

PASSIVE VOICE REWRITE EXERCISE

Rewrite the following article and change all of the passive sentences to active ones.

“Gaming is facing fresh allegations of sexism. One GamerGate survivor has advice for women coming forward,” by Soo Youn, June 24, 2018

<https://www.thelily.com/gaming-is-facing-fresh-allegations-of-sexism-one-gamergate-survivor-has-advice-for-women-coming-forward/>

Over the weekend, accusations of sexual misconduct in the online gaming world exploded on social media. Women are sharing accounts of being groomed and preyed upon as minors, sexually assaulted and harassed by prominent gamers, streamers and content creators on platforms including Twitch, YouTube and Mixer. As women come forward, they’re faced with personal attacks, harassment and questions about their credibility.

The cadence is all too familiar to Brianna Wu, co-founder of indie game studio Giant Spacekat and one of the original victims of GamerGate. At the time, she received over 200 death threats, which led to an FBI investigation.

GamerGate emerged in 2014 as an online mob attacking female game creators, like Zoe Quinn or critics who addressed sexism in games, like Anita Sarkeesian. In Wu’s case, she was harassed for commenting about the toxic culture of the gaming world online. It grew into an Internet culture war and the graphic rape and death threats become so severe that Quinn, Sarkeesian and Wu were forced to flee their homes.

Wu recently ran for the U.S. House of Representatives in Massachusetts 8th district, but ended her bid in April due to the difficulties of campaigning during a pandemic.

Amid fresh allegations, Wu spoke to The Lily about making it through GamerGate, how survivors can protect themselves and what comes next.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

Soo Youn: As someone who was drawn into GamerGate, and has been through the kind of public dragging these women are facing now, do you have advice?

Brianna Wu: It’s important to note that most industries had a reckoning with #MeToo. Film certainly did, politics is moving in that direction, but the video game industry did not. So I am delighted that some of these stories are finally coming out. But my message to you is that the backlash and consequences of speaking out are so intense that we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg.

SY: Can you expand on that?

BW: What’s going to happen to these women for speaking out? Twitter is going to become a nightmare. I have no doubt that they are going to be doxed. I can tell you that even in the

private Facebook groups for game developers, I've seen multiple men casting doubt on this and making statements like, "Well, if it doesn't have anything to do with his professional work it doesn't matter." So the reality is when you speak up it's the women that face career consequences more than the men.

Can I tell you about my first GDC (Game Developers Conference)? This is my story about being recruited to Rockstar [game publisher of the Grand Theft Auto series]. I'm walking from one side of the conference to the next and standing in the middle of the street is a woman wearing nothing but a bikini on a 60 degree day. And she is passing out fliers for the Rockstar recruitment party. And this is how they were marketing themselves to developers as recently as six years ago.

So there's this kind of culture in the game industry that it's a boys' club and it's filled with men that are suffering from Peter Pan syndrome. They never quite grew up and there's a reason that video games, despite having the same fundamental set of skills required to do the job as, say, working at Apple or Microsoft — there's a reason the culture is a lot more like the frat house. And that's because the men here kind of enjoy that kind of attitude.

SY: I have to confess it's hard for me to get into streaming. It's busy, for me aesthetically, it's a lot.

BW: Can we be honest? It's very male dominated. It's hard for me to watch streaming when I know it's going to be sexual comments about this girl. It's constantly sending messages saying, "You know what? This isn't meant for you."

SY: Getting back to this present moment — why now? Do you see signs that it may be different this time and have a lasting impact on gaming?

BW: I think [when] a certain number of women come forward, you're an army standing together. So it's getting past a certain critical point. Something that's really important for people to notice is that most of these allegations that are surfacing are happening with Twitch personalities where there's not a conventional boss and employee. It's more an everybody for themselves kind of structure.

We're seeing women in media more able to come forward. But the women who make your games, they're just still not feeling safe enough to speak up. And this has huge consequences. Riot just had a huge multimillion dollar lawsuit for structurally paying their [female] employees less. [Riot settled a [gender discrimination suit](#) last year for \$10 million]. We see sexual harassment and sexual assault allegations swept under the rug constantly.

I want to tell you a story. I was speaking at a college back in 2014. And I spoke to a young woman that was just unbelievably brilliant — she was a senior, she was looking for a job. She came up to me, she's like, "Bri, do you know anyone at X studio? Because this is my dream to go work there." And I said, "Of course I know people at that studio. I know the woman over in HR. Let me connect her to you and maybe you can get an internship." And she did. She graduated, she went to work for them.

I got a call a year and half later at 2 a.m. from this young woman sobbing because she had just been sexually assaulted at a bar in front of her team by her boss. Everyone thought it was a big joke in front of an all-male team. She had been sexually assaulted and they did not understand why it was so difficult for her. And that young woman, who had gone to a top-tier college and taken on a ton of debt does not work in the industry or in tech at all today, despite her ample skills.

The truth is we're hemorrhaging women because of this behavior.

SY: For the women who are going through this right now, what should they know?

BW: So the first thing they should know is one of the few resources our industry built after GamerGate had nothing to do with any major corporate power. It happened with the women that make your video games. We've created strong networks in Backchannel where you can vent, you can ask for help, and you can get support. Don't go through this alone. There's an army of women that are waiting to stand by you and that will have your back publicly and privately. So reach out and get support. That would be my number one thing. The second thing is you're going to blame yourself. You're going to ask yourself if you did something to deserve the harassment and blowback that you were getting and I want to let you know that your feelings are dead on. What you're feeling is valid and you don't need to apologize for it. It was the system that wronged you. You didn't do wrong.

SY: What got you through GamerGate?

BW: My friends. Some of the friendships I made during GamerGate are some of my most intense friendships I have today. In the end, all women in the tech industry have is each other. So treasure those friendships and treasure those women because they are the people that are going to be standing beside you at the end of the day.

SY: So let's say now you've made these accusations and you're getting trolled. What's the first thing you should do?

BY: My suggestion would be for any woman thinking about coming forward, the very first thing you need to do is a security audit. You need to make sure your Facebook, your Twitter, your email all has two factor authentication on it. Make sure you've done the basics so you can't get hacked.

If you are doxed, go ahead and file a police report so you have a paper trail but do not expect help to come. The sad fact is law enforcement, even after GamerGate and all the horror in the years after, is still not great on this subject. So keep a cool head, get support, but know that because information is so freely out there it's probably going to happen.