

TRASH TALK: WON'T SOMEBODY THINK OF THE CHILDREN EDITION

[NB: check the byline, thanks. /~Rayne]

Bonus second Trash Talk today, a day with perfect football weather here in Michigan – temperatures in the upper 60s to low 70s , partly cloudy, light wind out of the southwest. The scent of freshly mown grass mingled with smoke from tailgaters' grills, heightening anticipation for today's games. Depending on where you live, games may already have wrapped or are underway as they are in East Lansing, Michigan.

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Anticipation doesn't fully describe what Michigan State University fans and students are likely feeling today. You may already have heard about a new scandal centered on MSU's football coach, Mel Tucker, who has been accused of sexual harassing behavior by activist Brenda Tracy.

The entire situation reeks because MSU was caught flat footed in its response to the situation in spite of the university's past history dealing with scandal related to sexual abuse. You'll recall the prosecution of former osteopathic physician Larry Nassar based on charges he sexually abused dozens of girls and women gymnasts during his practice affiliated with USA Gymnastics and his career with MSU. It took nearly a decade from the first complaints by athletes before Nassar was convicted and jailed.

Here's a timeline of events related to the allegations about to Mel Tucker:

April 28, 2022 – During a phone call between Tracy and Tucker, Tracy alleged Tucker made sexual comments about her and

engaged in nonconsensual masturbation.

December 2022 – Tracy filed a Title IX complaint with MSU.

July 25, 2022 – Rebecca Leitman Veidlinger, an outside investigator hired by MSU, completed the Title IX investigation into Tracy's allegations.

September 10, 2023 – USA Today published a story disclosing Tracy's allegations against Tucker, revealing Tracy's identity. Though Tucker acknowledged to the investigator he masturbated while on the phone with Tracy, he claimed they were engaged in consensual phone sex, denying misconduct.

September 10, 2023 – MSU suspended Tucker without pay and asked former associate head coach/co-defensive coordinator Harlon Barnett to assume the role of Acting Head Coach in addition to his role as Secondary Coach.

September 13, 2023 – Michigan State University Trustee Dianne Byrum demanded MSU conduct an investigation in the leak of Tracy's identity which appeared in USA Today's report. "I am disturbed and outraged by recent reports indicating the name of a claimant in a sexual harassment investigation was intentionally released in an apparent effort to retaliate against her. We should unequivocally condemn attempts to silence or retaliate against victims," Byrum said.

September 14, 2023 – MSU announced the return of retired former head coach Mark Dantonio to assist Barnett. Dantonio will take on the role of associate head coach.

A hearing has been scheduled for the first week of October, the outcome of which may decide Tucker's continuing employment with MSU.

Reporting about the allegations has been far

from neutral. This report by USA Today – Mel Tucker made millions while he delayed the Michigan State sexual harassment case – published on September 14 assumed Tucker was deliberately delaying the hearing when he refused to accept the August 22-23 dates.

Never mind that August is the busiest month for an NCAA coach. MSU Spartans players attend a preseason camp beginning August 3. Dorm move-in dates are August 22-24. First classes are August 28. The team had 15 practices scheduled between the end of camp and the season opener on September 1.

But sure, Tucker was delaying the hearing. Never mind that USA Today then hammered on Tucker's wages which surely reflects the intense pressure Tucker's been under to improve on the Spartans' past lackluster performance.

The inability to find workable dates in September was a more legitimate problem, but September with a new team is also just as sensitive for NCAA football coaches. The October date makes a lot more sense (and is hardly the kind of extension a certain former president demands for *criminal* charges).

The intense public scrutiny about this case also wouldn't have emerged had not USA Today decided to publish its September 10 and 14 pieces. The public would have heard after the October hearing that Tucker was fired if it was determined he violated Title IX, or perhaps the public would never have heard anything if it was determined his behavior had no affect on education under Title IX.

Detroit Free Press shared an interview conducted by FOX 2 Detroit with Tucker's employment attorney, Deborah Gordon. She's one of the best employment attorneys in the state and also recommended for representation in Title IX cases. Her explanation of what Tracy and Tucker can expect from the hearing is worth a listen. And yet the Free Press also takes a position by not pushing back against Gordon's claim to FOX 2

that Tucker was a “high profile guy” who Tracy wanted to “go after. And she did it.”

Of course Tucker’s attorney would say this. What kind of attorney wouldn’t do that for their client?

MSU Spartans play No. 8 ranked Washington Huskies at home in Lansing today – kickoff was at 5:06 p.m. ET.

Expect players, their families, friends, and fans to be quizzed about the scandal because the media needs clickbait.

Can’t imagine what current students and their families as well as prospective students and families are discussing at home about this situation, because nobody in the media is thinking about them at all, nor teaching them about the concept of assuming innocence until one is proven guilty.

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Disgust as a “conservative” emotion – ?

We kicked around some disgusting GOP behavior in comments last evening beginning with South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem’s skanky on-again-off-again-can’t-stop affair with GOP consultant and alleged sexual harasser Corey Lewandowski. I mentioned studies I’ve run across which found “conservatives” respond more negatively and more intensely to prompts which are often labeled disgusting. See the study linked below for a list of research, some of which underpinned the article in The Atlantic also linked below.

Elad-Strenger J, Proch J, Kessler T. Is Disgust a “Conservative” Emotion? Pers Soc Psychol Bull. 2020 Jun;46(6):896-912. doi: 10.1177/0146167219880191. Epub 2019 Oct 16. PMID: 31619133. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31619133/>

McAuliffe, Kathleen. “Liberals and Conservatives React in Wildly Different

Ways to Repulsive Pictures." The Atlantic, Atlantic Media Company, 7 Dec. 2022, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/03/the-yuck-factor/580465/.

The fundamental problem with this is that many so-called conservatives regularly engage in disgusting behavior and yet this doesn't shape their voting.

Take the obnoxious example of Lauren Boebert who acted like a particularly nasty spoiled brat recently. TPM has an overview and a video documenting Boebert's latest public wretchedness:

There's Videotape! Annals of Feral Lauren Boebert ...

Why do GOP voters in Boebert's district put up with her? This isn't the first shitty behavior on her part. Even her business which has poisoned consumers giving them bloody diarrhea hasn't been enough to stop them from voting for her. "Conservatives" in her district didn't care. They voted her back in for a second term in 2022.

Ditto for Marjorie Taylor Greene and her sorry love life – okay, sex life, because her experiences don't sound like they're based on deep affection (It's the DailyMail, brace yourselves for the photos of her extramarital partners). Just sex and a general disrespect for the traditional Christian institution of marriage with its demand to have and hold a partner while forsaking all others.

Why aren't "conservatives" in her district disgusted by her readiness to swap sweat, voting her nastiness back into office?

You can surely think of many other examples of disgusting behavior by right-wing candidates and officeholders, like former GOP Senate candidate and spouse abuser Eric Greitens.

Or the mack daddy of marital disrespect, Newt

Gingrich, who's treated animals better than his ex-wives.

And of course The Donald whose proclivities have been hidden by catch-and-kill operations, although not always successfully.

We all know by now that hypocrisy makes not a lick of difference to so-called conservatives. They're happy bashing on Hunter Biden for his drug addiction, trashing Joe Biden for continuing to love and support his son in spite of Hunter's challenges.

Why do conservatives' brains react differently, then to images of disgust, while failing to act constructively on disgusting behavior?

How does the left more effectively appeal to conservatives' disgust when it's also obvious their disgust can be generated deliberately, as Chris Rufo demonstrated with his attacks on critical race theory?

How do we address this disparity between research results and real life in a way that makes a difference to our nation's children? Because they're being taught sexual infidelity and abuse is okay if you're a Republican, disrespect for vows, oaths, partners is also okay, and other sordid behavior like vaping in shared public space disregarding others' health is just fine if you're a Republican.