. But the explanation did not comfort him. At the end of April, the university chancellor reviewed the Foster report. Persuaded primarily by the discrepancy in the dates, he decided to dismiss the case. Gill, representing the faculty union, which was concerned about academic freedom, disputed both the findings of the Foster report and the procedure that had produced the panel. The university decided to bring in Thomas Angelo, a nationally known California labor arbitrator, to review the case. Angelo's findings present an inversion of the Foster report. He found no evidence of wrongdoing on Lamb's part. He said the main problem lay in Hippenstele's and Watanabe's handling of the case: “There is a wealth of objective, reliable evidence to demonstrate Dr. Hippenstele regularly used her status as a student
advocate educator to advance her personal philosophies regarding the issue of sexual harassment,” philosophies he found “incompatible with then nature of an educational setting and incorrect as a matter of law.”

Lamb assumed he had finally been vindicated. Hippensteele and Gretzinger, however, responded with renewed vigor. They organized a demonstration outside the office where a public hearing for Lamb was to be held. Hippensteele's lover, Gaye Chan, got involved, telling art students that evidence of Lamb's guilt had been suppressed. Lamb received four death threats, including intricate depictions of a severed lamb's head and the Hindu symbol of the monkey, with angry captions beneath. Once, he walked into the religion office to find BEWARE LAMB scrawled on the door of the department. Although the Angelo report had recommended that the university publicize Lamb's innocence, the university never took such action. Instead, Lamb learned in September 1994 that Gretzinger was suing him and the university for $4.75 million. When he walked into his house one night, Sachi was in hysterics because a reporter from a local TV station had called. That damning television story was followed by a slew of articles and anti-Lamb editorials.

The university elected to settle Gretzinger's case—paying her $175,000—reportedly not for harassment but for the tardiness of the investigation. Although Hippensteele had been significantly responsible for the pace of the investigation by allowing Gretzinger so many months to develop her accusation and thus creating the problems her employer was now paying for, she viewed the settlement as a triumph and told the local paper that it was “a wonderful accomplishment that would change the way decision makers are educated.”

Lamb's trial in the federal courthouse in Honolulu began in early 1996. Represented by Gill, Lamb countersued Gretzinger for slander. Gill presented Gretzinger's story to the jury as fiction and deconstructed its evolution. He compared the conflicting versions Gretzinger gave at different points: The rapes happened at his office, her apartment, and his home in one version—and later only in her apartment. The rapes began before the semester started—later, after chronological problems emerged, not until the semester began. Michelle's story started fairly vague, Gill says now, “and then evolved into an ever more complicated lie.” The detail that the Foster panel had found so convincing struck Gill as ‘bad, lurid high school fiction. She gave it some pornographic detail, but none of the things that give fiction credibility, like time and place. She liked the shock value of certain things, even if they didn't work with the chronology.” Her own “poor literary sense,” he said, was hampered by “poor editing by Hippensteele and Watanabe.” Gretzinger's lawyer, Clayton Ikei, did not try to refute each discrepancy but concentrated on the assertion that his client had no motivation to tell such an elaborate lie. Gill, however, did not see the lie as such a mystery. “I presented it as a kind of sorcerer's apprentice situation,” he says. “She started out with a fairly narrow agenda—anger at what she saw as public rejection, followed by a bad grade— and she thought she'd get herself out of the problem in a totally confidential setting. But she couldn't resist trying to get a little extra traction—adding a bit of spice to the soup by vaguely suggesting sexual impropriety. But in this climate, those charges are too inflammatory not to blow up.

The Foster panel had specifically cited Gretzinger's status as a married woman as a key factor in her credibility. But by the time the trial began, Gretzinger was divorced and engaged in a sexual relationship with a woman who had worked with her former husband. Gill deposed Hernan Eneres, who had been a co-worker of Gretzinger's. He testified that shortly before Gretzinger's wedding she had casually propositioned him. Within 10 days of her return from her honeymoon, they had begun an affair that lasted several months. The impression one gets from reading Eneres's deposition is not that Gretzinger had any particular passion for him but that she was simply excited by the frisson of deception.

Gill also deposed a police officer in California who had investigated Gretzinger's previous allegation of rape, and the officer revealed why authorities had elected not to prosecute. Gretzinger had claimed that another student had raped and taken naked photographs of her, which he
threatened to post in her office. But when the police enlarged the photographs, they showed Gretzinger posing Playboy-style, looking happy and relaxed. The police concluded she had cheated on her boyfriend and, afraid of being found out, called it rape. It took the jury just a few hours of deliberation to find against Gretzinger and in favor of Lamb's countersuit for defamation, though his $132,000 was some $43,000 less than the university had paid Gretzinger.

Throughout the trial, Gill recalls, jurors were visibly disgusted. “The jury wasn't stupid,” he says. “You get into the streets, and people can recognize a political slam job.”

The court victory did not provide the public, financial, or emotional resolution that Lamb had hoped for. The verdict received much less publicity than the allegations had. Lamb is a person invested not only in being a good person but in being perceived as a good person—and the loss of that perception was devastating. Susan Lamb once asked Gill why he thought the charges seemed to so deeply undermine her husband, even though both he and she knew he had done nothing wrong. Gill told her that he thought it was Lamb's own sense of anger that disturbed him—that he couldn't forgive Gretzinger, and he couldn't reconcile that bitterness with his own sense of self.

At the deepest level, the verdict foreclosed Lamb's dearest hope: the desire to prove himself innocent. The power of j'acoue is that it claims a special kind of truth. Is it possible something sexual happened between them at some point? Of course. She could be a liar, and he could be a harasser. At the end of interviewing him, Lamb expresses the hope that my article will provide the final closure, but I believe he will be disappointed. If nothing else, accusations become an irreversible part of one's identity, just as an unhappy childhood is not altered by a happy adulthood. Gretzinger will always be an inescapable figure in Lamb's life, one of much more importance than a passing affair. The story can be read as the ultimate revenge of unrequited love, in which Gretzinger succeeded in punishing him for not having had sex with her, for not having loved her, as he should have done, and the punishment has long outlived any of the original emotions.

On a bright afternoon at the same table on the patio where I interviewed Lamb, I meet Michelle Gretzinger. Her hair is chopped short; she wears a T-shirt and cutoffs over a heavy, muscular frame. She has changed her name and lives with her lover, an Asian-American woman who owns a café, where Gretzinger helps out. She is anxious that I uncovered her whereabouts, uncertain whether to talk. She has not paid any of the $132,000 judgment to Lamb and tells me that, as a matter of principle, she never will. Although she was admitted to Stanford and several other law schools, she no longer wants to go because she says she “could never again be in a courtroom and feel clean, you know?”

She attributes the verdict against her to sexism and homophobia, and says her lawyer, Clayton Ikei, was sexist. She displays the same striking ability she had throughout the case to answer questions by referring to an abstraction. When asked about the chronological problems with her allegations, she says, “He can show his little car receipts all he wants, but he can't have receipts for 24 hours a day, because I know something happened to me.”

She responds to questions about the facts of her story as an adult might to being quizzed about the dates of a childhood molestation—as if they were naturally elusive and pressing for them were a sign of obtuseness. “Everything happened exactly as I said it did. I never told a lie, You're asking me to justify myself, and I don't have to justify myself,” she says. Slowly, pausing between words, she adds, “Either you believe or you don't,” her sea blue eyes filling with tears. “There are people who believe me, and there's nothing I can do about the people who don't.” The force of her feeling is so palpable that I catch my breath when she says, “I thought you said you were a feminist.”

In Susan Hippensteele's articles and papers on harassment, she cites the Gretzinger case as an example of a miscarriage of justice and the battle that harassment policies still face. In 1997 she was given tenure in the Women's Studies Department at the University of Hawai’i. She is now on sabbatical and attending law school there. It's like with Anita Hill,” Susan tells me. “At the time,
there was a lot of questioning, but afterward people started to believe her. I don't think there's many people on campus who don't at least have some doubts about Ramdas.... A lot of people think Michelle was very brave.”

She says that she found Michelle very credible, and nothing that happened in the courtroom process changed that.” She is still impassioned: While showing me an old clipping about the case, In a which Gill is quoted as using the words “Stalinist feminists,” she kneels down on the carpet and places it on my lap, reading it with me.

The Gretzinger case doesn't prove or disprove the existence of sexual harassment any more than the O.J. Simpson case proved that black men kill their white wives and nobody really ever thought it did. But when personal narratives evoke larger social problems like race and gender, the discourse becomes confused. Gill sees the Gretzinger case as one stage in a process. For centuries, sexual harassment was invisible; suddenly, in the ultraviolet light of a new ideology everything looked like harassment. But eventually, the excesses become apparent—as they did when the jury returned its verdict in Lamb's favor—and moderate feminism prevails. Harassment guidelines have now been rewritten at the University of Hawaii.

The last time I see Gill, he cheerfully riffs through a 1997 report from the sexual harassment office. Five cases of sexual harassment were filed: Three of them were dropped; two formal complaints were made, but both were found to have “no cause.” For a campus of 20,000, it sounds like a pretty mild situation,” he says. “You could read this report and say, ‘Sexual harassment has been virtually eliminated at UH.’ Maybe Hippensteele and others should be celebrating their victories.... There's been a colossal sexual harassment industry established in the last decade. Maybe it worked.”