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Writing Assignment #4

The reading I discussed with my boyfriend was “I went on a date with Aziz Ansari. It turned into the worst night of my life” by Katie Way. The article follows the experience of a woman, “Grace,” who met Ansari at a party, got his number (actually he got hers) and they later linked up for a date. The date began at Ansari’s apartment, moved to dinner, Grace says he rushed through it, and later returned to the apartment where he continuously pressured her into having sex with him. While he never explicitly raped her, he did pressure her into other sexual acts that were unwanted and this in itself if sexual harassment, if not assault.

The main thing that we discussed was how people who hold “celebrity” status’s often think themselves to be above the laws, both morally and legally. There is this sort of removal from the rest of society that makes it seem as though these people who hold this level of fame or wealth will not have to face the same consequences as other people would. Adam brought up the instances of Harvey Weinstein and Jerry Sandusky, two well-known men who exploited their influential positions as they both were accused of sexual assault. Perhaps because of this, at least in the instance of Weinstein, many of those who accused him were too scared to do so initially because of the position of power he was in. Similarly, Ansari was also in a position of power like this and even though Grace spoke out about it, it may have looked differently had it been someone who was not a celebrity. We also talked about how Grace was very clear in stating what she did not want to do and yet, even so, Ansari was persistent. Particularly, the part where he tries to give her more wine as though to get her tipsy enough to where she might give in to his advances more easily is disturbing. He clearly only had one goal, and I think because of his “celebrity” status, also seemed to think he deserved it.

I don’t think either of our thinking has changed regarding the situation and article. We agree that Ansari took advantage of his status and was hypocritical in that he spoke of feminism, denies any misconduct and yet his actions show differently. We were both surprised that even with all that Grace had “against” him he denies that it happened the way it did and continued to support anti-sexual harassment movements. It very clearly shows how money and fame, at least in our society, can get you out of certain situations. This seems to be a problem that we need to fix because even those who have money or are in positions of power should not be above the law, though very often this is not the case.

The article itself was not difficult to explain as it was rather simple in terms of what happened. Way clearly states the events of the night and though there is obviously a possibility that it’s not true, there is no reason for Grace to make up the event. Overall, the conversation went pretty well as we were able to discuss why things such as this happen and how status has a lot to do with it.