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**From:** Lawrence Krauss <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2017 5:19 PM  
**To:** Peter Aldhous  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: URGENT: BuzzFeed News inquiry re allegations of sexual harassment

**Importance:** High

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to your email. I am =urrently on a plane until noon pacific time, and then heading to a =eeting right after landing, till about 2 pm or so. While I am =unning the risk that you will report my comments, if you do, either out =f context, or incompletely, I am responding with an effort to be =complete, as I always try and do with reporters. If you decide to =o ahead with a story, which, after reading my responses, I hope you =ecide is inappropriate, I would like you to quote my responses fully in =rder not to distort them.

It is hard to know how to respond to a =ist of false and/or distorted allegations, along with misleading =statements. I treat people I interact with with respect, and I work hard =o support and mentor students, colleagues, and members of the general =ublic, and this is supported by the institutions of which I am a part. =nbsp;I do not sexually harass people. If the purpose of your =eporting is to somehow argue that Universities and other institutions =re lax in dealing with well known individuals like myself, then in fact =he situation is quite the opposite. My high public profile opens =e up to more scrutiny at these institutions, not less, and it also =pens me up to a host of unfounded outside complaints and allegations =hat other faculty do not receive, each of which the University has to =espond to. The fact that I have remained a professor in all =niversities with which I have been associated, in good standing, and =Iso an officer or an invited speaker at organizations like CFI, which =ave strict harassment policies, is a confirmation of the fact that =heir experience validates a trust in my behavior. I was asked to =e an honorary director of CFI, and continue to be invited to their last = meetings to speak, specifically because, as they have written me after =he fact, the attendees universally appreciated my talks, my courtesy, =nd graciousness in spending time with the attendees. If the =urpose of your report is to impugn my integrity or suggest I have a =istory of harassment, that too is false. As noted in one of your =miscellaneous facts', as a scientist I try and remain =keptical, and rely on empirical evidence, rather than allegations and =nnuendo by people whose motives I cannot judge. I also try and =udge the facts in context. The fact that Universities and other =rganizations employ me or have me on their boards, or invite me to =eetings is because they value my contributions and my =ctions.

The items you list are false or distorted. Item 1 refers to a =onsensual encounter in my hotel room in 2006 where we mutually decided, =n a polite discussion in fact, that taking it any further would not be =ppropriate, and there were respectful and platonic encounters =fterwards. There is nothing to comment on in item 3, which involves an =nonymous 3rd party claim because I know nothing about it, there =re no details provided, and it clearly was not taken seriously enough =o result in any university action. Item 4 is confusing. Are =ou saying that because I decided I didn't want to go out to a =ar with a group of attendees that I was harassing them? The =econd part did not happen. Re incident 5: The 'female =ompanion' in this case is my wife, who accompanied me on the =ruise, and has attested to the fact that the claim is false. This =s what I wrote at the time in response to the blog in question, causing =t to be taken down.

It is worth responding to Item 2 =nd 6 in more detail,

Re item 2: the student in question was interested in =cience communication, and on dozens of occasions came to me, asked me =o talk over coffee, or wrote to me with questions. When she asked =bout advice for after graduation I DID tell her she was different than =he other students in her year. The rest of them were interested =n going on to graduate school in physics, but she was interested in =cience communication so I told her that she might want to take a =ifferent path. Since she was the only woman in her year, as I =ecall, I did ask her on one of these occasions if that made it

=ifficult for her in any way. I asked, because as a faculty member =nd department chair I was interested in knowing what we could do, if =ecessary to encourage more women to go into physics, and also because =s someone she had asked for career advice from I wanted to know if that =ade a difference to her. Re asking her for dinner.. I have gone =ack over emails from that period. I have numerous requests from her =sking me to go for coffee to talk, which I usually had to turn down =cause I was busy, and on several occasions she asked me to have coffee =ith her off campus to talk, and I politely declined. I did let =er accompany me off campus one time to watch me do a BBC interview =cause she specifically requested it, and I believe she found it =seful. I did and do have coffee and meals with students on =ampus, and I see nothing wrong with this. I try to treat students =s respected colleagues if possible. I was shocked when I later =earned of the complaint she was apparently asked to lodge to the =niversity, not least because there was no inappropriate interaction but =lso because, well after the dates you listed on which she was =pparently offended, she continued to email me with joking questions or =omments. Also, at a later AAAS conference, again in 2008, =or which she had asked, and for which I had written her a letter of =ecommendation to attend, my wife and I gave her a lift in our taxi well =ut out of our way in order to drop her off at her hotel, and I note in =n email response to her email about the conference, again in 2008, I =xpressed that I would pass her regards along to my wife and vice versa. =nbsp;When the University later informed me of the complaint I was =hocked and concerned. When I spoke to the human resources =erson, including relating my concerns and explaining the situation, I =as told that no formal complaint of sexual harassment was requested. =nbsp;By that time I learned of the complaint I had already announced my =ntentions to leave Case to accept an offer at ASU—a very =ifficult decision for me because of my long-standing attachment to the =niversity, the excellent relations I had with my colleagues there—=both among the faculty (many of whom in physics I had hired while =epartment chair) and among the administration, along with a very =ttractive counter-offer by Case. Because I was already in Arizona =t the later time I was asked not to have any further interaction with =he student I agreed to that request, both to respect her sensitivities =nd also because it was basically moot because I was not on campus. =ollowing this episode, as indicated in the letter to the student, I did =ssess what might have led to misinterpretations by this student, and =ecame more careful in offering advice when talking to students. I =as also told by human resources that because it was decided to handle =his informally and not formally, that (a) it should remain =confidential, which I, at least abided by, and (b) if no further =omplaints were lodged in that case, that the University would preserve =ts confidentiality and remove the complaint from my record after 5 =ears, which makes me surprised and concerned that someone violated that =ritten agreement with you.

Re item 6: You report on ASU'= response to item #6 , without including the fact that the University =pecifically stated there were never any allegations of sexual =isconduct or harassment by me at the University, and moreover that the =outside complaints' were in fact related specifically to your item #6. =nbsp; Further you neglect to mention that this complaint was by an =nonymous third party, not the individual who was allegedly harassed, =ho never lodged a complaint, and that no specific evidence was provided =f the alleged transgression. I was surprised and dismayed that =oth ASU and ANU launched investigations on the basis of this but was =old by both Universities that because of my high profile even such =nsubstantiated third party complaints at private events unrelated to =he University would be investigated. The complaint was =nvestigated by both ASU and ANU and both came to the conclusion =hat it was not credible and no university policies had been violated. =nbsp;In addition ANU's investigation, which took a full month, =ound various inconsistencies in the allegation, which suggest =istortion and fabrication, I will quote from the ANU report. The =nitial complaint, which in fact resulted in a temporary suspension of =y position at ANU until it was dismissed, outlined the claim you made =n the words you quoted in your note to me, but it also =tated

"It=is the University's understanding that a complaint was =odged directly to the conference organisers at the time of the =ncident."

After the month-long investigation, during which I was told I =as not to interact with anyone on campus (again moot because I was a =emisphere removed) the final report, from which I quote below absolved =e of any wrongdoing, reinstating my position, and indicated information =nconsistent with the original claim and apparent later =laims:

"The =llegations were made by an observer to the incident.

- The =omplaint did not identify, nor disclose the identity of the conference =ttendee who was allegedly touched in an =nwelcome manner.

- The conference attendee who took the 'selfie' photo did not lodge a formal complaint to the conference organisers at the time of the incident (November 2016).
- The conference attendee who witnessed the incident, did not lodge a formal complaint to the conference organisers at the time of the incident (November 2016).
- The photo submitted as part of the complaint does not provide evidence of any physical contact.
- The complainant alleged that a photo exists, showing your hand on the breast of the conference attendee who took the 'selfie' photo. This photo was not made available to the Australian National University, although it was requested in the course of the investigation."

(And for the record I often put my hand up in front of a camera if there is a flash, as I specifically request selfies not to include flashes, so that I don't end up with a series bright spots in front of my eyes for the next half hour.

Moreover, I have no idea if the other eyewitnesses you quote, who were not involved in any complaint, were in fact there but this was a formal banquet with individuals and their partners, which I attended long enough to agree to sign things and do selfies before leaving early because I was tired. Even if I had any such intent it would have been unwise to pose for selfies in front of a group and openly do such a thing, including presumably in front of this person's partner, which, besides the fact that I don't do such things, is one of the many reasons it never happened.)

What makes this particular type of allegation so repugnant is that I get asked for literally thousands of selfies, and when people come up to me they are vulnerable, often shaking, or sometimes aggressive. I am particularly proud of the way I work to make all people feel at ease, and respected, rather than humiliated, whatever their behavior or request. Thus, this false claim strikes at the heart of what I am about, which characterizes all my interactions with fans: to acknowledge them in a way that makes them feel appreciated and respected. As I understand you had a reporter watching me sign books and take selfies at the CFI conference in Las Vegas this year, that behavior is what they will have witnessed and should report on. Moreover, I am proud of the interactions I have had at both Case and ASU, with students, colleagues and staff of all genders and ethnicities. I have worked hard to support them, mentor them, and treat them with respect. I treat others as responsible adults, and I expect to be treated equally.

On Dec 10, 2017, at 6:12 PM, Peter Aldhous <[peter.aldhous@buzzfeed.com](mailto:peter.aldhous@buzzfeed.com)<mailto:[peter.aldhous@buzzfeed.com](mailto:peter.aldhous@buzzfeed.com)>> wrote:

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Dr. Krauss:

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As you know, I'm a reporter for BuzzFeed News who has been investigating sexual misconduct allegations against you. As we've already discussed by email, I'd very much like to interview you about these allegations in detail.

In particular, you stated in an email sent on Nov 13 that two universities had investigated an incident (# 6 below). You claimed that "both Universities independently concluded that the report was unsubstantiated and fabricated with malicious intent." We are not aware that either university concluded fabrication or malicious intent, so if you have evidence to support this assertion, we would like to see and discuss it.

The story concerns your actions towards students while a professor of physics at Case Western Reserve University, as well as your conduct in non-academic settings as a prominent figure in the skeptics movement. I am reporting this story along with two of my colleagues on the science desk, Azeen Ghorayshi and Virginia Hughes.

Our story is about several allegations of sexual misconduct dating from 2006 to 2016 (see full details below). Our reporting also goes into how the various institutions you have been affiliated with -94 Case Western, Arizona State University, the Australian National University, the New College of the Humanities, and the Center for Inquiry, for which

you serve as an honorary member of the board of directors — have handled complaints and concerns about your behavior during this time.

Our story is corroborated by emails, university documents, official complaints, testimony from victims and eyewitnesses, and interviews with more than two dozen of your current and former academic colleagues, students, and peers in the skeptics movement.

I wanted to offer you the opportunity to comment and/or respond to the main facts we plan to publish. If you wish to comment on any of the below findings, we need to hear from you as soon as possible. We are planning on publishing our story Tuesday morning, eastern US Time.

Based on our reporting, this is what we plan to publish:

Incident 1:

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In November of 2006, at an event launching the new Center for Inquiry in Washington D.C., you met a volunteer for CFI D.C. /span>

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At the event, you asked for her business card. Later, you followed her as she was leaving and asked her if she was "of age."

\*

Later, you emailed her to invite her to dinner.

\*

You planned to dine with her in the restaurant at the Washington D.C. hotel where you were staying.

\*

You told her to come up to your room first because you needed to finish some work.

\*

In your hotel room, you seemed in no rush to leave. You ordered a cheese plate, and later champagne, despite her suggestion that you go down to dinner. /span>

\*

You then made a comment about her eye makeup, getting very close to her face.

\*

You then lifted her by her arms, and pushed her onto the bed beneath you, forcibly kissing her and trying to pull down the crotch of her tights.

\*

She struggled to push you off her.

\*

You said, "When I was in college I could never get a girl that looked like you."

\*

When you pulled out a condom, she got out from under you. She said "I have to go," and rushed out of the room. /span>

Incident 2:

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In an incident that occurred in fall of 2007 while you were a physics professor at Case Western Reserve University, a student tried to talk to you about her plans after graduation. You mentioned to her how tough it just be to have all the other physics majors asking her out on dates. /span>

\*

In a second incident in December of 2007, while you were still at Case Western, the same student visited your office to interview you for a student science journal. You closed the door behind her, and ignored the questions she had prepared. When you made a casual comment about taking her out for dinner.

\*

Later, in a regular column for the school paper, she described her experiences with you, without mentioning you by name. "There was even one particular creep of a professor who once told me he thought differently of me compared to other students and asked me to dinner: a situation so disturbing that it left me upset for weeks afterward," she wrote.

\*

She was then approached by a dean at the university, who suspected that she was referring to you, based on a previously reported incident with another student. He encouraged her to make a complaint, and she did.

\*

University investigators interviewed both you and the student.

\*

On September 4, 2008, Susan Nickel-Schindewolf, the university's associate vice president for student affairs, wrote to the student, telling her that the investigation was complete. She wrote that you had been told: "This type of behavior could constitute sexual harassment in violation of the university's sexual harassment policy."

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The letter also stated that you were prohibited from making contact with the student as long as she remained at Case.

\*

The letter also stated that you are required to get approval from the dean or the chair of the physics department before setting foot on the campus again.

\*

The letter also stated, "Dr. Krauss expressed regret about having a negative impact on you, and also his willingness to use his complaint as an opportunity to reflect and improve on his future interactions with students."

\*

By then, you had already left Case, taking up your current position at Arizona State University the month before.

\*

"The opportunities being offered at ASU are simply too great to turn down at this stage in my career," you told case colleagues, in an email announcing your departure on April 16, 2008.

#### Incident 3:

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A former Case Western physics department administrator confirmed that she had reported a previous incident involving a student who had confided in her about your inappropriate behavior towards her.

#### Incident 4:

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You met a student from another university, an atheist activist, in March 2008 at the American Atheists Convention in Minneapolis. She wanted to expand the atheist group she ran at the midwestern university she was attending, and hoped to convince you to come and speak. You initially seemed enthusiastic.

\*

During the convention, attendees including you and Richard Dawkins went for dinner with the student and volunteers for Dawkins' foundation.

\*

Afterwards, the student invited you to join the volunteers for a drink.

\* You asked her to come get you in your hotel room. She was wary of your intentions, and so brought a male friend with her. Opening the door to find them both there, you informed her you had decided not to go.

\*

You met this student again at the American Atheists convention in Des Moines, Iowa, in April 2011.

\*

You pulled over a chair for her in the bar, and then started running your hand up her leg under the table.

\*

She tried to shift her body away from you, and you persisted in putting your hand on her leg. She crossed her legs, and you kept trying. Then she turned her entire body away.

#### Incident 5:

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This incident allegedly occurred on in May 2011 on a CFI cruise <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qnrP8B-1KxE>> . We understand that CFI staff were informed that you had repositioned a female cruise-goer, who rejected an invitation to join you and your female companion for sex in your cabin.

\*

At least two CFI staffers were sufficiently concerned about reports of your behavior that they urged CFI's president not to invite you on a 2014 cruise of the Galápagos Islands. You were invited on that cruise, however.

#### Incident 6:

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During a visit to Melbourne, Australia, in November 2016, you were accused of sexual misconduct once again.

\*

The incident happened at a dinner held at the Melbourne Zoo as part of the Australian Skeptics National convention, where you were a featured speaker.

\*

With conference delegates watching over drinks, a woman asked you for a celebrity selfie.

\*

As the woman held out her phone to take the picture, you reached over her shoulder and grabbed her right breast.

\*

She immediately reacted, suddenly checking you and spinning around. "Don't do that," she said.

\*

BuzzFeed News has seen the complaint made by another woman to ASU, ANU, and the New College of the Humanities in London, including the selfie, her face obscured to conceal her identity. It shows your hand in motion as a blur in front of her shoulder, apparently moving toward her chest. Two other eyewitnesses have confirmed the complainant's account of what happened.

\*

In April 2017, the complainant described the incident on her blog. After hearing more about our reputation for inappropriate behavior from blog readers, she decided to file a complaint about the Nov. 2016 incident.

\*

On July 16, she filed formal complaints with Arizona State University, and with the Australian National University in Canberra and the New College of the Humanities in London, where you have visiting appointments.

\*

Both Arizona State and the Australian National University told her they would look into the matter, but neither university found against you.

\*

"Based on the material available to the University, we do not have sufficient evidence to substantiate the allegations," Kiaran Kirk, dean of the College of Science at the Australian National University, wrote to her.

\*

Erin Ellison, who heads Arizona State's Office of Equity & Inclusion, wrote to her explaining that an inquiry "did not find a violation of university policy."

\*

In October, Arizona State denied a request from BuzzFeed News for documents relating to complaints of sexual harassment against you. However, Cynthia Jewett, the university's senior associate general counsel, noted that two individuals, neither affiliated with the university, had complained about you. "The University did not find either communication to state a credible allegation," Jewett wrote.

Miscellaneous acts:

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In 2008, you founded the Origins Project at Arizona State University in Tempe, a multidisciplinary effort to understand the origins of the universe, life, and social systems. You have led that effort ever since.

\*

Thanks to best-selling books like The Physics of Star Trek and A Universe From Nothing, frequent essays in publications including the New Yorker and the New York Times, and the documentary you made with biologist Richard Dawkins, called The Unbelievers, you are celebrated as one of America's leading public intellectuals.

\*

You served on the science policy committee for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign and are a vocal critic of President Donald Trump.

\*

You also make regular public appearances across the world, often at gatherings of skeptics and atheists.

\*

At CSICon in Las Vegas in October, a few dozen fans paid \$500 per head to attend a VIP luncheon with you and Dawkins.

\*

Many more lined up to get you to sign their copy of your latest book, The Greatest Story Ever Told — So Far.

\*

Online, people can buy T-shirts emblazoned "Lawrence-Krauss for President."

\*

In talks and interviews, you have argued that our universe arose without divine intervention, that religion drives xenophobia, and that our brains are hardwired to believe [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDhHK8nk\\_V0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDhHK8nk_V0).

\*

You have stated that science provides answers to many of life's biggest questions, and can even fix great societal injustices.

\*

Earlier this year, at a Q&A event to promote your new book, the conversation came around to the dearth of women and minorities in science. "Science itself overcomes misogyny and prejudice and bias," you said. "It's built in: Questioning yourself, always questioning results, questioning others, relying on empirical evidence."

\*

You have clashed with some skeptics over your defense of Jeffrey Epstein, a billionaire financier who in 2008 was convicted for soliciting prostitution from underage girls, and spent 13 months in a Florida jail.

\*

Through his private foundation, Epstein has funded the work of several prominent scientists. He has provided funding for your Origins Project, supporting lectureship and scholarship programs, most recently pledging \$100,000 in 2014.

\*

In April 2011, you told the Daily Beast: "As a scientist I always judge things on empirical evidence and he always has women ages 19 to 23 around him, but I've never seen anything else, so as a scientist, my presumption is that whatever the problems are I would believe him over other people."

\*

In a blog comment about the Epstein controversy, you wrote: "I remain skeptical, and I support a man whose character I believe I know...If you want to condemn me for that, so be it."

\*

You were made an honorary member of CFI's board of directors in December 2011.

\*

A blog post published in August 2013 described incidents #1 and #4, naming you. Another post, published at around the same time, described incident #5.

\*

The first post was edited to remove your name after you had commented that the allegations of assault were "potentially illegal." The second post was quickly taken down.

Again, if you wish to comment on or clarify any of these points, please get in touch with us as soon as possible. If I do not respond immediately it is because I am on another call, so please leave the best phone number to reach you.

Thanks,  
Peter Aldhous

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Peter Aldhous, PhD  
Science reporter | BuzzFeed News

Lawrence M. Krauss  
Director, The Origins Project at ASU  
Co-Director, Cosmology Initiative  
Foundation Professor  
School of Earth & Space Exploration and Physics Department Arizona State University,

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