

Scene on Radio

More Than Paper Cuts (Men, Part 5)

<http://www.sceneonradio.org/episode-51-more-than-paper-cuts-men-part-5/>

John Biewen: Hey everybody, a content warning: this episode includes a description of a sexual assault.

John Biewen: Celeste, from our first conversations about collaborating on this project, I asked you if you would be willing to go there, to talk about your own #MeToo story.

Celeste Headlee: And I said I would. I just didn't want to make it the real reason that I'm here. It's not. I mean, I'm a journalist and radio host, author and speaker – that's who I am professionally. John Hockenberry and WNYC are just something that happened to me. Among other abuses that men have committed against me as a woman in my professional life. But the story matters, of course, and it's certainly relevant to what we're doing here.

[MUSIC]

John Biewen: You're Celeste Headlee.

Celeste Headlee: And you're John Biewen.

John Biewen: From the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University and PRX, this is *Scene on Radio*. Part 5 of our series, MEN.

Celeste Headlee: Exploring patriarchy, sexism, misogyny – male dominance. What it is, how it works in the real world, and what to do about it.

John Biewen: So, let's set this up. In December 2017, the writer Suki Kim wrote an article in *New York Magazine* about John Hockenberry. He was a respected public radio host who had recently “retired,” at age 61, from his job at WNYC, New York Public Radio, where he hosted the news and talk show, *The Takeaway*.

Celeste Headlee: That's right. Suki Kim was a guest on the show in 2014, she was there to talk about her book on North Korea. She reported that after that appearance, Hockenberry pursued her with sexually suggestive emails for about a year and a half. Because of that experience, Kim decided to interview a number of women who'd worked on *The Takeaway* over the previous decade, including me, to find out if her experience was unique or if other women had gone through something similar with John. It turned out, some women staffers *had* been sexually harassed by Hockenberry. And for a few of us, it was really a different kind of abuse.

When Suki called me and asked if I'd experienced abuse, I said yes. But I was talking about bullying. Constant abuse and harassment that was demeaning and undermining, but not sexual. I complained many times and worked my way through the chain of command at WNYC, but nothing

changed, except that I was sent to get training on how to work with a difficult person and still sound good on the air.

John Biewen: You were not the only co-host of John Hockenberry's who went through something like this.

Celeste Headlee: No, Suki kept digging into this story and discovered that all three African-American co-hosts on the show had the same problems with John... abuse, harassment, and constant bullying. John's first partner, journalist Adaora Udoji said he would constantly yell and scream at her in the studio, even when senior staff was present. John told Farai Chideya she shouldn't stay there as a diversity hire and then advised her to lose some weight. I lasted the longest – that was three years -- and John constantly cut me off, talked over me, took stories from me for himself. Every day was exhausting, just sitting a few feet away from someone who screamed and ranted and insulted and demeaned me on a pretty regular basis. Those were three of the hardest years of my life, particularly because the institution that was supposed to protect me was actually protecting my abuser and paying him almost double what I was making for the exact same job.

And remember, *The Takeaway* was a show that was created in order to reach more diverse audiences who tended not to listen to public radio. It was intended to include more people of color. And in the end, three women of color were bullied out of their jobs and the person who ended up hosting the show alone was an older white male.

John Biewen: WNYC hired an outside legal firm to investigate claims of misconduct on the part of not just Hockenberry, but also two other men on staff. The investigation found a pattern of abuse going back years but also found management was not to blame. John Hockenberry's response was this, this is a statement he put out, quote: "It horrifies me that I made the talented and driven people I worked with feel uncomfortable, and that the stress around putting together a great show was made worse by my behavior. Having to deal with my own physical limitations has given me an understanding of powerlessness" – an aside, John uses a wheelchair. He's paralyzed...

Celeste Headlee: From the chest down.

John Biewen: "...and I should have been more aware of how the power I wielded over others, coupled with inappropriate comments and communications, could be construed. I have no excuses." WNYC issued a statement that included this: "We have committed to providing more training for employees, including managers, hosts and other persons in authority, and more support for those who come forward. This may also mean more severe and immediate consequences for misconduct than was the norm in American workplaces a year ago."

Celeste Headlee: That's a pretty telling statement, right? How much changed in one year's time.

John Biewen: Yeah. And I understand this was not the first or only time that you, Celeste, faced abuse from a powerful man in a professional situation.

Celeste Headlee: No. I mean, I'm a female journalist, I've been assigned arts and culture stories while all the stories on the military went to men. I've interviewed men who made very overt passes at me, sometimes using explicit language. I had a boss who used to make jokes about the size of my chest. I mean the list – we could spend the rest of the time talking about that.

John Biewen: Well, and judging from what I see too on social media from women journalists in general even including what happens on social media – wow, it's rough. It's rough out there.

Celeste Headlee: Yeah sadly it just becomes part of your job.

John Biewen: Among your many talents and livelihoods, you're an opera singer.

Celeste Headlee: That's true, and one of the directors I worked with in the opera world just retired after allegations of sexual misconduct. He would sexually harass me very blatantly, during rehearsal, in a room filled with people, and it was humiliating. He invited me back to his hotel room, he told me he'd brought a selection of sex toys with him overseas. When I said I had a boyfriend, he said bring him along.

... But you know, there's a reason that the hashtag is me too. That's because most women have a story like this in their history. Most women have felt diminished and humiliated by a manager at some point. It was horrifying when all these stories began to emerge, but also a little comforting to know that I was not alone. When the silence was broken, it was like the bursting open of a release valve and a flood of stories about abuse on the job.

John Biewen: You know, if we think about the deeper roots of this problem, of men abusing women on the job: Remember what we heard in the first episodes of this series, from anthropologists, about public and private spaces, and the patriarchy's long history of excluding women from public spaces – including a lot of professional settings.

Celeste Headlee: Yes, but to be precise about it, historically women were excluded from most jobs, not most workplaces. Men have wanted and needed women to work alongside them, but they wanted them working in subordinate, supportive roles, helping and serving the men. So, secretary, clerk, assistant this or that.

John Biewen: With less power, and sort of there at the man's disposal. To serve the man in some way. For centuries, the doctor was almost always a man, the nurse a woman. To this day, more than 90% of airline pilots are dudes, the majority of flight attendants are women. On and on.

Celeste Headlee: Things have changed a lot in a fairly short time. In the 1960s, Congress passed laws banning discrimination in hiring or wages based on gender (as well as race). In the 1970s, it became illegal to discriminate against women because they were pregnant. The term “sexual harassment” was coined in the 1970s, and in 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court declared sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination.

John Biewen: Those legal changes didn’t end the problems, obviously, but until a generation or two ago, it’s almost hard to imagine this now, women didn’t even have that leverage. There weren’t even any laws they could appeal to, to seek relief if they were discriminated against or harassed. So, there’s progress.

Celeste Headlee: Today, women make up half of the college-educated workforce, and earn the majority of four-year and advanced degrees. Women have become astronauts, Supreme Court Justices, CEOs, and almost (almost) president of the United States. But we still have a long way to go, not just in terms of sexual harassment and hiring and promotions, but also in terms of pay. Personally, it wasn’t until 2012 that I was finally making the same pay as other men in my job description.

[MUSIC]

John Biewen: In this episode, reported for us by producer Ibby Caputo, a broad look, a kind of status report, on the experiences of women on the job. The #MeToo Movement is shining an urgent light on sexual harassment

and abuse in certain kinds of professional settings, especially media, politics, and entertainment.

Celeste Headlee: Ibbly spoke with women about sexual harassment, but also about more subtle kinds of discrimination, and more violent abuses. And she goes beyond the sorts of workplaces we've been hearing about through the #MeToo Movement so far – to occupations where women are often Black or brown, and they're especially vulnerable.

John Biewen: We'll have more to say on the other side. Here's Ibbly Caputo.

Ibbly Caputo: When I was a teenager, this was the theme song of one of my favorite movies.

[Fade up soundtrack]

Ibbly Caputo: *Working Girl*. It's the 1988 Oscar-nominated story of a secretary from Staten Island whose bright idea is stolen by her boss, a privileged 29-year-old who lives in her parents' Manhattan brownstone. The secretary then steals the idea back, and lands a deal by pretending to be her boss. I loved this chick flick because my mom loved it, because Harrison Ford was in it, and he was so cute. But I recently watched it again, and it made me cringe.

The boss is played by Sigourney Weaver. Her character is the one-dimensional villain, heartless, ambitious, conniving. Here's where she gets her comeuppance.

[Movie audio]

Boss: Warren this is a simple misunderstanding, and I... You cannot—

Warren: —I can and I will. Now get your... What did you call it?

Harrison and Melanie Griffith: Bony Ass

Warren: —Bony ass out of my sight.

Ibby Caputo: Ouch. She's definitely not the woman we're supposed to emulate. The heroine of the story is the underdog, the secretary Melanie Griffith. She's soft and sexy and childlike at times. Here she's rewarded after her boss is given the boot.

[Movie audio]

Warren: You've got a real fire in your belly, or was this just a one-time stunt that you pulled?

Griffith: I'm not sure what you mean. I've got something in my belly but I think it's nervous knots.

Warren: I mean are you willing to go out on that limb every day, working for me, legitimately?

Griffith: Yes sir.

Warren: Have to be right at the entry level, any problem with that?

Griffith: No sir.

Warren: Gumption Miss McGill.

Griffith: Yes sir. *(laughs)*

Warren: See you tomorrow.

Griffith: Okay.

Ibby Caputo: Okay. So I wasn't hip to the message when I watched this blockbuster on VHS. But it's pretty clear to me now. Be soft, don't be assertive, and if you want to get ahead, you've got to pit yourself against other women... and potentially sleep with your new business partner, who used to be your boss's boyfriend. Resources are scarce, ladies, men and careers.

Hannah Riley Bowles: It's very zero sum the way they set it up. There's only so many slots for women and what kind of woman who's going to take that particular slot.

Ibby Caputo: That's Hannah Riley Bowles, co-director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. I asked her to watch the movie, and she did so while working out on her treadmill.

Hannah Riley Bowles: It was not easy to discipline myself to watch this, I'll be candid with you, because there's so much I don't want to watch, and you're in this tension... because of the charm you feel like you're being cranky really disliking it, but there was a lot of it that was, ugh.

Ibby Caputo: Bowles studies how gender influences pay negotiations.

Hannah Riley Bowles: One thing that stuck out to made me as particularly sad candidly watching it was the queen bee image, the queen bee role that Sigourney Weaver plays.

Ibby Caputo: The Queen Bee is both an archetype and a phenomenon studied by sociologists, where a woman in power doesn't help other women rise in the ranks, and sometimes works to hinder their success.

Hannah Riley Bowles: We're all going to cheer when the queen bee gets toppled. But it's also suggesting that a woman who's really competent but not nice should deserve at some point to get pushed out and what a lot of the research shows is we don't hold men to that same standard.

Ibby Caputo: Bowles points to certain behaviors women and men both engage in, like asking for higher pay.

Hannah Riley Bowles: What we've found in the studies, is actually both men and women look less likable and more demanding when they do this, but it only affected the willingness to work with the women.

Ibby Caputo: It's as if there's this likability tax for women.

Hannah Riley Bowles: It's the old adage with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers - she did everything Fred did but backwards and in high heels... The problem for a lot of women who are trying to make their way in male dominated environments is that it's hard to always be sugar and spice and

everything nice because you need to be tough as well as competent at certain moments.

Ibby Caputo: And in those moments, you might be violating someone's subconscious idea of how a woman should and shouldn't act. Now, the ways women are *supposed* to act aren't universal. The stereotypes in *Working Girl* largely refer to the pigeon holes white heterosexual women fall into. The stereotypes can shift when you bring in race and ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender presentation. Bowles says there's not a lot of research on how these identities intersect with gender norms in the workplace, but one thing is clear. There's a narrow window of socially acceptable behavior for all women, and this puts many working women in a bind.

[MUSIC]

Kelly Lanspa: I remember, like really wanting to be successful.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly Lanspa works in tech in Silicon Valley.

Kelly Lanspa: But I remember thinking and telling my ex-husband, I don't know what's wrong with me, I feel like a square peg in a round hole. I just feel like I don't belong here. I don't know, is it me? I don't understand. I kept blaming myself for not fitting in, but I don't think it was me.

Ibby Caputo: I don't think it was Kelly either. She laid out her nearly 30-year career for me, not by telling me about each rung on the ladder to

success, but instead by describing all the times she experienced gender discrimination and sexual harassment.

Kelly Lanspa: I think it was the definition of how a woman is supposed to be and I think people being uncomfortable with a woman being direct, forceful, tenacious, but also you know, being pretty, or attractive, or bubbly and friendly. And you know they can't put those, women can't be both.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly's in her early 50's. She says the sexist behavior started with her very first job in tech where senior management referred to the women in the office as the "stable."

Kelly Lanspa: As in a stable of horses, female horses. Mares.

Ibby Caputo: Not long after that, Kelly decided she wouldn't work in what she called the velvet ghetto. It's also been called the pink ghetto. It refers to departments filled mostly with women, like human resources and public relations. Kelly says she realize that in tech, the closer you are to engineering, the better off you are.

Kelly Lanspa: I made a conscious decision to move towards the more technical marketing, because I didn't want to be in that velvet ghetto, there were mostly women there, that's where women would move up in management, but the salaries weren't there and they were laid off, they were seen as less critical, more expendable.

Ibby Caputo: But Kelly's decision to pivot her career towards more stability and money meant she was often the only woman around.

Kelly Lanspa: You'd stick out like a sore thumb, and it would be quite obvious that they just felt very uncomfortable with you.

Ibby Caputo: That discomfort would come out in all sorts of ways. There was the time when her supervisor would only talk to her with the door to his office open, even though he shut the door when he talked with her male colleagues.

Kelly Lanspa: He would get up and open the door, and we would play this game of open the door, shut the door, open the door, shut the door. And then finally he said, I can't have you saying something about me, I don't trust you, insinuating that I would leap over the desk and make some sort of pass at him. So you know, that impacted our discussions, that impacted the quality of feedback that I'd get, the candidness, and all of our conversations were public.

Ibby Caputo: Then there was the time a boss gave her some really good advice.

Kelly Lanspa: He thought he was being really helpful, you know, he was trying to do it from a good place, but he told me, Kelly, I've worked with one other woman in management and what made her really successful is she didn't really force her ideas, she just put the ideas out there and let

everybody in the group, primarily men, just let everybody think it's their idea, and then they'd come around to it.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly remembers thinking to herself, what does that even mean?

Kelly Lanspa: That part of your personality, the part that makes you successful, tenacious, you know driving forward and creative, we want you to dial that back ... so that there's no challenging of their egos or anything, you just suggest them gently. You don't own them, you don't get passionate about it, or strident, is the word I've often heard in my career. Don't be so strident.

Ibby Caputo: Strident, of course, is one of those negative words used to describe women who bend or break or somehow violate the deep-rooted stereotypes of how a woman should behave. Other popular choices include pushy, bossy, shrill, abrasive, *emotional*. Kelly says over the years she's asked her male colleagues if they've ever been called strident.

Kelly Lanspa: And they were like, what? No.

Ibby Caputo: There was one company she worked at where the men would fly business class and take limos to the airport, while Kelly would scramble to get a ride, because no one had told her about those perks. That was also the place where a male colleague just ... didn't want to work with her.

Kelly Lanspa: I remember asking him numerous times for some information about his product that I could put into my product datasheet, and he would just ignore me, I think just intentionally hoping I would fail. And so I had gone over into his – stepped not quite into his cube but right outside the door of it and politely asked him, can I get this information, and this one time he stood up and walked over to me and chest-butted me out of the way.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly withheld the names of the tech companies where she worked. She says Silicon Valley is a *small* valley, and she's concerned about retribution. She says part of her is so angry she wants to call out the people who hurt her. She fantasizes about logging on to Facebook and outing them to their wives and daughters, but she doesn't, she says, because it would be ugly.

Ibby Caputo: Besides, she says, she was young back then, and she grew up Catholic and was taught to respect authority.

Kelly Lanspa: And I thought, well, I need to toughen up, that's how the business world is done and if I want to be accepted as an equal and I want to compete, you know, I picked a competitive industry, there were a lot of men in it, but I felt like, I just need to put my big girl panties on and just deal with it.

Ibby Caputo: That idea that you need to toughen up because that's just how the business world is, reflects an aspect of workplace culture that's been studied and has a name. It's called ... the masculinity contest. Peter

Glick is a professor at Lawrence University and here he is talking about it in an online video posted last year by Harvard Business School.

Peter Glick: In the context of organizations, the masculinity contest is viewing work as a dominance contest, that you win through performing masculinity. So it creates a set of norms and we've measured these norms within organizations, so the norms have to do with things like showing no weakness, so being the tough guy, not asking questions because that might make you seem like you don't know the answer.

Ibby Caputo: Also valuing strength and stamina, and putting work first, ahead of family responsibilities. Glick says this work-as-manly-competition creates all sorts of negative consequences. There are a few winners, but a lot more losers, and it creates organizational dysfunction.

Peter Glick: For instance people who said, 'in my work environment, it has these aspects of things we call the masculinity contest, they were much more likely to report that their immediate supervisor was a toxic leader, they were much more likely to report that the environment includes bullying, gender harassment, sexual harassment, ethnic harassment. And then at the personal level, personal outcomes, they were reporting higher job burn out, less organizational dedication, more of an intention to leave in the next three years, and lower psychological health.

Ibby Caputo: It doesn't sound like a fun place to work. But that's what Kelly Lanspa was dealing with as a woman in tech.

[BREAK]

Ibby Caputo: Plenty has been written about the tech industry's bro culture, but I talked with lots of women, from a variety of industries. Journalists and academics, women who worked in government and on farms, in restaurants and in retail. They had stories to tell too.

[MONTAGE OF WOMEN'S VOICES:]

Imani: For two years I worked at the same pay grade as the person that I supervised.

Kirsten: But what ended up happening is two of the members of city council said, 'oh no, Kirsten can't have that job, because she's a mom with kids.'

Eva: It's like it's not like the groping that was so terrible, it was the years and years and years of like very insidious undermining and demoralizing that happened and all of that.

Erin: That was when I realized, like they're not used to women who speak. (Laughs) You know, they're not used to women who will speak and own the floor for more than a minute, or women that don't just, you know, smile and nod.

Shelley: And I'm like really? Like you literally didn't even hear me.

Megan: And he basically just talked at me for the next half hour or so and he eventually said, um, 'you know you're a woman and a lot of women have problems with men, do you have a problem with men?' and I said no, and you know I should mention that I'm gay and I look very, very visibly gay and that was clearly a homophobic comment.

Anonymous: There's no true way, I don't think, to know if someone is racist or treating me differently because of my color or because of my gender, unless I suppose they say something explicit.

Shelley: Why would my boss at the bike shop think, let's pay Shelley way less. The guys are worth more. I've never missed a day of work. I hold the keys to the shop. I do my work faster than anybody. Why on earth would they get paid more. There's just no answer except for a silent agreement that exists out there that we haven't yet touched.

Imani: I can only suspect that it's because he's a man and I'm a woman.

Megan: And he slammed his fists down on the table and he said fine, and he stormed out of the room.

Erin: I believed talking to the company lawyer (laughs) would help me somehow, I mean I should have just gotten my own damn lawyer and had them give me advice.

Megan: And so then we sat there for I think about an hour and a half where they bullied me into dropping the grievance. And so as a result, you know, I then left the organization like so many women had before me.

Ibby Caputo: And here's one of my stories:

At one place I worked, a public radio station in a big city, the man who was hired as my editor, and promoted to news director, had been named in a sexual harassment and retaliation claim that resulted in a settlement at a previous job. When I first complained about being bullied by that editor, I was told that I read too much into things. Eventually, I was assigned a new editor, but the damage was already done. I was so demoralized I could hardly speak in meetings. I left that job soon after.

Meg Bond: But usually a woman in that situation just simply feels crazy. You really have to find someplace where you can feel like you're, like I said, not crazy and that you really understand and see clearly what is happening to you ... if it doesn't feel right then probably something is amiss.

Ibby Caputo: Meg Bond is a professor of psychology and the director of the Center for Women and Work at UMASS Lowell. She's been studying sexual harassment and gender discrimination since the 1980s. She tells me that's how she coped with seeing discrimination in her own industry.

Meg Bond: So one of the things I've been trying to encourage people to do is focus on what sometimes people refer to as micro-aggressions or subtle bias because allowing those to happen, really that's the environment within which the more blatant harassment grows.

Ibby Caputo: When Meg Bond says this, it feels like an epiphany. All of the "small" things – the paper cuts, the things we pretend to laugh off or bear because that's just how things are – those small things are intimately connected with the more egregious abuses by the Harvey Weinstens, the Matt Lauers, the John Hockenberrys.

Meg Bond: I wouldn't necessarily say that the big stuff comes from the little stuff, but rather that the little stuff really creates the kind of organizational culture where the big stuff is likely to happen. It's not inevitable but it's very common that where the major events happen is where it's communicated that these teasing - quote unquote - teasing is okay.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly Lanspa, the tech professional we heard from earlier, didn't only experience *teasing*. She dealt with more blatant forms of harassment too. A supervisor who announced in front of colleagues that he wanted to fuck her. Another boss at a different company who not only removed her name from a set of slides and presented them as his own, but forced a kiss on her when they were alone in a car, and groped her while she was sleeping on an airplane.

Kelly Lanspa: I pushed his hand away and pulled the blanket up and just tried to imagine it going away. ... I don't know, you know it was hard to, I had never thought about moving. I just didn't think it was an option, I just wanted to will it to go away. I thought if I, I thought if I didn't think about it and just put myself in my own little bubble it would just disappear and I would get through it.

Ibby Caputo: Kelly did report this boss to his supervisor, but they were drinking buddies.

Kelly Lanspa: He told me, Well, we really like Greg. He's such a nice guy, he's so much fun! And then he told me, "let me just handle it." So stupidly I didn't report it to HR

Ibby Caputo: Kelly says it didn't help that it was an international company with a weak Human Resources department. To deal with the more explicit forms of sexual harassment, Kelly says she would try to control her own behavior. She wore her hair short, dressed in professional suits, never

wore anything revealing. She said the sexual harassment was tiresome and obnoxious, but it was the more subtle forms of discrimination, the belittling and the constant reminders that she didn't belong and couldn't measure up to the men, that, she says, ate at her soul.

Kelly Lanspa: I look back now, I can see a pattern. I put on weight, I was getting, I'd never been an anxious person but I was getting more and more anxious, sleep was getting, I was grinding my teeth, wearing them down so bad that my dentist to this day every time I go to a check-up, he says your teeth are so worn down, you have so many nodules in your mouth, do you have a stressful job? And I can look back now and I can see the pattern of it slowly building building building, but then I'd have little – like I'd get promoted, and I'd feel like okay it's worth it. I'm succeeding, okay I'm making it in this world, so it'd be an up and down thing.”

[MUSIC]

Ibby Caputo: Kelly didn't sue the company or the supervisor who groped her, but she did eventually file and settle a claim against a different company, for different abuses.

In 2015, The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission created a Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace. The resulting report states that people who are harassed at work generally respond by avoiding the harasser, denying or downplaying the gravity of the situation, or attempting to ignore, forget, or endure the behavior. The

least common response is to take some formal action, either reporting it internally or filing a formal legal complaint.

In fact, roughly three out of four individuals who experience harassment never even talk to a supervisor, manager or union rep about it.

Why?

The EEOC report says it's because employees fear their claim won't be believed and nothing will be done – or worse. They'll be blamed or face social and professional retaliation.

Meg Bond was one of the 16 members of the EEOC's Task Force.

Meg Bond: You certainly are going to lose friends within your own workplace and you'll always worry you're going to hurt your reputation outside of your immediate workplace. So organizations where they say, 'well, nobody is reporting anything,' it just means people are too uncomfortable or feel too unsafe to report it, because even in the best organizations this happens.

Ibby Caputo: It happens, and yet in the not-so-distant past, it seemed like no one was talking about it. I remember feeling duped when I figured out what it's like in the workplace. That a woman can be just as smart and capable as a man, but often, he gets ahead while she's busy jumping through all these extra hoops. Once you start to see it, you see it everywhere.

Meg Bond: That is the magic of the Me Too movement, is that women are starting to realize, oh, we don't have to accept this. The Me Too movement didn't really unearth something that many of us weren't aware is already there, how rampant it is, because it is so part of our culture that women have been devalued for a long time and most of us have been socialized to say, 'well that's the way the world is' and we figure out how to navigate. But the Me Too movement has got it out there in the media that we don't really have to tolerate this.

Ibby Caputo: We don't.

The Center for Women in Work at UMASS Lowell – the school where Meg Bond teaches – recently received a 3.5-million-dollar, 5-year grant from the National Science Foundation to reduce biases against women in science, technology, engineering and math. Bond is the lead on that grant, and she says the university is using that money to raise awareness about micro-aggressions through speakers and installations, and it's investigating how subtle biases seep into decisions about tenure and hiring.

Meg Bond: We don't really care what's going on in your head, we care about the impact of what you're doing and saying. And it can come from the best intentions ever, but if it's making people around you, whether it's women, people of color, uncomfortable or feeling marginalized, you have to look at it and you need to think about changing it. So you can actually, I believe, start from the assumption that people are well intended. They don't get up in the morning and say, "I want to treat women horribly today," but

they haven't necessarily stopped and been held accountable for the impact of what they do, and that is often to marginalize.

Ibby Caputo: Bond says UMASS Lowell is also implementing bystander training.

Meg Bond: Really it's essentially moving the responsibility for addressing these issues to everybody, that it's a shared responsibility, it's not just HR, it's not just management – it is all of those. But also developing the skill set for colleagues up and down the organizational hierarchy to be able to see these kinds of subtle biases and to understand how they can intervene to try to either lessen the impact or change the transgressor, or change the work environment in a broader way, to make it less likely.

Ibby Caputo: Those are the sorts of institutional changes that can be sought after with a 3.5-million dollar grant. But what about all the other workplaces, especially the ones with little incentive to change? Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin, only applies to workplaces with 15 or more employees. That means a lot of workers aren't even protected by the federal law.

In that report on sexual harassment I mentioned before, the EEOC included a chart of risk factors for harassment. A lot of them are known, including: a lack of diversity in the workplace, a reliance on customer service -- think: restaurant work, and other work for tips. And when workers are isolated like they often are in hotel and farm work.

Mily Trevino-Sauceda: All along we worked in areas that were very far away.

Ibby Caputo: Mily Trevino-Sauceda is the co-founder and vice president of la Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, the National Farmworker Women's Alliance. When Mily was 8 years old, she started working with her brothers and their mother, in potato, alfalfa, and wheat fields in Blackfoot, Idaho. She did this before and after school. When she was a teenager in the 1970s, her family moved to California. That's when she started getting harassed by the tractor driver while picking oranges and grapefruits. To protect herself, she'd challenge her brother to a competition, to see who could fill the citrus bags faster, just so he would stay near her. She never let on to her brother that he was actually protecting her.

Mily Trevino-Sauceda: I was always afraid to be blamed..... um ... *(crying)* hold on for a second. I'm fine, just remembering. ... I didn't know what was going to happen to me, I didn't want to even go to the restroom, I didn't want to do anything, or find water during the day.

Ibby Caputo: Doing those things would mean she'd be by herself, and that would be dangerous. A 2010 study by a researcher at the University of California Santa Cruz found that the majority of women farmworkers surveyed had been sexually harassed on the job. Mily says a lot of women farmworkers deal with sexual violence as well.

Mily Trevino-Sauceda: This is why every time a woman comes to us, or comes to me directly, I always, always believe. That all this is happening and it's worse for many of them, because they have been raped.

Ibby Caputo: Mily says the person who often knows the most about a farmworker is the crew leader, who usually does the recruiting and sometimes has a working relationship with labor traffickers. That makes women – especially undocumented women – particularly vulnerable to abuse.

Mily Trevino-Sauceda: The first thing they say, they know they're undocumented ... they are going to be threatening them, they are going to be telling them, I know where you live, I can call immigration on you. ... or if you don't do what I say then you are going to be fired, and many of the people that are undocumented, the first thing that they have to do when they arrive in the United States is pay a large debt for paying people to cross them over the border.

Ibby Caputo: In November of 2017, a few weeks after the Harvey Weinstein revelations, la Alianza Nacional de Campesinas published an open letter in *Time Magazine*. It was written on behalf of 700,000 women farmworkers who say they stand in solidarity with their Hollywood sisters. The president of la Alianza, Monica Ramirez, penned the letter. Here she is reading a portion of it:

Monica Ramirez: We do not work under bright stage lights or on the big screen. We work in the shadows of society in isolated fields and packing

houses that are out of sight and out of mind for most people in this country. Your job feeds souls, fills hearts, and spreads joy. Our job nourishes the nation with the fruits, vegetables and other crops that we plant, pick and pack.

Ibby Caputo: The letter helped spark Hollywood's Time's Up movement, and its legal defense fund, to support lower-income women in their fight against sexual harassment. Ramirez was even invited to the Golden Globes as actress Laura Dern's date.

[MUSIC]

This is an important time. Women are telling their stories, not just to each other in so-called whisper networks, but out loud, in the space created by social media. We are telling our stories and we are being heard and believed.

Linda: (In Spanish) No, it's okay. I've never told this story, not even to my family.

VOICEOVER

Ibby Caputo: Linda has harvested a lot of the foods we all buy in the produce section of the grocery store: grapes, carrots, corn, lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, artichokes, asparagus. Spices like cilantro, oregano and parsley. In the offseason she's cleaned houses in the Coachella Valley. Linda is not her real name.

She says she can't remember if it was a supervisor or crew leader or the owner of a ranch who invited her and her sister-in-law to a restaurant to talk about a promotion.

Linda: (In Spanish) They were telling us they were going to give us more work and position. They said, 'you're not going to work as packers anymore, now you'll be the assistant to the supervisor,' or something like that.

VOICEOVER

Ibby Caputo: Linda and her sister-in-law had driven together in a car, but the men convinced them to split up. They asked Linda to drive one of the men home, and her sister-in-law would ride with the other man.

Linda: (In Spanish) And I thought, well yes, I can give him a ride. ... Well, when we were on our way to his house, he started to try to abuse me, or rather touch me, and tell me things that I didn't like to hear. And I was telling him that I didn't come here for that kind of thing.

VOICEOVER

Ibby Caputo: The man wouldn't tell her where he lived. He kept directing her to deserted places.

Linda: (In Spanish) And I would tell him, 'if you don't tell me where you live, I'm going to drop you off right there and you can figure out

how you get to your house because I'm going to drop you off right here.'

VOICEOVER

Ibby Caputo: Linda says the man could tell she was angry, and he said I'm sorry, I won't mess with you anymore, but then he told her where he lived. Linda knows the Coachella Valley well, and she knew that where he was telling her to drive to was dark and isolated, far from the city, a place of ranches and fields. He asked her, Why are you scared?

Linda: (In Spanish) And I said, 'you're not interested in whether I'm scared or if I'm not scared. That doesn't interest you. So get out of here or I'll ask someone nearby for help,' because I stopped in an area where there were houses and lights. It was late, already past eleven, but there were a lot of people and cars moving around. I said, 'I'm going to stop any person here if you don't get out of the car.' And he lunged himself on me. He wanted to take me by force and *(crying)*...

VOICEOVER

Ibby Caputo: Linda has kept this a secret for twenty years. She didn't even tell her sister-in-law when she found out a similar thing happened to her. Linda says she still feels guilty.

Linda: (In Spanish) I still do, because I went with him. It was my decision to take him or not.

Ibby Caputo: She knows what happened is not actually her fault. Linda says she never told her story before now because she was afraid she wouldn't be believed. But now she knows she's not alone. And she wants others to know that, too.

[MUSIC]

John Biewen: Ibby Caputo. This is John and Celeste – we're back.

Celeste Headlee: You know, it's really easy to hear stories about awful things that happen to other people and say we would have behaved differently in that situation. So it's no surprise to me that Linda still feels an illogical sense of responsibility and guilt. But honestly, we're talking about women who are totally at the mercy of their supervisors. They work for very low wages, they're living paycheck to paycheck with no savings. So their willingness to tell their story, it just stuns me. That takes incredible courage.

John Biewen: A lot of women in those jobs are poor when they take the job, and they're still poor even though they're working. They're doing that work because they don't have better options to support their families. We need to state the obvious, that abuse and harassment in the workplace is a man problem – men do it to women, by and large, and sometimes men harass men. It's not unheard of for women to be the harassers, but it's rare, very rare, by comparison. We men need to be better, to just stop doing this crap.

Celeste Headlee: But we can't wait for that. Convincing all men to be better and rooting out all the abusers is a long-term project – it's one we'll talk more about later in the MEN series. But we need to find ways to protect women now, especially women in those low-wage industries.

John Biewen: I looked up a few numbers. One study found that about half of women who work in the restaurant business, and forty percent of those in fast food, reported facing scary or unwanted sexual behavior on the job. A similar 42-percent said they didn't feel they could report these behaviors because they couldn't afford to lose their jobs.

Celeste Headlee: This is such a huge problem ... we don't even know what to do about it – how to create conditions where women can speak up. #MeToo has created some momentum in that direction *in a few industries*, but it's still just a beginning.

John Biewen: So all those laws that we listed at the top of the episode, laws against discrimination and sexual harassment passed a generation or two ago, they aren't much good when women don't feel they can report abuses and hold men accountable.

Celeste Headlee: Some people might say, these women just need to muster the courage to speak up when they're harassed or abused. But it's no mystery why so many don't do that. A large majority of women who report harassment are retaliated against. They're often just not believed. And unlike, say, a well-paid female host at Fox News being harassed by Bill O'Reilly, most women can't afford to hire a lawyer to advocate for them.

I'm a textbook case of speaking up and seeing no action taken against the abuser, and then even losing my own job later.

John Biewen: So, what to do. Experts who think about these things say there are changes in laws that would help give women more leverage – for example, changing that statute in the Civil Rights Act that Ibbey talked about, that excludes employees of small businesses from the law's protection. Just recently a union in California negotiated an agreement for hotel workers, ensuring that the hotels provide housekeepers with panic buttons, to call for help if they're assaulted by a hotel guest. But some advocates say what it'll really take is something bigger and broader: to make women in these lower-wage jobs less vulnerable, financially. Raise the minimum wage, provide universal health coverage...

Celeste Headlee: Right. Create conditions in which women – and workers of every gender – can afford to take on their employers, or simply leave their jobs if they have to, and not face complete destitution or homelessness.

[MUSIC]

Celeste Headlee: John, since #MeToo blew up, quite a few men have engaged in hand-wringing, saying they don't know how to act anymore with the women they work with, given the heightened sensitivity to harassment and unwanted attention. Are you having this problem?

John Biewen: I'm not. At the risk of sounding, you know, more feminist than the next guy. I tend to kind of roll my eyes when I see that reaction, "Come on, guys." But let's take a minute and not just dismiss these concerns off-hand. To start with the more egregious abuses. It's not hard to not sexually assault or harass people you work with, I would submit. Just don't do those things.

Celeste Headlee: Don't grope your co-workers. Don't show them your junk, either in person or via text message. Or Twitter. Don't ask them to sleep with you.

John Biewen: Rules to live by.

Celeste Headlee: But, to be fair, you're a happily married guy. You're not trying to find romance at work.

John Biewen: This is true. So, for people who are, some guys are saying that feels trickier now. If you are interested in someone at your job, how do you show that without being *that guy*, the creepy dude making unwanted advances.

Celeste Headlee: Is it really that complicated?

John Biewen: I agree. But for those who aren't clear about it, tell you what, how about I try to lay out some simple guidelines and you tell me how I'm doing, OK?

Celeste Headlee: That's a good idea.

John Biewen: So, let's say, for the sake of argument, that you're a guy and there's a woman you find attractive at your job. When it feels right, approach her in a respectful, appropriate way. Ask her if she'd like to have coffee sometime.

Celeste Headlee: Coffee is safe.

John Biewen: Then, from the time of that invitation through anything that may or may not happen from that moment on, cheerfully and gracefully take no for an answer. If she's not interested in you, or if she ever stops being interested in you or in something you want to do with her or to her, accept it, move on, and be nice and be a grownup. Treat her the same way you would like to be treated if someone were making unwanted overtures to you. How's that?

Celeste Headlee: That's pretty good. Most importantly, listen to her.

John Biewen: Yes, and I would add, by the way, so this is how to not be The Guy, but I think we really, we also need to change the culture of enabling. The whole culture of the silent guys who are not doing this stuff, but stand by when we see it in our workplaces. We gotta start speaking up, because that's really what it's gonna take. The culture needs to change overall.

Celeste Headlee: The thing is, we have to get over this ridiculously outdated idea that the workplace is somehow yours and we women are intruding on it. Or that we're there to serve or to please you, sexually or otherwise.

John Biewen: Wait. You're telling me women have jobs for the same reasons men do? To do your work and pay your bills?

Celeste Headlee: Yeah we gotta pay some bills. Maybe someday we'll all do that together, on equal footing, with everyone treated with respect. And for that matter, minus the masculinity contest.

John Biewen: That just might be good for everybody.

[MUSIC]

John Biewen: Next time, in Part Six: One very particular professional setting: The military. What it means to be a warrior ... for men, and women.

Celeste Headlee: Thanks to Ibbey Caputo for reporting this episode. Editorial help on the MEN series from John Barth.

John Biewen: Music by Alex Weston, and by Evgueni and Sacha Galperine. Music and production help from Joe Augustine of Narrative Music. Voiceover this time by Ruxandra Guidi.

Celeste Headlee: You can find transcripts and other info about the show at sceneonradio.org. *Scene on Radio* is a production of the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, and PRX.