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NOBODY’S VICTIMFighting Psychos, Stalkers, Pervs, and TrollsBy Carrie Goldberg with Jeannine Amber**CONSENTA** Memoir of Unwanted AttentionBy Donna FreitasIn 2012, Carrie Goldberg logged onto the dating site OkCupid and met the love of her life. She was a newly divorced lawyer in her mid-30s living in New York City; he was a Wharton M.B.A. with his own fashion line and ample charms. Late-night nonstop texting blossomed into a passionate attachment that, as the weeks progressed, began to seem a touch too passionate, a touch too attached ... leading Goldberg to suspect that her new boyfriend was more possessive control freak than devoted suitor.Four months in she ended the love affair, and he launched a grotesque inversion of it, bombarding her with texts, emails and phone calls, sending mendacious messages to everyone she knew on Facebook, even filing a fake police report that landed her in jail. Goldberg moved apartments, spent more than \$30,000 in legal fees and lost the respect of her boss and co-workers. However, it was his threat to distribute naked photos of Goldberg, including a sexually graphic video he’d filmed without her knowledge, that caused her the most distress, not least because there was no way the law could stop him. Back then, the dissemination of nonconsensual pornography — the preferred term among activists for what’s often referred to as “revenge porn” — was legal in New York State, and it remained so until earlier this year.That’s only the half of it. In her memoir doubling as a rallying cry for privacy justice, “Nobody’s Victim: Fighting Psychos, Stalkers, Pervs, and Trolls,” Goldberg admits that as with many people who have endured sexual harassment, it took time to tell her story in full, which she does now in chilling detail. Such experiences are alarmingly common. In 2017 the Cyber Civil Rights Initiative, a nonprofit organization formed in 2013 to fight online abuse, found that more than 10 percent of social media users are victims of revenge porn, with women twice as likely to be targeted as men. These statistics aren’t an enormous surprise given that many people these days meet their romantic partners online — 39 percent of heterosexual couples and 65 percent of same-sex couples, according to a recent study by sociologists at Stanford University and the University of New Mexico — and go on to conduct a great deal of intimacy by way of smartphone and computer, whether sexting or video-chatting. What is most worrisome, Goldberg makes clear, is that until our legal system catches up with these new realities, our culture’s unchecked reliance on communications technologies, combined with the ever-collapsing distinction between so-called “real life” and “what happens online,” will remain a paradise for men (and they are mostly men) who traffic in the nonconsensual distribution of sexual imagery, decimating the lives of adults and, increasingly, teenagers and children.Goldberg builds a convincing case that sexual privacy is a right that should be protected by federal law, much in the way that our personal, financial and medical information already is. If anyone can make that happen, it is she. In 2014, with little more than the resolve to become “the lawyer I’d needed,” Goldberg quit her job at the Vera Institute of Justice, rented a tiny, windowless office in a shared work space in Dumbo and hung a shingle as a victims’ rights attorney specializing in sexual privacy. In the five years since, her firm — now 13 people strong — has removed more than 30,000 nonconsensual images and videos from the internet, jailed more than a dozen offenders, and successfully sued the New York City Department of Education on behalf of a teenage girl who was gang-raped by classmates in her school’s stairwell and then suspended for lying. Goldberg also helped craft a dozen states’ revenge-porn laws and promote the first federal bill aimed at protecting victims of revenge porn. Introduced to Congress in 2016 by Representative Jackie Speier of California, the bill was reintroduced in 2017 by Senator Kamala Harris as the Ending Nonconsensual Online User Graphic Harassment (ENOUGH) Act. (As of this writing, the bill is still pending.)In a 2016 New Yorker profile, Margaret Talbot suggested Goldberg is a cross between Gloria Allred and the Marvel Comics superhero Jessica Jones. It’s a wonderful characterization, though it would seem that Goldberg is far more upbeat than her depressive fictional doppelgänger. With the help of Jeannine Amber, an award-winning journalist who often reports on communities in crisis, Goldberg chronicles in “Nobody’s Victim” her battle for justice in a tone that is both take-no-prisoners and warmly gregarious (indeed, she befriends many of her clients). The text bubbles with colloquialisms like “shrug emoji” and “mouth-breathers,” who, along with “power pervs” and those who simply feel free to conduct themselves with “unbridled asshole,” make up her “Carrie Goldberg Offender Taxonomy.”The cases she narrates are gut-wrenching, and her conversational approach lightens what could otherwise be an unbearably heavy load. It also makes accessible the complicated legal history leading to our current moment. Goldberg reminds us that “the internet was a very different place” in 1996, when the Communications Decency Act was signed, with a small provision called Section 230 declaring that interactive computer services were not publishers and therefore weren’t liable for user-posted content: “There was no Google, Reddit, YouTube or Twitter, Mark Zuckerberg was in middle school, and Amazon was an exciting new website that only sold books.” She believes that the “free speech purists and tech heads” who claim the law enables the internet as we know it today are missing the forest for the trees. Section 230, she writes, “is the No. 1 reason the internet is a safe space for peddlers of fake news, graphic death threats, conspiracy theories, Russian propaganda, racist slurs, Nazi hate speech, anti-L.G.B.T.Q. vitriol, vivid promotions of violence against women, instructions for how to make your own bomb and phony dating profiles offering sex in someone else’s name,” which is to say it’s the “enabler of every ... troll, psycho and perv on the internet.”Donna Freitas became a young adult in the late 1980s and ‘90s, which limited the man who stalked her — her much older graduate school professor and mentor, who also happened to be a Catholic priest — to postal mail and landlines. In “Consent: A Memoir of Unwanted Attention,” Freitas recounts with great thoughtfulness how her perception of the power differential between them, as well as her faith in the religious and educational institutions she’d grown up with, lulled her into susceptibility and disbelief. She let more than a year pass before reporting the man’s harassment to university officials, who gave her “a very small sum of money” to never speak of it again. “I cut out my tongue,” she writes, now well aware, thanks in large part to the #MeToo movement, that she was hardly the only one to suffer this particular injustice. “All around the country, at universities far and wide, at workplaces of all sizes and types, at companies that boast of doing good and making the world a better place, there are file cabinets full of the bloody tongues of women.”Yet, in spite of her own enforced silencing, Freitas doesn’t believe in the contemporary campus requirement that every disclosure of sexual abuse by a student to a school employee must result in the filing of an official report, even when the student wishes not to. After the fallout from her harassment helped ensure that Freitas would never attain the academic career she’d worked so hard for, she went on to publish books about the complications of hookup culture and social media among college students, and she’s concluded that mandatory reporting, as the practice is known, only “wrests the power of naming from the victim’s hands” and is therefore “like being violated all over again.”Presumably the #MeToo movement also made more likely the publication of these two memoirs, which have in common not only nuanced explorations of the meaning of “consent” but also the hurried, underedited quality of a manuscript written on deadline. Goldberg’s book could have stuck to descriptions of her own cases, without folding in those already reported elsewhere, and Freitas’s would benefit from tightened prose. But these are small complaints given the service both provide, which is to show without a shadow of a doubt that sexual harassment is often more terrifying than many people understand it to be (particularly those lucky enough to have avoided its reach). For that reason, I’m grateful for Freitas’s reclamation of her voice, and for Goldberg’s precision on the particulars of one of the most frightening technological frontiers of our time. Skip to content Rivington and an essential timely conversation-starter, Nobody’s Victim invites readers to join Carrie on the front lines of the war against sexual violence and privacy violations as she fights for revenge porn and sextortion laws, uncovers major Title IX violations, and sues the hell out of tech companies, schools, and powerful sexual predators. Her battleground is the courtroom; her crusade is to transform clients from victims into warriors.In gripping detail, Carrie shares the diabolical ways her clients are attacked and how she, through her unique combination of advocacy, badass relentlessness, risk-taking, and client-empowerment, pursues justice for them all. There are stories about a woman whose ex-boyfriend made fake bomb threats in her name and caused a national panic; a fifteen-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted on school grounds and then suspended when she reported the attack; and a man whose ex-boyfriend used a dating app to send more than 1,200 men to ex’s home and work for sex. With breathtaking honesty, Carrie also shares her own shattering story about why she began her work and the uphill battle of building a business.While her clients are a diverse group — from every gender, sexual orientation, age, class, race, religion, occupation, and background — the offenders are not. They are highly predictable. In this book, Carrie offers a taxonomy of the four types of offenders she encounters most often at her firm: assholes, psychos, pervs, and trolls. “If we recognize the patterns of these perpetrators,” she explains, “we know how to fight back.” Deeply personal yet achingly universal, Nobody’s Victim is a bold and much-needed analysis of victim protection in the era of the Internet. This book is an urgent warning of a coming crisis, a predictor of imminent danger, and a weapon to take back control and protect ourselves — both online and off.Author: Carrie Goldberg | Publisher: PlumeGoodreads | IndieBound (buy local!) | Amazon | Barnes & Noble

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