

New York Times places songwriter Ryan Adams in the crosshairs of its #MeToo witch hunt

Eric London
18 February 2019

Alt-country singer/songwriter Ryan Adams has become a target of the #MeToo witch hunt, the latest “public enemy of the week” in the right-wing campaign orchestrated in the pages of the filthy *New York Times*.

In a major spread in Thursday’s print edition, which was posted prominently on the front page of the on-line edition, the *Times* features an article headlined “Ryan Adams dangled success. Women say they paid a price,” by entertainment writers Joe Coscarelli and Melena Ryzik. The article is a vindictive personal attack on the musician. It alleges—without factual support—that Adams pressured women into sexual relationships as a *quid pro quo* for promises of record deals and stardom.

Within hours, the music industry began erasing Adams’ nearly 30-year career as a pioneer of popular Americana music.

Retail companies indefinitely postponed the release of his forthcoming album “Big Colors” and radio corporations began blacklisting his latest single, which had been climbing the charts as late as Wednesday. The CEOs of Benson amplifiers, Walrus Audio and JHS Pedals all issued statements dropping sponsorship of Adams-branded equipment.

Musicians, including some who have produced or toured with Adams in the past, responded to the *Times* article by throwing him to the dogs.

Vanessa Carlton and Bethany Cosentino of Best Coast, and Tamara Lindeman of The Weather Station all publicly denounced Adams, as did Jenny Lewis, who just co-produced an album with him. When Jason Isbell, whom Adams invited to appear on an upcoming album, was asked via Twitter whether he “believed” the accusers, Isbell gave a pathetic one-word answer: “Yep.”

The Adams takedown follows the *Times*’ #MeToo model: allegations are presented as unquestionable truths,

accusers are presented as infallible, and the target is presented as a monster.

The most prominent allegation is that Adams engaged in sexually explicit text message conversations in 2014 with someone, identified only as Ava, who told him repeatedly she was an adult but who was in fact under the age of 18.

According to state and federal law, Adams has committed no crime because he did not know Ava was underage. Although Ava did not report the matter to authorities at the time, the *Times* writes gleefully in a follow-up article that “in response to The Times’s [initial] article, FBI agents in the bureau’s New York office on Thursday took the first steps to open a criminal investigation” into Adams.

The remaining allegations are from ex-lovers or former collaborators whose complaint against Adams is that he failed to adequately advance their musical careers.

Courtney Jaye was 35 years old when Adams sent her a Twitter message asking to collaborate. According to Jaye, when they met Adams “began remarking on Jaye’s appearance,” and later “they wound up in bed, but didn’t have sex.” She then says she told Adams she did not want a relationship, at which point Adams told her he would still work with her.

Jaye blames this non-event for ruining her career: “Something changed in me that year,” the *Times* quotes her as saying. “It made me just not want to make music.”

Phoebe Bridgers also responded enthusiastically when Adams offered to produce her songs. The *Times* reports that “a whirlwind romance commenced,” which, she claims, “turned obsessive and emotionally abusive” when he sent her too many text messages.

After they broke up, Adams still released three of Bridgers’ songs and “offered her a few dates opening for him on tour,” which “she accepted because it was a big

opportunity before the release of her debut album.” Bridgers alleges—and Adams denies—that he invited her to his room and appeared naked when she opened the door.

The most famous of Adams’ accusers is his ex-wife, former teen pop singer Mandy Moore, who now says Adams “abused” her when the couple was married from 2009 to 2016. She claims Adams “promised to record” her music “but never did,” and that he “booked them time at his studio, only to replace her with other female artists.” To call this “abuse” demeans and diminishes actual spousal abuse.

Moore tweeted the *Times* article with a caption that read, “Speaking your truth can be painful and triggering but it’s always worth it. My heart is with all women who have suffered any sort of trauma or abuse. You are seen and heard. #sisterhoodforever.”

Behind this sanctimonious nonsense lies Moore’s real motive: money. She told the *Times* that Adams’ “controlling behavior essentially did block my ability to make new connections in the industry during a very pivotal and potentially lucrative time—my entire mid-to-late 20s.” (Emphasis added).

Moore’s net worth is roughly \$10 million. An actress on the show “This Is Us,” she makes \$80,000 per episode—nearly three times the per capita median annual income in the US.

To Moore and her social layer, the #MeToo campaign is a vehicle for self-advancement. Now that Moore has denounced Adams, her musical career has been “rediscovered,” with *Billboard* publishing an article Saturday titled, “How the Ryan Adams Allegations Cast Mandy Moore’s Music Career in a New Light.”

The *Times* article says the newspaper learned of the allegations against Adams because Moore “and several others who said they were scarred by their relationships with Adams have found one another, creating a support system” and eventually speaking to the *Times*.

Tipped-off by Adams’ conspiring exes, the *Times* pored over thousands of Adams’ text messages and produced a 5,200-word exposé above the fold in the arts section.

Employing techniques that resemble those employed by the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy, the *Times* editors deploy their posse of journalistic bounty hunters to search for, seize and sniff the underwear and bed sheets of whomever the editors have targeted for destruction.

If the “newspaper of record” had conducted half as thorough an investigation into the George W. Bush administration’s claims of “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq, over a million Iraqis and 5,000 US soldiers might

still be alive.

The attention given to tearing down Ryan Adams exceeds the attention given by the paper to the ongoing persecution of immigrants at the US-Mexico border and countless other atrocities committed by the US government on a daily basis.

The *Times* allocated such immense resources to pursuing Adams because it is advancing both a political agenda and a business strategy.

While covering up the crimes of US imperialism, the *Times*’ constant focus on claims of sexual harassment advances the Democratic Party’s efforts to portray the main dividing line in society as gender or racial identity and not economic class. The campaign is also aimed at eroding popular support for the democratic principle of due process—an initiative that always leaves the poor and oppressed most vulnerable.

At the same time, the #MeToo campaign is based on the business principle that “sex sells.” Since the *Times* first reported allegations of sexual misconduct by Harvey Weinstein in October 2017, the company’s stock has risen from roughly \$19 per share to \$32 per share today. Earlier this month, the *Times* reported \$709 million in digital revenue for 2018, a 27 percent jump from 2017.

While reporting record subscriptions and ad revenue, the *Times* announced a 25 percent increase in shareholder dividends. The newspaper reported, “Investors who own Times Company stock will receive 5 cents per share every quarter, costing the company about \$33 million a year. That will also benefit the Ochs-Sulzberger family that controls The Times.”

Immense fortunes are being made on the rubble of the careers of talented people like Ryan Adams. There is nothing progressive about this right-wing campaign carried out by the corrupt alliance of the cash-hungry *New York Times*, the Democratic Party and the politically reactionary and self-absorbed upper-middle class.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact