

OPINION

# Kamala Harris Is Already Being Called a Prostitute

This is a remarkably gendered attack, and, if you're a sexist, a fairly brilliant one.

BY JENNIFER WRIGHT / JAN 29 2019, 3:23 PM EST



If you thought we were going to make it all the way to the actual primaries before we started accusing democratic women of prostituting themselves, boy, are you in for a surprise.

It's recently come to light that, 20 years ago, Kamala Harris dated former San Francisco mayor Willie Brown. While Brown was still married at the time, he had been estranged from his wife since 1981. Harris and Brown broke up in 1995.



**Tyler Zed**

@realTylerZed

Former San Fran Mayor Willie Brown (84) on Kamala Harris:  
"Yes, we dated...Yes, I may have influenced her career by appointing her to two state commissions when I was Assembly speaker."

Prostituting her way to the top, what a great feminist!

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Kamala Harris has dealt with the fact that she dated Willie Brown for some time—wondering to an interviewer at SFWeekly in 2003, “Would it make sense if you are a Martian coming to Earth that the litmus test for public office is where a candidate is in their relationship to Willie Brown?”

No, it really wouldn't. I doubt most people outside of San Francisco know who Willie Brown is.





And, to his credit, Brown seems to agree. On Monday, the Former mayor issued a very brief statement to *SFGate* entitled “Sure, I dated Kamala Harris. So What?” In it he mentioned he certainly helped her career, but he “also helped the careers of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Gov. Gavin Newsom, Sen. Dianne Feinstein and a host of other politicians. The difference is that Harris is the only one who, after I helped her, sent word that I would be indicted if I 'so much as jaywalked' while she was D.A.”

Good for her. As ex-boyfriend responses to this nonsense go, that’s a nice one.

Many opponents of Harris have not handled this quite so well. *Fox* has gone forward with a headline declaring “Extramarital affair with Kamala Harris? Former San Francisco mayor, 84, admits it happened.” Twitter seems to be enthusiastic about calling her either a gold digger or a prostitute.



**BayAreaFrau**  
@bayareahausfrau

"Hi, Willie, I'm your new gold digger. Anything I can do for you, big boy?"

-- Sen Kamala Harris

**ABC News** @ABC

Potential 2020 presidential candidate Kamala Harris shares advice for young women: "Don't let anybody tell you who you are, you tell them who you are." [abcn.ws/2Dfj73T](https://abcn.ws/2Dfj73T)





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Kamala will not answer "Was he good?"



**Robbin Young**

@Robbin\_Young

Kamala doesn't care if Willie was good...women who prostitute themselves only care about money and prestige.

4 7:47 PM - Jan 27, 2019

[See Robbin Young's other Tweets](#)

Let's be clear: unless they sexually harassed someone or raped someone (which seems to indicate they might not be qualified to make decisions about political and social issues), there's no need to care too much about a candidate's personal life—especially when it comes to who they dated 20 years ago. Most everyone has made at least one or two regrettable choices in that department.



But this is a remarkably gendered attack, and, if you're a sexist, a fairly brilliant one. It's far more likely that a female candidate would date a powerful man than if the genders were reversed, simply because there were more powerful men than there were powerful women 20 years ago. This attack can't be used on a man, because, just looking at the number of women versus men in politics in the 1990s, it would be really unlikely for a man to encounter a powerful enough woman that their relationship would still be seen as benefiting his career 20 years later.

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Assuming that a woman's success is directly tied to a man she knew 20 years ago is fairly absurd, regardless. It seems easier for many people to assume that a woman was the puppet of a man than to think she might have dated someone, broken things off with him, and run her own life ever since. Claiming that a woman is certainly a gold digger reaffirms a worldview pleasing to those who'd like to believe that men are the ones with the real power, and, if a woman ever exerts power, it's been generously bestowed on her by a man.

This claim—that someone used their sexuality to advance—basically never happens to men. It happens so rarely that there isn't really an equivalent to the notion of a man being a gold digger. And that's not because, in 2019, there aren't women in powerful positions, or men who are very physically attractive. It's because a man in a position of power is never suspected of having gotten that power through underhanded means. After all, he's a man. It's natural that he'd have a successful career.



For some people, power is naturally the domain of men. Women who get it must either be unsexed shrews, or sleeping with men in order to have some of their power.

"A man in a position of power is never suspected of having that power through underhanded means. After all, he's a man. It's natural that he'd have a successful career."

The people horrified by Kamala Harris' actions are not, I do not think, largely horrified by extramarital affairs. If they were, they could not tolerate a President who cheated on his pregnant wife. But then, that would mean holding men to the same standards as women.

For sexists, the hubbub around Kamala Harris acts as a convenient reminder to other women thinking of running that, if you choose to, you had better have married your high school sweetheart. Otherwise, your past may not be pure enough to satisfy people.

None of which is to say that Kamala Harris' record shouldn't be examined. There are many career choices she's made which are good, and many she's made which aren't. But perhaps we could look at those choices, rather than looking at who she dated. You know, as we would with a male candidate.

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