

“OFF THE RAILS” WITH BRETT KAVANAUGH

A former student of Brett Kavanaugh's Prep School recalls the party scene in which our current Supreme Court nominee spent his formative years. His narrative, which has been condensed and edited for clarity, is below.

I guess you could call Georgetown prep a fraternity between a bunch of rich kids. All this shit happens, and then nobody really wants to talk about it, *because if one person crumbles, the whole system crumbles, and everybody tells on everybody.* And that's not the way Georgetown Prep has ever been.

When Kavanaugh and I overlapped, it would have been 1982, and that's when Kavanaugh was a senior. [Current Supreme Court Justice] **Neil Gorsuch** [who also attended Prep] would have been a sophomore. Now, as far as Gorsuch goes, he was so straight-up. He was like, **“Golly gee,”** one of those kids. And Prep has always been a very elite school with 400 students. One hundred per class — that's all they would ever let in. Some of it was academic merit, but the rest of it was privilege. I didn't have a lot of interaction with Kavanaugh, but I did know of Mark Judge, the other guy who was named. My first reaction I had was, **“Oh, that guy.”**

I mean, we were teenagers, but there was sex and drugs and more drugs and more partying and belligerence and disrespect, all going on at all times while I was there. Around 1986 is when Georgetown Prep really changed, and it went back to a more strict, Jesuit-based style. (The Jesuit's magazine *America* asked for Kavanaugh's name to be withdrawn.)

A lot of the stuff that happened in the '70s and the '80s and the time that Kavanaugh was there, it was common. That's what happened all the time. One of the biggest people and one of the most influential people there was **Doug Kennedy**. He was one of the youngest **RFK** kids, and Dougie, as we called him, was the one who had all these huge parties. There were other parties, but **everybody remembers Kennedy parties because they were in McLean at the house where Ethel Kennedy lived.**

The police would be there, but they would say, *“Oh, are you going to the party? We'll escort you.”* That kind of thing. And, you know, they're escorting a load of teenage kids in a car who were all going to underage drink and party. And as I remember, it was hundreds of kids — boys and girls from different schools, all private. No public schools were involved. And what would happen was a lot of drinking. There was one room full of drugs, everybody would be doing coke. And in another room, everybody would be smoking weed. And then in another room, people would be having sex.

And there would be all sorts of unwanted stuff going on. These were the situations where, I think, you could talk to any prep school girl, and they would say, yeah, I was attacked or I was abused or I was touched or I was done in this improper fashion. And like I said, it was a fraternity, but it was also a situation where the girls wouldn't talk about it later on, either. A lot of these women basically became kept women.

Yeah, the Ford thing was typical and a lot of that happened. And I think she said she was in a bathing suit, so that happened at Beach Week, I would guess. That's where everybody would go down to the coast, over to Ocean City [Maryland], or Rehoboth [Beach, Delaware], one of the local beaches. And somebody would have a house, or somebody would rent a house, and then it would just turn into a free-for-all there. My friend, who went to one of the private girls' schools, said she woke up with a guy on top of her. And this was not a situation where people would talk about it. They would just say: *“Oh, well, how'd you do? How was your weekend?”* *“Oh, well, I got attacked.”* And that was just normal then. It was an attitude where *“No”* didn't necessarily mean *“I'm going to stop.”* It meant *“I'm going to keep going,”* and *“I'm going to keep going because I'm privileged and I'm allowed to and I'm not going to get in trouble for it.”*

So the Kennedy parties were the most notorious. But every weekend there was some sort of party base during the school year where there was drugs, alcohol—which was typical, but we're talking about 14-, 15-, 16-, 17-year-old kids. I remember hearing about David Kennedy's death after it happened in Florida. It was a small school and everyone was talking about it. It came out in the news, and it was all over The Washington Post. And everybody was like, *“Oh shit,*

what happened? How is this going to affect us? Were we involved? Did this happen with us?” That kind of thing. And it was never a situation where anybody told on anyone. That was the weirdness about all of it. It was hushed up and cleaned up quickly because of the Kennedy connection. In the weeks after, no one really talked about it.



Most of the partying was based on the football schedule. Like, as a football team, we played all the other prep schools. That's where all the parties started, and that's where all the parties went. I don't think it was something that we invented. I think that it was a culture that had been there for a long time, and then it just progressively got more abusive, and more and more and more and more abusive.

Beach parties were considered a rite of passage. An end-of-the-year blowout. Partying at the beach was typically way more crazy than what happened during the school year. Inhibitions were thrown out the window. Fighting was a lot less common, but there was more sex involved and even more liberties taken because the parents were so far away. At least, that's what I concluded from my experiences at Beach Week every year.

It was a game of who could party the most, who could drink the most, who could get the most girls, who could get away with the most crazy shit. A lot of these kids at these prep schools had family homes at the beach. And if not, they rented homes for the week. Every weekend there was this whole idea of, *“Hey, where are you going this weekend?”* *“Well, so-and-so's having a party or someone's having a party at their house.”* Usually because their parents were gone — that would happen all the time. Then everybody would go over there, the entire class. Or at least, anybody who was cool or anybody who could party would go. Anybody who could get a ride, or anybody who had a car. And then all the girls' schools in the area. If you talked to any of the girls there, they would all say, *“Oh, yeah, of course there was a culture where assaults like that happen.”*

It was just a weird culture of how there was *no telling* — you know, *don't tell, don't tell.* But then you're getting all these 14-, 15-, 16-year-olds, 17-year-old kids doing whatever the fuck they wanted to do, with no repercussions. Drugs everywhere. Partying everywhere. Drinking — just whatever we wanted to do. It was unbelievable, **off the rails.** And that's just how it was. Most of the kids I went to school with were either privileged or from foreign governments or whatever. **They could get away with anything.**

It was more common to have at least 50 people there at a party. But these smaller parties — usually what happened was that it was a Beach Week party, where the kids went to the beach. Somebody had a house, and whoever was there and whoever heard about the party went to the party. So there may have been as few as five people. Ford said four. There may have been as many as a hundred. It just depends. But that was not uncommon. As soon as I read the description, I was like, *“Oh, yeah, that's your typical prep school party, where it's just a bunch of kids just going off the rails.”* **That's the best way to describe it.**

-Ashley Feinberg for RAINN
National Sexual Assault Online Hotline: rainn.org
the National Sexual Violence Resource Center:
nsvrc.org

DOUBLE-DOWN YOUR FANTASY &...Imagine

Imagine you're a privileged white male who's learned, implicitly, and accepted, explicitly, that white male culture will protect you, no matter what, if you stick to the script.

If you can't imagine that, recall Chuck Grassley, Orrin Hatch, Lindsey Graham, and Brett Kavanaugh during the hearing. After lifetimes, from 53 to 85 years, of things going your way, of never facing discomfort, powerlessness, or indifference, a *woman*, a lesser being, goes off — and stays off — the script of male-hegemony. Ford, herself white and privileged, stood in *their bastion* and spoke against *their version* of truth, nobility, and right-thinking. *This*, moreover, after Orrin Hatch described her as an attractive witness” and “pleasing.” *This* is how she repays his gallantry?

Interruptions to the dominant narrative — *“culture”* — present enormous disorientations in individual and collective psyches. Interruptions rattle, demand one think creatively and on one's feet, pose dilemmas, and threaten change. Faced with a Dr Ford, chinks appear in the system and dominant beneficiaries respond by stalling, dismissing, shoring up, protecting the system by feverishly applying that which has worked in the past. Cover up. Undermine, but not too openly. Humiliate, but not too openly. Rage. (Don't cry.) Then emulate Donald Trump and “punch back ten times harder,” search and destroy, wage war.

Ironically, if Judge Brett Kavanaugh had admitted abusing alcohol he'd already be on the Supreme Court.

(George W. Bush, a fellow Yale, admitted,

“When I was young and irresponsible, I was young and irresponsible,” and he became a two-term president.)

But admitting to *“youthful hijinks”* doesn't sit well with Kavanaugh. Gripped by self-righteousness, he sees himself the way his culture portrays masculinity: boot strapping, busting his butt, athletic, charitable. Reports among the thousands of pages from earlier investigations suggest Kavanaugh tends to “dissemble,” a culturally appropriate way of saying he lies. If he'd admitted his high school and college years included booze-addled blurs, and if Dr Ford's claims were true (they're *not!* He's “innocent”) he must have been drunk (implicitly not responsible). If he'd expressed shame, if he'd apologized, he would be on the Supreme Court. That's the power of male culture. Instead, he foisted a false narrative and “dissembled” under oath about Maryland's legal drinking age, that he never ralphed, about the meaning of “boof” and “devil's triangle.” He raged. He cried. Now he and his supporters seek to search and destroy.

Brett Kavanaugh is a culturally damaged creature of toxic male hegemony who lacks a broad understanding of and pleasure in our complex, multicultural world. He's confused — outraged — about *why* this is *being done to him*. He's played the culture game right: *“had no connections”* to assist him into Yale, *“worked his butt off,”* excelled at academics and athletics, attended church, enjoyed the occasional beer, and kept his calendars from high school and college to prove it. His version of American culture (Grassley's, Hatch's, and Graham's, too), the only version that matters, *entitles* him to *his* spot on the Supreme Court. He *deserves* it. The job of lesser beings — Americans — is to get out of his way.

-SUSAN GALLEYMORE

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