From: Lawrence Krauss[redacted]
Sent: 12/11/2017 5:18:30 PM
To: Peter Aldhous[redacted]
CC: matthew.schafer[redacted]
Subject: Re: URGENT: BuzzFeed News inquiry re allegations of sexual harassment
Attachments: image002.png

Importance: High

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

It is hard to know how to respond to a list of false and/or distorted allegations, along with misleading statements. I treat people I interact with with respect, and I work hard to support and mentor students, colleagues, and members of the general public, and this is supported by the institutions of which I am a part. I do not sexually harass people. If the purpose of your reporting is to somehow argue that Universities and other institutions are lax in dealing with well known individuals like myself, then in fact the situation is quite the opposite. My high public profile opens me up to more scrutiny at these institutions, not less, and it also opens me up to a host of unfounded outside complaints and allegations that other faculty do not receive, each of which the University has to respond to. The fact that I have remained a professor in all Universities with which I have been associated, in good standing, and also an officer or an invited speaker at organizations like CFI, which have strict harassment policies, is a confirmation of the fact that their experience validates a trust in my behavior. I was asked to be an honorary director of CFI, and continue to be invited to their last 3 meetings to speak, specifically because, as they have written me after the fact, the attendees universally appreciated my talks, my courtesy, and graciousness in spending time with the attendees. If the purpose of your report is to impugn my integrity or suggest I have a history of harassment, that too is false. As noted in one of your 'miscellaneous facts', as a scientist I try and remain skeptical, and rely on empirical evidence, rather than allegations and innuendo by people whose motives I cannot judge. I also try and judge the facts in context. The fact that Universities and other organizations employ me or have me on their boards, or invite me to meetings is because they value my contributions and my actions.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The allegations were made by an observer to the incident.
- The complaint did not identify, nor disclose the identity of the conference attendee who was allegedly touched in
an unwelcome 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 lunacy 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 <[redacted]> wrote:

Dr. Krauss:

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 — 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:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

Incident 2:

- 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 must be to have all the other physics majors asking her out on dates.
- 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. Then 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."
- 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 this 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:

- 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:

- 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:

- This incident allegedly occurred on in May 2011 on a CFI cruise. We understand that CFI staff were informed that you had propositioned 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:

- 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 chatting 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, bodychecking 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 your 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 facts:

- 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.

- 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 were 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
[redacted]

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