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# Sexual aggression: why are artists and politicians untouchable?

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Lise Bouvet is a philosopher, Yaël Mellul is a lawyer and president of the association Femme & Libre. These two specialists in violence against women, publish "Untouchables? People, justice and impunity ". An illuminating investigation into the media treatment of Polanski, Cantat, DSK, Tron.

**MC: You've read hundreds of newspaper articles about these cases. Too often we find this inversion that puts the aggressors for victims, including Roman Polanski ...**



Yes, Roman Polanski, listening to his supporters, is a political refugee persecuted by American justice. He pleaded guilty to the prosecutor right after the fact. Then he was incarcerated in California in what is called a prison-hospital, two months during which he was examined by psychiatrists. And the day before the hearing, when his sentence was to be fixed by the prosecution, he fled for fear of going to jail. From that day, in the eyes of the law, this individual was and continues to be a fugitive. He only served a two-month sentence in pre-trial. For a crime admitted even during a procedure to plead guilty, it is well below the sentence incurred for a rape.

**MC: You speak of a caste defended by the establishment and rarely by public opinion.**

We are talking here about pedocriminality. If we were dealing with another Roman, from a disadvantaged social background who confessed to a crime on a minor, then accused by five other young girls, he would go directly to prison. There would be no BHL and Finkielkraut to mobilize and launch a petition. In fact, its defenders defend their caste, their impunity, and their manners. This is the title of our book "Untouchables". For them, Roman Polanski is not a citizen and a litigant like the others, he is above the law.

**MC: Artists have a special status in France that would explain their impunity?**

Yes, here the world of art is very elitist. In the United States, the Weinstein affair is possible because Hollywood is considered to be a cultural industry. Americans say "Hollywood is like Reebok, you are an industry like any other, you have to apply sexual harassment laws like any other." We have a vision of romantic and outmoded art, of the creator as a God. The underlying reasoning is that a man with exceptional talent should have exceptional status. We are under the old regime. Art also enjoys great impunity because the place of women is still very archaic. Very few artists are put forward, and very few women run cultural institutions.

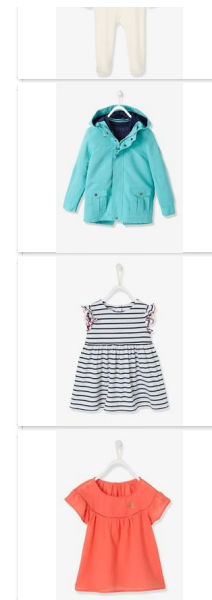
**MC: How do you explain Bertrand Cantat's defense?**

This is the classic strategy of the violent man: from the moment he is in the denial of his act, it must necessarily be blamed on the other. It was said of Marie Trintignant that she was hysterical, drugged, alcoholic, had several husbands. Added to this is the concept of the crime of passion "I killed her because I loved her". What is fascinating about Bertrand Cantat is that he never stopped saying it despite his 4 years of imprisonment supposed to make him think about the gravity of his act. In his Inrocks river interview (October 2017), he continues to talk about love for Mary. Years later, at the very moment of the release of his first album, we are beyond indecency, it is a provocative act.

**MC: The Minister of Culture, Françoise Nyssen said "he paid, justice has decided, he also has the right to continue living".**

The fact of having served your sentence does not have the magic power to erase the crime. We can not forget, it's impossible. It is he who takes the risk of coming to us, exposing himself to the public, if he stayed in his corner, we would not open it. It exposes us so we also have the right to say that what it does is immoral.

**MC: You have reopened the Krisztina Radvai affair and fight for the**



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**"suicide offense" ....**

**Yaël Mellul:** In 2014, my association Femme & Libre allowed me to file a complaint against Bertrand Cantat to the public prosecutor of Bordeaux on the basis of the criminal offense of voluntary violence that led to the death without intention to give it. Following this, Krisztina Rady's suicide investigation was reopened. In the continuity of the crime of conjugal violence of a psychological nature, which I was at the initiative, finally included in the framework of the Law of July 10, 2010, I would like to create the criminal offense of "forced suicide". It should be considered that a woman can commit suicide as a result of physical and / or psychological violence suffered, and that the perpetrator is precisely responsible for this suicide. So ultimately, he's a psychic murderer. Society may be riper today to understand it. It's a complex concept. One must have knowledge of what is the psychological hold, its traumatic consequences, and the state of psychic destruction leading the victim to commit this act. Even when she has children. The case of Krisztina Rady is still open, it should be that those who have witnessed direct or indirect violence speak. But that's the omerta.

**MC: In the Tron case, the complainants' past is revealed. They are reproached for their sexuality for example.**

In the Georges Tron case, the magistrates charged the plaintiffs, especially Eva Loubrieu, to whom they accused her libertinage. As if we could do anything we want to this woman. We see that the dice are stacked. The aggressors hijack the presumption of innocence - the centerpiece of the criminal proceedings. They discredit the victims by calling them liars. Not to mention that the way to complain is very long. In the Tron case, the girls are seven years of extremely painful legal proceedings and it's not over! The message sent to the rest of the victims is terrible: if you complain, look what will happen to you. It is understandable that only 8% of them dare to file a complaint.

**MC: Regarding the DSK case, you say there was a before and after in the media.**

Yes especially in the print media. Why? Because the profession is feminized and rejuvenated. We have peeled 500 articles, and we feel a paradigm shift. Nobody believed in the charge against DSK. Everyone turned against the complainant but in the 11<sup>th</sup> complaint, the journalists admitted their mistake. As the journalist Jean Quatremer wrote about DSK "His past does not plead in his favor". We knew he had pans. We see with the Tron case that from 2013/2014 the media treatment changes. The Baupin case was the big test. The press was impeccable. We talked about the "Green DSK": we will be careful, we will listen to the complainants, we will give them the floor.

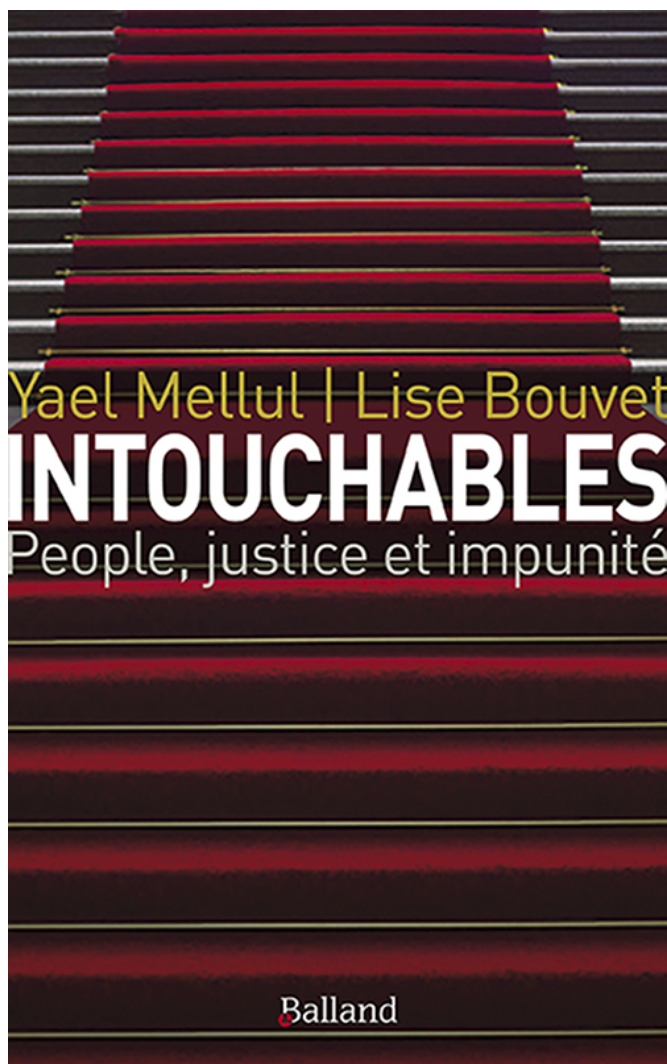
But we must remember that they are political women. However we will moderate our words and our optimism. With Nicolas Hulot and Gérard Darmanin, we see that journalists have learned but not the political staff: same caste effect, same reflexes on the conspiracy theory. They protect themselves like the middle of the cinema. They are men of power, network and money who will try to destroy the victims with complaints of defamation. Baupin also lodged a complaint against Médiapart and France Inter, which only echoed the voices of the victims. It's bullying. It's a real war.

**MC: If she's a powerful woman, will she be protected the same?**

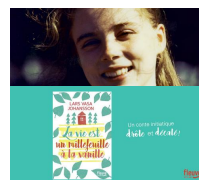
MOST women are victims of violence. But the fact remains that some attack, are violent. But it remains marginal. This question allows us to say that male domination is not biological but cultural. To fight against, we can act socially by public policies. For us it is necessary to double or even five times the budget of Justice, too low. There are not enough magistrates in France.

**MC: So the media has made progress. Are you optimistic?**

It depends on the day (laughs). Given the current government, we do not know. We can say anything we want, but without means we will not succeed. It's nice to release the word but if there is nothing to welcome him, the victims will be quiet.



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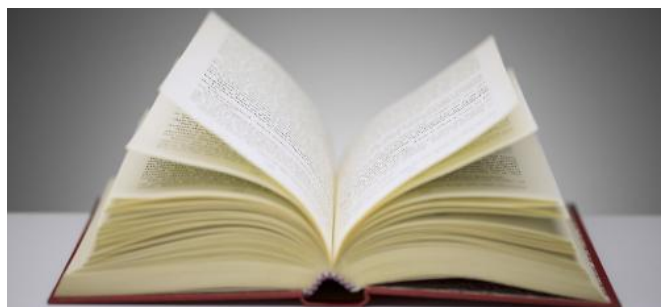
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