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‘A Prank Between Mates’: Social Media Responses to Sexual Assaults  
Against Men.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Abstract**

This thesis analyses social media commentary and its influence on the production of discourse around sexual assaults on male victims. It draws together a number of strands from different disciplines, including issues of representation in social media, rape myths affecting victims more generally, the specific challenges to masculinity caused by assuming a victim identity and myths of male sexual invulnerability. The analysis centres on a promotion run by Hell Pizza in 2012 which rewarded an entrant who confessed to committing an act which appeared to describe unlawful sexual connection. Covering questions of the construction and enactment of masculine identities in New Zealand and how these masculinities are enforced, the research identifies themes within the comments which indicate an adherence to and reinforcement of hegemonic masculinities. Behaviours and attitudes such as victim blaming are also apparent in the online discourse along with an assumption that male victims of sexual assault do not exist or are not affected by mental and emotional harm in the wake of an assault. The commentary is indicative of the wider social attitudes to sexual assaults against men which victims may be exposed to, and the problem of low reporting rates among male victims is also touched on and considered with reference to the largely unsupportive environment which victims may find themselves in.

The key findings of the thesis are that evidence exists of a number of different kinds of dismissal and minimisation of the seriousness of assaults on men in the commentary around the specific incident analysed, and that when this is directly addressed and mentioned by victims their own experiences are frequently ignored or silenced. The thesis suggests that many of the challenges faced by female victims of sexual violence are equally applicable to male victims, a finding which may have implications for awareness campaigns and education about consent.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

Don't read below if you're easily offended. Below is last week's winning confession in our confessional:

I was once at a party and saw this utter wanker, he passed out so I put a mask on and stuck my cock and balls into his mouth til he woke up. To this day he still has no idea who it was, and gets shit for it all the time.

– Hell Pizza Confessional entry (Imgur 2012)

In this thesis I hope to contribute to a greater understanding of the attitudes and barriers which are faced by men who have been raped or sexually assaulted and wish to seek counselling or other professional help or to formally report the assault, particularly men living in New Zealand. My motivation to undertake deeper study of this topic was manifold. Firstly, the Hell Pizza 'Confessional' case outlined in chapter five for greater analysis attracted my attention when it first arose and I was deeply bothered by some of the comments I read. The incident included the quotation above, which was posted on the Hell Pizza Facebook page by the page administrator, with the offender winning a voucher for free pizza. Hell Pizza responded to extensive online backlash first by saying they had posted the Confessional believing it to be in the spirit of "a prank between mates" and later by offering to match donations to Wellington Rape Crisis. The online discussion about the incident lasted for several days after the retraction and apology from Hell Pizza, and the following chapters will explore the social factors underpinning the online commentary.

Secondly, I already had an interest in reading extensively about the ways in which the set of social circumstances commonly termed 'rape culture' manifested and made it easier for people who committed assaults to escape without sanction or consequence, and more difficult for the victims of those assaults to obtain proper help and to be treated with respect. At around this time a number of incidents also led me to question the ways in which the behaviours associated with rape culture, including victim blaming and the minimisation of the seriousness of assaults (evidenced by the minor media furore over United States political candidates and others speaking of 'rape'

and ‘legitimate rape’) affected men (Blake). The specific incidents in the US included political candidates implying that there were different degrees of rape, often in response to proposals to amend abortion laws and access to abortion following rape. Statements were made to the effect that women who become pregnant following a rape had not suffered a ‘legitimate’ rape, which served to underline that many people including those in positions of power believed that people lied about rape and that third parties could presume to know the seriousness and impact of a crime on a victim.

Much of what I had read understandably focussed on the impacts on women, and this makes sense as women who are assaulted are affected by still more problematic discourse and the treatment of women’s sexuality more generally. Nonetheless, there seemed to be a lack of discussion of assaults on men, and so I made the decision to pursue this line of study. My decision was motivated also by a strong conviction about the importance of discussing consent for all people and encouraging discussions about bodily autonomy.

In conducting this analysis of social media commentary I want to determine the kind of social climate in which male rape and sexual assault victims find themselves, and the attitudes which they will be exposed to, whether or not they have chosen to disclose their status as a victim or have identified their experiences as rape or assault. From this I will discuss, with reference to other studies on male victimisation and writings on masculinity, the impacts which the views most prevalent in the social media sample may have on male victims including views which support and perpetuate victim blaming and minimisation of the impacts which violence has on men. I will consider the possible impact the views have on the likelihood of male victims self identifying themselves as having suffered an assault or rape, and on their willingness to report the attack. I also wish to explore the role which expected performances of masculinity and the societal pressure to enact behaviours aligned with dominant masculinities play in the behaviour and treatment of male. I will use the online media commentary as a lens through which to illustrate the kinds of pressures men are subject to.

Based on my reading, outlined in detail in chapter two, my expectation was that the online commentary stigmatising male victims of rape would fall broadly into two camps. Based on Smith, Pine and Hawley’s “Social Cognitions about Adult Male Victims of Female Sexual Assault” (1988) I expected that some comments would likely

identify male rape victims as having lost their masculinity and their position of power in society, viewing rape and sexual assault as a tool of control and humiliation rather than a sexually motivated act, or conversely would underestimate the trauma caused to the victim by the attack. This proved to be the case, but many of the comments criticising the victims or those who spoke out in support of victims were more subtle in their stigmatising and used a variety of approaches, discussed in chapter five and in my conclusion, to achieve this upholding of the masculine status quo.

In keeping with the findings of Sandesh Sivakumaran in “Male/Male Rape and the ‘Taint’ of Homosexuality” I also expected that some online comments would suggest that male victims of assaults by other men are homosexual either because they were targeted for the assault or as a result of being assaulted (Sivakumaran, 2005). Such suggestions rely on the homophobia of a society for their effectiveness, to impress upon the victim that being attracted to or being suspected of being attracted to other men is shameful and will invite ridicule. In chapter five I will discuss my findings, and consider the frequency with which these kinds of stigmatising comments have occurred in the online discussion analysed, and what other opinions and views are most apparent. Those which are most immediately evident include attempts to redefine the incident as something other than an assault and dismissals of lived experiences.

In determining the scope of the work I will only consider discussion which takes place predominantly among New Zealanders or on the webpages of New Zealand corporations, specifically Hell Pizza, New Zealand media outlets and journalists, (including their Facebook and Twitter feeds, where commentary on these pages is relevant to the discourse analysis being carried out) as well as blog postings from New Zealand. The primary limitations are those of length – an in depth consideration of the social and online media commentary requires that the number of case studies is limited to permit full and proper consideration of each. The case study included in chapter five generated over 20,000 words of discussion (contained unabridged in the appendix). The scope of the study also means that determining any definitive links between the social attitudes observed and the reporting rates from male victims (one of the variables which can be measured) would represent a deviation from the aims of the research, and be too difficult a task in the time and words allotted.

In presenting the argument of this thesis, I will begin in chapter two by discussing the culture of enforced masculinity in which the comments being analysed are made, and I will consider literature which outlines the existing attitudes to sexual assault, specifically assaults against men and as well as assaults more generally. In doing so I will consider theories of masculinity presented by R.W. Connell, Judith Butler, Matthew Bannister and Michael King, among others. Bannister and King provide discussion of particular forms of masculine behaviours and identities particular to New Zealand and the ‘bloke’ identified by Bannister is important for making sense of some of the commentary in chapter five. Butler provides views on the formation of identity and the relationship between conventionally male and masculine behaviours and a masculine identity, while Connell’s extensive work on hegemonic masculinities is an excellent framework on which to understand the minimisation of violence and privileging of some kinds of masculinity over others. I will go on to discuss how reports of rape are treated generally, looking at phenomena which occur around the reporting and discussion of rape and sexual assault such as victim blaming and rape myths, as well as how rape is used as a tool of dominance and power and how it is often intended as a humiliation as much as, or more than, a sexually motivated attack. I will discuss the ways in which rape and sexual assault as an expression of dominance is used to threaten and belittle men under hegemonic masculinity, and how attacks on men by men and women are treated differently, but ultimately both dismissed and minimised for different reasons. The conclusions based on research in this chapter will be compared to my findings in chapter five, with the case studies conducted, to see if the behaviours and commentary I expect based on my readings are evident and what other trends appear.

In chapter three I will outline the legal definitions of rape and sexual assault in the New Zealand legal system, and I will consult victimhood studies, including the “New Zealand Victims of Crime Survey”, to determine the prevalence of assaults on men and women, as well as the difference between reported and estimated actual rates of assault. When comparing the reporting rates and any gender based differences between the rates I will look at the specific wording used to identify people who have suffered assaults and determine whether the phrasing requires those answering the survey questions to self identify as a victim, or to agree with statements which could be seen to challenge particular kinds of masculinity identified in chapter two. With reference to the evidence presented about rape myths and victim blaming in chapter

two, I will briefly outline some of the reasons why victims of assaults may choose not to report the assault or to self identify as a victim.

Many of the rape myths outlined in this chapter contribute to and constitute rape culture, a concept discussed by a number of feminist scholars and which has passed into popular usage to describe a culture which supports or abets rape and sexual assault by placing blame on the victim or by encouraging prevention campaigns which focus on the victim's actions. Elana Klaw et al discuss this in "Challenging Rape Culture" (2005). The authors outline the ways that such myths and attitudes contribute to the acceptance of sexual assaults and note that women's studies classes which assess sexual assaults through the lens of rape culture encourage consciousness raising among those in the classes, allowing them to identify their personal experiences as part of a wider political system (49). This movement to name the pervasive attitudes towards rape also challenged some students in the class to actively speak out against them, according to the surveys carried out as part of the paper's research (53).

However, some approaches to the definition and description of rape culture and the associated rape-tolerant phenomena presumes that rape culture affects only women assaulted by men and ignores the other victims of rape whose experiences may not be reflected by these descriptions of rape culture. Such presentations are critiqued by Liam Skinner in "Rape Culture and Masculinity" (2012), in which he notes that prevention campaigns which only recognise male assaults on women often function by reinforcing conventionally masculine stereotypes and behaviours, and reinforcing a hetero-sexist and cis-sexist view of rape. The phrase 'rape culture' is used extensively by commenters in the discourse analysed in chapter five and their usage crosses between the definition which sees it affecting only or predominantly women and the usage advocated for by Skinner.

In chapter three I will also be discussing the specific wording of the Crimes Act which outlines what constitutes rape and what constitutes unlawful sexual conduct. In this chapter I will use the term 'cis-gendered' to denote people whose personal gender identity matches the sex which was assigned to them at birth. This will be done for example, to indicate when a specific act can only be carried out by a person with a penis or in other cases where the anatomy of a person is relevant to discussions of their gender.

The decision to use the term cis-gendered has been made with the intention that it deliberately avoids conflating anatomy with gender identity and presentation.

In chapter four I will then discuss the various forms of social and online media analysed in my case study, the features available on each at the time of writing, and any other information about their user demographics, use or spread which is pertinent to the analysis of the postings therein. I will refer to writings on the use of social media generally, and the formation of identity on the internet specifically and consider how this may relate to formation of masculine identities and the enforcement of hegemonic masculinities online. I will also discuss the two divergent views that the internet is either part of the wider world and 'real life', influencing people's real experiences, or a simulacrum of real life, similar to but having no real bearing or impact on people's offline behaviour. In this I will refer extensively to Michele Zappavigna, Daniel Trotter, Sherry Turkle and various essays contained within *Social media: Usage and Impact* including those by Mia Long and Lynne Webb et al (2012). The formation of identities online discussed in chapter three also resonates with many of the points about masculinity and masculine identities discussed in chapter two with relation to Butler and her assertion in *Gender Trouble* that the performance and creation of gender is responsible for the creation of personal identity and not the other way around (Butler 1990).

The ways in which terms like 'rape' and 'sexual assault' are commonly used will also be discussed in chapter three, with reference to James Paul Gee's work on figured worlds and social contexts. Specifically, Gee explains that some words may by a strict dictionary definition mean one thing but through common usage may have come to have a much narrower definition (Gee 2011). Such changes in language and its use can sometimes mean that victims of assaults may find that in common usage, words like 'rape' and 'sexual assault' exclude them and their experiences, and they are literally left without the words to express what has happened to them. This pattern will be explored particularly with relation to the legal definitions of these crimes, as the legal and more common usage of the terms will have particular importance in chapter five where the case studies are analysed, where extensive debate between commenters occurs over whether a particular act constitutes rape, assault or neither.

Gee's work will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five, in which the methodology which was used to select and analyse material from the case study will be laid out. Other theorists I will refer to at this point will include Michel Foucault, for his work on discourse analysis and the restriction of discourse around sex and the ways in which it is tightly controlled and used to define anything outside approved normative behaviours as deviant. I will outline in detail my own guidelines for determining what content I will include and what I will exclude from my analysis, and after providing a brief overview of the case I will conduct an analysis of the online discourse around the case.

Foucault's approach to discourse will also help inform how the term 'discourse' is used within this thesis. Refining the definition of the term as it is expressed in dictionary terms as "written or spoken communication or debate", or what Gee calls "small 'd' discourse," Foucault takes the approach that knowledge about classifications and ideas is obtained and constructed by statements and signs made within a wider framework of discourse (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 409). This reading of Foucault's 1973 work *The Order of Things* is made by Stephen Schneck in "Michel Foucault on Power/Discourse, Theory and Practice", and he is at pains to note that single agents cannot individually construct knowledge and the reading of comments in chapter five is made with this in mind: the individual comments cannot change the discourse around sexual assaults but collectively they contribute to it and reinforce existing ideas (18). James Paul Gee takes a different but complimentary definition of discourse, separating the concept out into 'small d' and 'big D' discourse. He presents 'big D' discourse as a specific way of speaking, discussing and articulating identity which relies on a variety of social markers and nuances to understand and enact, while 'small d' discourse can encompass any stretch of spoken or written communication (205). He also proposes that various discourses can be embodied by a single person at different times and places (34-37). He also cites language and discourse as a way of demonstrating affiliation with a group, and this becomes evident in some of the analysis of comments which reinforce hegemonic masculinities.

Hegemonic masculinity is a term used throughout this thesis, and is based primarily on the version of that term popularised by Raewyn Connell, which proposes that it is a way in which masculinity privileges some men hierarchically above others and most men above most women. John Storey articulates Gramsci's theory of hegemony as a means

by which a social group does not rule by coercion, but rather leads by presenting its own concerns as those of the society as a whole (95-96). In Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity this group is men, and generally white, heterosexual, cis-gendered and able bodied men.

Although completed as a portion of the work required to obtain a Master of Arts in Media Studies, the topic of this thesis is decidedly multi-disciplinary and the resources referred to throughout encompass fields as diverse as sociology, law, media studies, gender and women's studies, discourse analysis and psychology with frequent reference to authors best known for their contributions to Cultural Studies. As such, many of the ideas discussed will not fall squarely under the umbrella of the media studies department, although all the points relate back to the central topic of considering the ways in which sexual assaults against men are discussed in online media. However in order to fully articulate the ideas and stitch together the important considerations from different fields expressed in this thesis, such an interdisciplinary approach was necessary and beneficial.

## Chapter 2: Masculinities: Their Enforcement and Enactment.

In considering the responses from social and online media users to reports of sexual assaults and unwanted sexual contact where men are the victims, it is critical to consider the culture in which these comments are made. To enable the culture to be considered in depth various theoretical approaches to western notions of masculinity will be discussed in this chapter, including analysis which is specific to New Zealand. Men are placed under pressure to adhere to specific performances associated with hegemonic masculinity, and comments such as social media discourses on sexual assault against men both reflect and at the same time enforce hierarchies of masculinity.

### Connell's Hegemonic Masculinities and Feedback Loops.

R.W. Connell articulates the notion of multiple masculinities by expressing that what she terms 'hegemonic masculinity' forces various masculinities associated with different groups to be arranged into a hierarchy (*Masculinities* 67-81). Particular modes of masculinity are valued above others, and hegemonic masculinity legitimises violence towards women and marginalised groups of men, including but not limited to men who identify as gay, who are disabled, are people of colour or are working class. Connell also notes in her writing that organisations which are already male dominated are effectively operating in a feedback loop: the organisation is arranged to benefit men, because men are mostly in charge of arranging the systems within the organisation, and the men creating the system often gained their position in part because systems and structures already in place valued men above women.

Such feedback loops are also evident in other areas where particular performances of masculinity are expected and enforced: an example would be the refusal to believe that male rape victims exist, as observed in some comments analysed in chapter five, which then dissuades men who have been raped or assaulted from describing their experiences, in turn perpetuating the belief that male rape victims do not exist. This feedback loop is repressive, attempting to reduce open discussion of assaults on men rather than enabling a male-oriented structure as in the example given by Connell, but it works in a similar

way to encourage only performances of masculinity which adhere to conventional notions of masculinity. These feedback loops exist within many behaviours associated with hegemonic masculinity. The behaviours modelled are the dominant ones, those seen most often or valued most highly. When seeking appropriate ways of responding to situations such as being assaulted or hearing of another's assault, men are only met with a limited number of responses which they can model their own behaviour after. In time this perpetuates the specific responses which are allowable in hegemonic masculinity and eventually makes them the default response.

Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is valuable because it articulates the ways in which various performances of masculinity are assigned value. Performances of masculinity under the hegemonic model are not 'pass' or 'fail'; they have varying degrees of adherence to the ideal, and the hegemonic model also begins to address issues of intersectionality within masculinity, whereby a person may belong to a privileged group in one sphere, by being male for example, but be disadvantaged by another facet of their identity. For the purposes of this thesis, the hegemonic model can be used to identify where masculinity is being enforced in various ways which address different areas of the performance of masculinity. As detailed later in this chapter, men who are victims of sexual assault may be criticised or shamed on the presumption that an assault has affected their sexual orientation, that being assaulted indicated they were unable to defend themselves, or that being traumatised by an assault is an unmasculine display of emotion. Each of these attempts at shaming targets a different portion of the masculine ideal, and the model of hegemonic masculinity recognises the multiple facets which are encompassed in performances of masculinity, and the way in which social pressure is applied to uphold these performances.

Connell notes in her key work *Masculinities* that men's bodies are often treated with disregard and viewed as either a tool or a weapon, depending upon the context. She writes of professional sportsmen that they are pressured to "treat their bodies as instruments, even weapons" and notes that 'as [Michael] Messner puts it, 'the body as weapon ultimately results in violence against one's own body'" (58). The ability for a body to bear abuse and heavy use is seen as critical to performances of hegemonic masculinity, and perhaps this disregard for men's bodies also informs an apparent lack of concern about men's bodily autonomy and consent expressed by some online

commentators. One of Connell's case studies in *Masculinities*, Dean Carrington, takes care to define his own masculinity as being partly defined by having his own sexual agency, being an active partner and directing his own sexual encounters. This definition bears some close parallels to Connell's own commentary about men's bodies being used as a tool and as a direct expression of masculinity, with Carrington defining his own masculinity as being directed by the ways in which he can use his body in a sexual sense. By being in control of his encounters Carrington feels he is fulfilling his own notions of masculinity, and the inverse can be easily discerned: that being the victim of unwanted sexual contact is unmasculine.

Connell also notes that even among the men in her case studies who identify as progressive and in some cases feminist, there is still a latent homophobia, which in many cases prevents them from forming close friendships with other men. The homophobia and social punishments for being queer which all the interviewees who have sex with other men speak of are possibly evident in some of the responses discussed in the Hell Pizza case study: the enforcing of hegemonic masculinity extends to implying simultaneously that being in any way queer is undesirable and unmasculine, and that being a victim of sexual assault by another man makes the victim in some way queer and therefore deserving of exclusion or derision for failing to adhere to notions of hegemonic masculinity (*Masculinities* 143-163). In "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept" (2005), Connell and Messerschmidt note that hegemonic masculinity and traditional notions of the male body are considered to contribute to the difficulty many men face "in responding to disability and injury" (834). This refusal to accept a hurt which requires attention and treatment is possibly another reason why men's reporting rates for rape are lower than women's. They explain that gendered outcomes in health care can be traced directly to the masculine behaviours modelled to men and boys from an early age which are expected to be closely followed.

In Connell's various discussions of masculinities and femininities, she explicitly states she does not subscribe to an essentialist view of men and women, and finds such attitudes and approaches unhelpful. An essentialist approach to the issues discussed would suggest that such behaviours by men (a reluctance to accept injury or seek medical help) are an immutable part of being male, and that the male body is linked directly to masculine behaviours. In a post to her personal blog titled "Feminism's

Challenge to Biological Essentialism”, Connell further expands on this point, outlining her approach and saying that while a complete rejection of the role bodies play is not helpful either, biological essentialism fosters attitudes which are harmful and reductive. On the topic, Connell writes:

Curiously, whatever biological mechanism was appealed to, the argument always ended up in the same place: Conventional sex roles, gender divisions of labour, and inequalities of power, were biologically determined and therefore could not be challenged. Feminist activism was coming up against nature and so, ultimately, it was futile.

The idea that gender relations are biologically fixed, is shown up as nonsense in the light of the ethnographic and historical evidence of cultural diversity and change.

In this Connell is dismissive of the arguments levelled against feminist demands that what was being asked violated a natural law about gender roles, denouncing such claims as ‘nonsense’. In this thesis, Connell’s approach will be the one taken: that essentialism is not a valid method of approaching sex differences because of its reliance on outdated and unproven assumptions about gender roles, the role that biology plays must also be considered. In the example of rape and sexual assault for example, only cisgendered women, some genderqueer people and trans\* men are at risk of pregnancy following a rape.

Connell’s notion of hegemonic masculinity illustrates how forcefully men’s lived experiences are policed. Although Connell’s theory of hegemonic masculinity presumes that no similar structure exists for femininities (in as much as there is no equivalent hegemonic femininity because of the way that hegemonic masculinity privileges masculinity above all femininities), in the comments analysed in chapter five it is evident that women are frequently held to some of the standards formed by hegemonic masculinities. This is evidence of the ways in which dominant notions of expressions of masculinity impact upon the expected and idealised performances of femininity leading to certain kinds of behaviour being rewarded and expected. The repeated demands that people, mostly women, who complained about the Confessional stop caring or complaining carried with it echoes of an expectation of masculinity that sees emotional displays as shameful and a sign of weakness, a feminine behaviour that

should be discouraged. As I will discuss in the next section, the figure of the uncomplaining and expressionless ‘bloke’ is particularly strong in New Zealand cultures of masculinity.

### A New Zealand Masculinity.

The influence that masculinity has on notions about victims of assaults and the self identity of assault victims must also be examined within a New Zealand context,. Matthew Bannister has written extensively on a particularly New Zealand form of masculinity which he identifies in his 2005 article, “Kiwi Blokes: Recontextualising White New Zealand Masculinities in a Global Setting” as being largely unchanged from that identified by Jock Phillips in the 1980s. Bannister notes that in a 2004 survey of national identity as understood by interviewees from various countries New Zealand women and men identified the characteristics of ‘blokedom’ identified by Phillips as being integral to a sense of being a New Zealander. He argues that the ‘kiwi bloke’ stereotype represents a type of masculinity which is utterly bound up in New Zealand identity, and therefore the traits associated with it are enforced socially in a number of ways.

The ‘kiwi bloke’ archetype as Bannister explains it has its roots in the colonial notion that action was a male trait and passivity was a feminine one, which then evolved through New Zealand’s relationship with the UK to be a man who was scornful or dismissive of women, physically strong, tough and uncomplaining:

This defensiveness coincides with ideologies of male working-class bodies as hard and impenetrable, allied with emotional reticence, laconicism, repression – men "who keep it all inside"[...] To question masculinity is to be critical of our national ethos" (James and Saville-Smith, 64). Expression and sensitivity are signs of femininity but if "real" blokes aren't expressive, then where does this leave "pakeha culture"? (Bannister 2005.)

He explains how the ‘bloke’ has become a sort of shorthand for New Zealanders in advertising and how aspects of the identity were picked by men and women alike in a 2004 survey of national identity, in contrast to people from other nations such as the United States where there was a divide between the objects and ideas which men and

women identified as representing American culture. He further explains that the New Zealand version of homosociality is a social hierarchy which is based around a distrust of difference, particularly any hint of homosexuality, and a policing of any feminine traits (Bannister paragraph. 19).

In a New Zealand context then the drive not to show weakness by asking for help following an assault, or even recognising that it occurred, is driven not just by a hegemonic masculinity, but by a masculinity which is ubiquitous within the fabric of New Zealand's national identity. This claim is supported by Michael King's writing in *One of the Boys?* where he identifies his own experiences and notes many of those discussed in the book represent a 'vortex' of 'emotional deprivation' (vii). King's essay also discusses the role which sex and being seen to be sexually in control played in the formation of masculinity during his own upbringing. He identifies having sex with women and having sexual agency over those encounters as being a critical part of becoming a 'man' for his peers (135-155).

Masculinity in New Zealand then is not just a sense of what it is to be male, but what it is to be a New Zealander as well, enforcing such behaviours on at least two different levels of identity. Bannister identifies the characteristics which came to typify the kiwi bloke as the ones which were positively remarked upon during the World Wars, particularly being strong and uncomplaining. New Zealand masculinity also includes a particular homosociality which involves policing of any suggestion of homosexuality and a disdain for any behaviour considered 'feminine', as well as a distrust and suspicion of difference of any kind.

The particularly New Zealand masculinity is therefore even more closely bound to the homophobic masculinity identified by Connell, and to ideas that being masculine means not complaining or having any kind of a victim role. The New Zealand hegemonic masculinity creates an environment in which identifying as a victim or seeking help to recover from an assault is considered shameful on at least two levels: firstly for having been a victim, a form of victim blaming where being impervious to assaults is construed as central to masculinity, and secondly for acknowledging the assault as a serious enough event to need to discuss it or seek help, rather than stoically and silently carrying on. This resistance to seeking help can be seen in Åkerström,

Burcar and Wasterfors's work too, where the interviewees expressed that being seen to seek sympathy was considered unmasculine.

### Homophobia and its Impacts on Reporting Rates

Savakumaran outlines the reasons behind the differences in reporting rates of sexual victimisation between men and women at length in "Male/Male Rape and the 'Taint' of Homosexuality". He notes that, as speculated above, society's constructions of manhood are a strong disincentive to report sexual assaults. He adds that the reported rates of sexual assaults by women are estimated to account for between 10% and 24% of the total number of assaults which take place, while male reports of assaults by women are estimated as 3% to 10% of the total number of assaults which have occurred, and reporting of attacks by men on men are likely lower still given research which indicates that men consider assaults committed by women less negatively than assaults committed by men, which may be an added disincentive to report an assault.

Savukumaran's work also investigates the motivations of the attacker in instances of male/male rape and mentions what he terms the 'taint' of homosexuality as a concern for the victim and sometimes the intention of the attacker. By this Savukumaran means the idea that any sexual engagement with another man, even without consent or occurring by force, is in some way deemed to make the victim queer. Queerness is viewed as a negative trait by many victims and attackers, especially given the way in which queer men are treated by their peers and by society as a whole (outlined above in Connell's work.) This is a strictly performative notion of sexual orientation: that a person's orientation is determined by the sexual acts they have taken part in, or had forced on them, rather than by their emotional and mental attraction. This performative notion of sexuality is also evident in the value placed on men's being the sexual aggressor: they are expected to pursue women for sexual encounters to 'prove' their heterosexuality and the role reversal present when they are victimised subverts this notion and adds to the shame which is felt by male victims.

Savukumaran's suggestion that the 'taint' is the intention of the attacker is particularly relevant for the case study in chapter five, in which Hell Pizza said in a

statement that the marketing team saw the ‘Confessional’ entry as “guys making fun of other guys” and “a prank between mates”. The supposed humour of this incident comes from the homophobic ‘taint’ which Savukumaran speaks of, and likely was intended to appeal to the homophobic trend evident in Hell Pizza’s other advertising campaigns, including a series of ‘Misfortune Cookies’ where one read ‘you will marry a transgender’ (New Zealand Herald 2011).

The comments made by Carrington in Connell’s *Masculinities* are confirmed by the work of Sivakumaran and of Smith, Pine and Hawley, that rape is a tool of control and dominance, sometimes used to shame or embarrass the victim. The blending of rape and sexual assault as a tool of power and as a sexual act means being the victim of it as a man is to strip him of both masculinity (in conventional hegemonic masculine terms) and to remove agency from him in his sexual conduct. As Sivakumaran notes, a man’s virility is his most conventionally valued sexual commodity:

The chastity of a female is considered similar, by society, to the virility of a male. Both are considered to be the sexual virtue of each sex [...] If, for the purposes of non-reporting, the chastity of the female survivor can be loosely equated with the virility of the male survivor, reasons for the non-reporting of female rape and male rape are roughly comparable. (1289)

### Challenges to Invulnerable Masculine Identity.

A further challenge for men who have been the victim of an assault is the difficulty in expressing how the assault has affected them in the face of notions of masculinity which seek to cast men as invulnerable and able to bear extensive stress and strain, as well as conflating hegemonic masculinity with being able to ‘handle’ threats and ‘not back down’. In “Balancing Contradictory Identities—Performing Masculinity in Victim Narratives” (2011) by Åkerström, Burcar and Wasterfors, the authors interviewed a group of young men in Sweden who had been victims of violent assaults and concluded that they considered the way in which the victims spoke about the assault indicated trying to walk a line between the conflicting identities of ‘young men’ and ‘victim’.

The authors note that the term ‘victim’ encourages others to see the person being labelled as one who has been harmed by forces beyond their control, which conflicts with the traditional performance of hegemonic masculinity in which masculinity is associated with being in control and able to defend oneself. In speaking about their experiences, one of the group also highlighted that he had not sought to use the counselling programs offered because many of them appeared to be aimed exclusively at women who had been raped and he felt they were not intended for him:

Mark, an eighteen-year-old student who was assaulted, for instance, first declares that he has declined help from them as “it is not like I haven’t felt anything (.) you know any need to precisely talk about it” (curative conversation, Swedish *tala ut*), then makes what can be interpreted as an indirect complaint about the brochure he got from the victim support agency: “There was this list so it was maybe (.) six out of eight (victim shelters, help lines, support) were for girls that had been raped.” Then, he uses a hypothetical form when talking about what has happened, which avoids positioning himself as the complainer: “Well, if it’s a young man who has been assaulted so they send that one (that brochure).”. (118-119)<sup>1</sup>

Declining professional support was also explained by others in the study who said they were uncomfortable with sympathy – they felt it was unneeded and embarrassing. One in particular outlined the sympathy he received as making him feel like a child. In some cases the interviewees used the reactions of onlookers or family members to explain the severity of what happened, being unwilling to complain about it themselves as it could be construed as ‘unmasculine’ and seeking sympathy. Some of the victims also said the police failed to take their complaints seriously, but typically used irony or humour to get this point across, and the authors identify this trend as a desire not to appear to have a ‘righteous victimhood’ which could be seen as feminine (119).

The overall conclusions of the paper were that men who have been victimised and who speak about the attack find ways to discuss their experiences while protecting their identity as masculine. It also makes it clear that many aspects of victimhood are incompatible with traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity, and this

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<sup>1</sup> The periods inside parenthesis in this passage are used in the transcription provided to indicate pauses in the spoken interview.

incompatibility makes it more difficult for men who have been victimised to seek help. The notions of hegemonic masculinity are created by repeated performances, and deviating from those performances is difficult for men who fear being ostracised or rejected by their peers, or having their identity undermined.

The idea that masculinity, among other identities, is created and maintained by repeated performances is the basis of much of Judith Butler's work, particularly *Gender Trouble*. Butler also notes that such repetition can create the impression that there is one 'natural' way to perform a gender if such assumptions about gender and the behaviours associated with it are not examined closely. Her approach to identity and gender is that expectations of gender are shaped within discourse and cannot exist outside of societal discourse around what constitutes masculinity, for example (Segal). Butler's work has sometimes been criticised for failing to consider the materiality of the body, and in this her approach is somewhat incompatible with Connell's approach that the physicality of bodies must be considered without taking an essentialist stance (Klement 168). Butler herself responded to these criticisms in *Bodies That Matter*, noting that performativity should not be seen as 'arbitrary' and that it was not a conscious set of behaviours but rather the inadvertent and subconscious reinforcement of and adherence to norms (187). She also argued extensively that the matter and physicality of the body was reliant on the identity performed by and attached to it. Butler and Connell's approaches do converge in some areas. Connell's approach to hegemonic masculinity provides an example of how some masculinities are constructed as being more valuable or correct than others, an approach not dissimilar to Butler's discussion of how bodies are constructed so that some are privileged and valued above those which have been constructed as 'other' (Bloodsworth). This process of raising the perceived value of normative bodies and identities is maintained by discourse which supports the status quo.

Butler's central argument is that identity, including gender identity, is constructed through repetition of behaviours, and using this theory to approach the work of Åkerström, Burcar and Wasterfors, it is apparent that the men they interviewed have been using the performances of masculinity they have seen in the past to determine how they should respond to being victims of assaults. The attack challenges their masculine identity, and the response is to use repeated performances of masculinity to re-establish their self-perception and projected identity as masculine and invulnerable. This also

echoes the feedback loops described by Connell, where the only possible ‘masculine’ behaviours or responses are those which have already been observed. The young men interviewed in Åkerström, Burcar and Wasterfors were acutely aware of the expected performances of masculinity and how they existed within discourse, and shaped their own recounting of their experiences into a new personal discourse about their assault which more comfortably sat within expected masculine experiences.

Similarly, the lack of recognised masculine experiences which involve being victimised presents difficulties for those attempting to collect data about rates of assault. In *Understanding Judith Butler* (2011) Anita Brady and Tony Schirato discuss Butler’s work noting that Butler theorises that the normalisation of particular identities is carried out through the repeated representation of bodies that have ‘certain regimes of value’ and are presented as being naturally disposed to achieve and carry out certain behaviours (12). Men’s bodies are not normalised as sites of assault, and as Butler points out, subjects are formed not only by what is allowed as part of the identity of a subject, but by what is denied. Much of the current discourse of masculinity does not allow for a perception of a person as both masculine and a victim of an assault, creating the situation which Butler cautions of, where the presumed natural way to perform male-ness is to deny victimhood or ignore it as an experience.

This lack of ways to discuss male victimhood is apparent in “Forced Sex On Dates: It Happens to Men Too” by Cindy Struckman-Johnson and David Struckman-Johnson. The authors outline their findings following research on an American college campus about male and female students being coerced into having sex on dates. In the paper they explain it was difficult to find statistics for the rates of such attacks against men because of a myth of ‘male sexual invulnerability’ and a societal myth that men cannot be sexually exploited by women. The Struckman-Johnsons explain that this belief is so firm that in the cases of some surveys which were examined in the course of the research, the phrasing of the questions meant there was no way for men to answer that they had been the victim of coercion, only that they had been the coercer, while others allowed men to report being victims but only if their attacker was a man. The research by the Struckman-Johnsons found that of the students surveyed, 23% of women and 16% of men had been victimised in this way, and that men were more likely

to have been coerced using psychological pressure, and with reference to this concluded their findings by recommending that victimisation surveys use words like ‘pressured’ and ‘coerced’ in their questions to get more accurate results than surveys which had questions which used words like ‘forced’. Struckman-Johnson’s findings make it clear that societal expectations about men’s sexual behaviour have influenced the collecting of accurate information about male victimisation. They also say many researchers contend that statistics about such attacks are inaccurate because of reluctance among men to come forward about being coerced into sex on dates. This is possibly linked to the idea that masculinity means taking the active role in sexual encounters, outlined by Connell, and that having been assaulted is an attack not only on the physical body but on the victim’s masculinity and masculine identity. The assault has stripped them of the performance of masculinity that society expects of them, and compounding this is the problem that reporting the assault or seeking professional assistance can be seen as a feminising act.

From the combined research of Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, Åkerström, Burcar and Wasterfors, and Savukumaran, it is clear that assaults on men challenge any personal identity they may have that can be ascribed to or shaped by hegemonic masculinity. Depending on the circumstances of the assault, it may attack the myth of male sexual invulnerability or ‘taint’ him with homosexuality. The negative connotations in all of these circumstances stem from an idea that being a victim of sexual assault is essentially a feminine trait, which is obviously problematic in part because it contributes to the view that rape and sexual assaults are normal risks associated with being female. Likewise, the homophobia also carries with it a fear of the feminine: being the penetrated partner is incompatible with hegemonic masculinity, and many homophobic stereotypes ascribe traditionally feminine modes of behaviour and expression to men who are bisexual, gay or Queer, with the implication that being feminine is always a negative trait. This construction of victimhood as feminine is also intrinsically linked to the notion of the masculine as aggressor and sometimes even as predator.

For this reason, work to reduce rates of rape and to end rape myths is as important to male victims as to female victims. Such work is often tied into other feminist driven campaigns and struggles, and many of the myths outlined in this chapter which contribute to underreporting of male assaults and the difficulty by male victims in

seeking help are directly related to wider views of women and femininity, and are enforced largely by patriarchal power structure.

### The Phenomenon of Victim Blaming

Among the myths about rape and sexual assault which likely make it even more difficult for all victims, but particularly male victims, to seek help and report their assaults is the phenomena of victim-blaming. This is discussed in “Social Cognitions about Adult Male Victims of Female Sexual Assault” by Smith, Pine and Hawley and in “Attributions of Victim Responsibility, Pleasure, and Trauma in Male Rape” by Mitchell, Hirschman and Nagayama Hall (1999). ‘Victim blaming’ is attributing some or all of the blame for a crime or assault to the victim, and in the case of blaming victims of sexual assault or rape often involves suggesting the victim wanted the assault to occur and their behaviour encouraged it. Such victim blaming often seeks to remove blame from the attacker, and suggest they are either blameless, or at least shouldn’t be judged as harshly.

In Smith, Pine and Hawley’s research, college students were asked to comment on a series of imaginary attacks, reported as a man attacking a man, a man attacking a woman, a woman attacking a man and a woman attacking a woman. In testing it was shown that the interviewees considered the man attacked by the woman to have been most likely to have encouraged the attack. The authors suggested that as there is little information about attacks on men, stereotypes about sexual assaults were likely to have a greater impact on the perception of how the attacks would affect the victim and be perpetrated. They also note that perceptions that men are more sexually aggressive than women were likely to have influenced the way in which interviewees considered the scenarios described to have played out.

In the research conducted and reported on in Mitchell, Hirschman and Nagayama Hall’s paper, male and female interviewees were given a case study to read in which a male-on-male assault took place. The sexual orientation of the victim changed between the cases presented to interviewees and the intention was to discover if this changed the attribution of blame for the assault and the degree of trauma or

pleasure the victim took from the assault. In the opening comments of the paper the authors discuss victim blaming more generally, saying research shows people often hold female victims accountable for what has happened to them and the small quantity of information available suggests the same is true of male victims. In their experiment, they found that participants considered homosexual victims to have experienced more pleasure and less trauma from the assault.

In discussing their findings, the authors note the difficulty of finding accurate data about assaults on men, but note a proportion of college aged men have been assaulted by men or women, and in a survey of homosexual men in the UK, 25% had been the victim of non-consensual sexual activity at some point. They add that reporting rates among men are low, with most rapes thought to go unreported. In discussing the finding that homosexual men in the case study presented to interviewees were presumed to have done something to encourage the attack the authors note this is similar to what happens if case studies with female victims have one set of circumstances where the victim is described as ‘promiscuous’. They add that homosexual men are part of an ‘outgroup’ generally considered promiscuous, and that may have influenced the views of the survey group. In discussing future avenues for further research, the authors note that the case study described an incident of stranger rape, and that if an incident of acquaintance rape had been described then the survey group might ascribe even more blame to the victim and be less sympathetic.

The victim blaming attitudes described in these papers tend to assume that victims did something to encourage the attack, or that the victim either enjoyed it or found it less stressful and traumatic than they actually did, thereby attempting to justify and excuse it after the fact. In analysing the online discussion in chapter five, victim blaming is one specific behaviour and expression which I was looking for and this was evident in various ways, often expressed as an unsympathetic commentary placing blame on the victim if they did not report the attack. I also consider how such expressions could contribute to the low reporting rates outlined by Mitchell, Hirschman and Nagayama Hall and discussed further in chapter three below.

In analysing the ways in which social media responses to sexual assaults on men occur and what specific viewpoints they exhibit, the attitudes and concerns outlined in this chapter will be referred to. I expect that in the Hell Pizza case study, the attitudes

towards male assault victims outlined here remain relevant, despite much of the research into sexual assaults on men having been completed well over a decade ago – suggesting a lack of progress or improvement in the treatment of and regard for male victims. It is very likely that the repeated stating of such attitudes informs the opinions of others towards sexual assault victims and influences reporting rates. The way in which expectations of hegemonic masculinities are expressed online will furthermore be expanded upon in chapter four, with discussions of the formation of online identities and the links between behaviour on the internet and the corresponding impacts in ‘real life’

### **Chapter 3: Legal Definitions and Reporting Rates.**

In discussing sexual assault and rape of men, an understanding of what the legal definitions of these terms are must be established, particularly so that such definitions can be contrasted with the understandings and definitions used by commenters in the Hell Pizza controversy. This chapter sets out the definitions of sexual crimes in New Zealand, reporting rates of rape and sexual assault, and discusses how these rates are measured. The discussion of reporting rates is raised so that any differences between male reporting rates and female reporting rates can be referred to in my conclusion, when speculating as to what differences may be exacerbated by the societal pressures typified in the online comments analysed. Phrasing used to determine actual and reported rates of rape and sexual assault will also be discussed in this chapter, with reference made to the comments by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson in the previous chapter on masculinities. In New Zealand the Crimes Act 1961 outlines the various Sexual Crimes and their definitions. Under Section 128 of the Crimes Act, only the penetration of another's genitals with a penis constitutes rape. The definition also means that penetrating a victim's mouth doesn't constitute rape, a point relevant for the analysis of the act described in the Hell Pizza Confessional. The definition of unlawful sexual connection is broader and covers any sexual connections which one party does not consent to. Importantly for the later discussion of my case study, section 128A of the Crimes Act specifically notes that a person cannot consent to sexual activity if it occurs while they are asleep or unconscious. A person cannot consent to sexual activity if they are affected by alcohol or another drug which impairs them to the point they are unable to consent or refuse consent to an activity.

The Crimes Act then indicates from a legal perspective that although men can be raped, it can only be by persons with a penis and that any other sexual contact which has not been consented to is unlawful sexual connection, a charge which will be less immediately familiar to the public than the charge of rape. As Gee explains, in day to day usage words are assigned 'situated meanings', a meaning which may deviate from strict dictionary or legal definitions based on what he calls 'figured worlds' (Gee 76-95). This term describes the linguistic occurrence where a word or phrase moves to having a more narrow definition in common usage, based on social expectations of what the normal use of that word or phrase would describe (Gee 62-98). For example the

terms ‘rape’ and ‘sexual assault’ are both used often to describe an act in which the victim is cis-gendered female and the perpetrator male, and usually cis-gendered, to the point that using such words to describe an attack on a male is rejected by some commenters, as seen in the detailed analysis in chapter five. This is also noted by Smith, Pine and Hawley, who say that an understandable but almost complete focus on male assaults on females has led to little to no attention being given to the issues and needs of women assaulted by women, and men assaulted by women or men. They conclude their findings by saying: “For male victims of both homosexual and heterosexual assault, there is a need for support and treatment programs that parallel those which have been established for women”. (95)

As Gee also notes, figured worlds marginalise and alienate anyone whose experiences and existence are contrary to those expressed in figured worlds, as they may find they are without the words to adequately express what has happened to them. Gee’s figured worlds are similar in effect to Connell’s feedback loops: they create a world in which the ways that a word or experience can be applied is limited, effectively erasing any alternatives outside the experiences and expectations they describe.

Figured worlds inform situated meanings based on social norms and expectations. Therefore the situated meaning of rape in an online media context when used by a commenter would be partly informed by their own social norms and expectations and partly by the legal definition in the Crimes Act, and therefore they may use it to express an idea more narrow than that expressed in the Crimes Act (they may use the word ‘rape’ to describe a crime which they believe can only be committed by a cis-gendered man against a woman, for example) or broader (commenters may use the term ‘rape’ when the act they are describing would legally be classed as Unlawful Sexual Connection). When the *New Zealand Herald* reported on the Hell Pizza case discussed in chapter five, they initially used a headline describing the incident as a ‘sex prank’ (later changed so not quotable in full). They were criticised by some Twitter users who asked them to change the headline to refer to the incident as ‘rape’ and others who pointed out that the headline referred to sexual assault, which shouldn’t be termed ‘sex’ (Bathory 2012). In this case the Herald’s responsibility to report according to legal definitions and the understanding of what constituted rape in its usual situated meaning

by some Twitter users were at odds. The Herald later changed the headline to “Rape Crisis accepts Hell Pizza offer” (Donnell 2012).

In New Zealand the “National Victims of Crime Survey 2001 ” (published in May 2003 by the Ministry of Justice) discusses sexual crimes specifically and notes that sexual crimes have some of the lowest reporting rates of all crimes, with an estimate that only 12% of all sexual crimes are reported to the police. The Survey uses the term ‘sexual victimisation’ to refer to both unlawful sexual connection and rape. The methodology of the surveys involved asking participants if they had experienced particular circumstances or incidents and what time frame those had occurred in. The responses were recorded by an interviewer. The phrasing of some questions varied from survey to survey, requiring people to identify their experiences in different ways. The survey comments specifically note that many victims do not identify what happened to them as assault or rape, and notes many victims experience feelings of shame or guilt. Additionally the survey notes the difficulty in obtaining accurate data about the number of assaults which have occurred, specifically mentioning that the responses vary depending on the number and type of questions asked of respondents, and the way in which they are phrased.

In the 2001 National Victims of Crime Survey the question about sexual victimisation read:

“Has anyone ever sexually interfered with or sexually assaulted you or made you carry out any sexual activity when you did not want to?”

The same question in the 1996 National Victims of Crime Survey reads:

“During your life has anyone, either a stranger or anyone you know, ever done any of the following things to you?

Had sexual intercourse, or attempted intercourse, against your will?

Had oral sex, or attempted oral sex, against your will?

Had anal sex, or attempted anal sex, against your will?

Penetrated or attempted to penetrate the vagina or anus with fingers or an object against your will?

Sexually assaulted you in some other way? “

The 2001 “National Victims of Crime Survey” notes that no comparison will be made between the responses and findings in the two surveys because of the change in methodology, and cautions that the small number of responses makes it difficult to make generalisations from the data. The 1996 survey resulted in higher rates of reporting from men, but not from women however, and in light of the Struckman-Johnsons’ comments and the findings from Åkerström, Burcar and Wasterfors about difficulties among young men in being comfortable with self identifying as a victim. Perhaps some of this difference is due to the phrasing of the questions. Specifically, in the 2001 survey 4.9% of men reported they had been sexually assaulted or interfered with at some point in their lives, and in the 1996 survey 16% of men reported the same. However, as noted in the 2001 survey, the small number of men reporting assaults also leaves the data open to significant variation in rates of reported assault with only a change of one or two responses.

However, the survey’s notes are careful to note that the rates are based on people who are willing to identify their experiences as sexual assault or sexual interference, and the requirement that people identify themselves as victims is greater in the questions from 2001 than 1996. The phrasing of the question from 2001 requires the interviewee to identify an incident as sexual assault or interference, while the questions in 1996 largely remove from the interviewee the requirement to identify what happened to them as an assault, and ask about specific discrete occurrences.

In Statistics New Zealand’s publication “Crime in New Zealand: 1996-2005” the estimates about the percentage of sexual crimes which are reported is even lower than in the Victims of Crime Survey, although the survey notes their data includes offences such as obscene exposure, immoral behaviour and indecent videos. The various sources all point to the same conclusion that reporting rates for sexual violence are low, with between one in ten and one in eight instances reported.

The Justice Department publication “Confrontational Crime in New Zealand: Findings from the 2009 New Zealand Crime and Safety Survey” presents findings in a

different format to the 2001 and 2006 National Victims of Crime Survey and so cannot be directly compared, but does provide an overview of offences committed against men and women. It mentions that the incidence of ‘confrontational crime’ by partners of victims declined but doesn’t distinguish between sexual assaults and other assaults. It puts the incidence rate in 2005 at 26 per 100 females and 18 per 100 males, and in 2008 at 18 per 100 females and 11 per 100 males, indicating that women are victimised more often than men but victimisation against men in terms of assaults more generally is far from uncommon.

The New Zealand Government’s “Are You OK?” campaign collated statistics from various surveys relating to attacks on men and women by domestic partners, and found that 33% of women and 14% of men report being sexually or physically assaulted by a partner during their lifetime (drawing on both a World Health Organisation Study and a 2006 NZ Crime and Safety Survey to provide those statistics). Although this is a different question to the one asked in the Victims of Crime survey detailed above it does serve to underscore the point that although men are not as likely as women to be assaulted they are attacked with a frequency perhaps greater than that assumed by many.

In Savakumaran’s “Male/Male Rape and the ‘Taint’ of Homosexuality” the issue of reporting rates is expanded upon, and he notes that the rate of reporting among female victims attacked by men is considered to be 10%-24% of the true number of assaults which take place, while the reporting by male victims of female attackers is even lower at 3%-10% (1289-1290). These figures are drawn from US crime statistics, but the expectations of masculinity outlined by Savakumaran are similar to those identified in New Zealand, specifically, the expectation that men will be the sexual aggressor and that men will be stoic and uncomplaining. The low reporting rates among male victims may also contribute to a perception that sexual assaults on men are rarer than they are, or occur hardly at all and as such do not require attention or resources for victims.

As mentioned in chapter two one of the contributing factors to low reporting rates is a fear by victims that they will be blamed for provoking or causing the attack. This is also outlined in the “New Zealand Victims of Crime Survey”, in which the authors note one barrier to reporting is a fear that police will not take a report of an assault seriously and that friends and family will either not believe the victim or will

blame them for what happened. The authors further note that this is especially so for victims who do not fit the profile of what the authors term a ‘real rape’, specifically one in which the victim is attacked by a stranger, in public, at night, which involves weapons and is an attack on a person of ‘good character’ who is chaste. Many attacks do not fit this stereotype, and attacks on men are already outside the figured world of a ‘real rape’ purely because the victim is a male.

The victim blaming which is apparent in studies such as those discussed in chapter two does not exist in a vacuum and the men who are victims of a rape or sexual assault will in most cases be well aware that if they are to report their assault they will be subject to scrutiny and very possibly their friends, family, and authority figures, disbelieving or questioning their report. In addition, as reported in the “New Zealand Victims of Crime Survey”, the prosecution rate for reports of sexual victimisation is 30%, and many victims will also likely be aware that reports of sexual victimisation have a low prosecution rate.

My citing of reporting rates in this chapter is intended to underscore the point that the way in which sexual assaults on men are treated in the media and in more general social discourse appears to have an effect on victims. The reporting rates in surveys of victimisation for men are often a third of the already low reporting rates for women, with only a fraction of those assaulted reporting the incidents to the authorities. It seems almost certain that the discourse around male victims, in which they are assumed to be non-existent, has a direct impact on these figures. Much of the discussion analysed in chapter five will also be seen to assume that assaults on men are rare, when the statistics from numerous surveys indicates this is not the case. Although assaults against men are less common than assaults on women they are by no means a marginal or fringe occurrence, despite the way that they are discussed. Gee’s figured worlds theory appears to be strongly in play here, with many commenters in the Hell Pizza case study either wilfully or innocently unaware of the realities of assaults against men. The reporting rates discussed in this chapter are reflective of this and it is not difficult to see the patterns of thought which dissuade men from talking about their experiences and reporting them. If a man who has been assaulted is unaware of how common such an occurrence is then the incident carries with it more shame and embarrassment precisely because he assumes it is so unusual and will mark him as an outlier and possibly an outcast. These patterns of thought are evident in the discussion about what prevents

people from reporting assaults, and it is not a great stretch to understand how the attitudes evident in chapter five would compound the difficulties faced by assault victims.

## **Chapter 4: ‘It’s Just Facebook’: Social Media as Discourse.**

In considering the way in which sexual assaults against men are discussed in social media it is important to understand the way in which identity is formed online, and the ways that social media websites are used and understood by those who frequent them. In this chapter I will discuss the ways in which identities are cultivated and curated online, and how interactions between users on social media websites occur and are understood, referring to existing studies of how social media users consider the relationships they have with people online, particularly on Facebook. I will also consider the interactions which occur between online and offline behaviour and how the functionality of some social media websites allows information and commentary to be viewed and disseminated among a wider group. The issue of how online social media profiles intersect with ‘the real world’ will also be considered, particularly with regard to how this intersection relates to the ways in which the expected performances of masculinity (discussed in chapter two) are expressed by commenters, and would be read and understood by abuse survivors observing the comment threads analysed in chapter two. The key theorists on online media who I will refer to have written works with publication dates which span from the mid-1990s to the last few years. Where older texts are used this will be noted, and changes in the way that online media is used and understood which conflict with their statements will be briefly mentioned in order to clarify how their work is being approached.

### Facebook, Twitter and Blogging: The Functionality of the Mediums.

The primary arenas in which online discussion to be analysed in this thesis are drawn from are Facebook, Twitter and online comment forms on news websites.

Facebook comments for analysis have been drawn exclusively from public ‘fan’ pages of businesses, where all posts are visible to anyone by default and are not made with an expectation that they will be private. On Facebook the people a user comes in contact with will be predominantly those they have ‘friended’ and will most often be those they know in real life. Facebook’s default privacy setting for many things is ‘friends of friends’, meaning that any friend of a friend of a user can see the post but it isn’t available to all Facebook users (Trottier 61-83). The format of the Facebook homepage is also such that a post by someone who is a ‘friend of a friend’ which has

been commented on by a sufficient number of a user's friends may show up in their main newsfeed, with Facebook's algorithms determining it as something the user may be interested in seeing. Mia Long writes:

Each time a Facebook member joins a company's fan page or "likes" a product or company, his friends are alerted of this new association. This, in turn, may draw other members to the company's page. (147)

Another way in which people may see posts beyond status updates and posts between friends is the small 'ticker' on the top right hand corner of the Facebook newsfeed which displays in real time all comments, likes and posts by friends which include those which would not show up in a users timeline. As an example, if User A has friended User B, but only User B has 'liked' the Hell Pizza page, User A will see when User B comments on the Hell Pizza page by way of scrolling updates in the ticker. People may also be exposed to strangers who share a common interest through fan pages or groups. In the examples given in chapter five, it is possible some of those who engaged in the later stages of the discussion became aware of it through the ticker function (when they saw friends commenting repeatedly on the Hell Pizza fan page) or through other forms of media, both online and offline, which caused them to seek out a fan page they otherwise would not engage with.

Twitter is slightly different in the social circles which are formed by users to those on Facebook. Twitter usage is seemingly not as ubiquitous among younger people, and a Twitter 'follow' indicates the user is willing to have all of the followed users' tweets appear in their time line, whereas on Facebook it is possible to be 'friends' but to hide all of a user's updates. Unlike Facebook friendships, Twitter followings do not have to be reciprocal, so one influential twitter account can be followed by many more people than it follows. The default privacy setting for Twitter accounts is public, with anyone whether or not they have a Twitter account, able to view a user's tweets. It is however possible to lock a Twitter account, which retrospectively locks all of a user's tweets. A Twitter account is also not necessarily linked to a 'real' offline identity, in the sense that it can be linked to a single legal name. A Twitter account may be run by a collective, or a single person may have multiple Twitter accounts to cover different topics, or allow them anonymity on particular matters.

The ways in which particular tweets may be more prominent or seen by more people are manifold. A tweet could be retweeted (meaning it will be re-posted with the original tweeter's name and profile picture into the second person's 'feed' and then seen by everyone who follows the second person) or could be included in the 'top tweets' for a particular topic or hashtag. A hashtag is a way of making a tweet searchable with regard to a particular story or issue, and the act of adding a hash symbol to the start of a word or phrase (with no spaces between the words) creates a hyperlink to a twitter page compiling other tweets with the same hashtag which defaults to listing 'top' tweets first. Michele Zappavigna observes that the use of a hashtag makes a statement 'louder' as it makes it more likely the comment will be seen by other interested parties.

The final key source for comments, although a lesser source than Facebook and Twitter, are comments left on online news websites. Such comments are moderated before being posted and so are not as immediate a representation of commenters' thoughts as Facebook posts and Tweets. The comments are often made in response to an invitation from the news website to 'share your thoughts' or to discuss personal experiences and ideas about an issue. The comments left will generally either be in response to other comments and be made in response to statements and claims reported in the story. Comments on online news websites have the differentiation from Twitter that they are not made in a format where they are immediately accessible to friends and family of the writer. They are instead visible to everyone who reads the article, similar to posts in Facebook groups where the audience is based on common interests and not friendship.

Posts on news websites are sometimes linkable to an offline identity, depending on the policies of the specific website. Most require writers to provide an e-mail address which will not be published but pseudonyms are common. The news websites often provide an edited version of a story which aired on television or radio, or which would be published in a print edition of a newspaper.

Some mentions will also be made of blogs and the comments on them. Blogs are postings made on a web site in a longer form than a Tweet or Facebook post or comment, generally by a single person or by a collective who share similar views and concerns. Such postings are sometimes made under a real name, or more often under a pseudonym. In blogging platforms such as Tumblr, the post cannot be commented on in

the traditional manner and is instead ‘reblogged’ with comments added by the second party at the bottom. A post can be reblogged indefinitely, with more comments added at the bottom of the chain, effectively creating a perpetually nested comment field. Blog postings are often cross promoted on Twitter or Facebook and comments about the blog postings may also be sourced from these media.

### Identity Formation on the Internet: Online/Offline and the ‘Real’

Notions of how online identity can be seen to relate to ‘real’ identities have changed dramatically from the mid-1990s with a growth in social media networks which require the use of real names. Both Facebook and Google Plus have real name policies which require people to sign up under their real names, and will suspend accounts if they believe a user is fictionalising their identity (or using a pseudonym, which unfortunately has implications for anyone not known by their legal name for a variety of reasons.) This contrasts with the online experience described by Sherry Turkle her influential work *Life on the Screen* (1995), where users created their own identities that could mimic, complement, or diverge entirely from their real life persona (9-19).

The move to a greater pressure from the providers of social media websites that users be ‘real’ and accounts be able to be connected to a discrete offline identity means that the ways in which users interact online now refers back to their offline identities in ways not formerly possible. Comments on Facebook are usually made under a user’s real name, often with a profile picture of them, meaning the commenter can be immediately identified and the comments being made are part of the formation of their own identity. Rob Cover expands on this point by linking Judith Butler’s ideas about the formation of identity to the crafting and creating of identities online, through profiles, posts, tagged images and commentary (177-179). He states, when discussing actions such as updating a profile, making a post, commenting or ‘liking’ a page, that:

...these are performances of self-identity which, in Butler’s formulation of subjectivity, retroactively constitute identity, just as offline performances of selfhood do likewise.

What individuals say on Facebook is visible to their friends, and if made on group pages it is also visible to acquaintances or strangers and is part of how their online persona

will be understood. That the online persona they have created is visible to people who can identify them in real life is a significant change from the chatrooms and online game environments which Turkle describes from the 1990s.

Another issue regarding social media which is addressed in various writings is the question of if things which occur on social media are ‘real’, including if the persona cultivated on Facebook or Twitter is a representation of a person, or if it is really them. The real name policies of some social media websites attempts to ensure all the people on the website are ‘real’ but that isn’t necessarily the same as the person online behaving as they would in a spoken conversation in public.

The social media landscape increasingly is public though, with discussions and incidents occurring online reported on in the mainstream media as discussions and occurrences which took place in a physical landscape would be. In “Facebook: How College Students Work It” by Webb, Wilson, Hodges, Smith and Zakeri, the authors discuss how American college students approach and consider Facebook and where it fits into their offline relationships. Ultimately their finding was that “many if not most users employ online social networks simply to augment offline relationships” (4).

Sherry Turkle in *Life on the Screen* writes about MUD games, multiplayer games which were a cross between modern day Massive Multiplayer Online Role Play Games and chatrooms, in which players created a persona which they then used to interact with others in the game. She notes that in a text based reality such as a MUD game or (although social media in its present form did not exist when she was writing) on social networking websites ‘words are deeds’ (9-29). One of the arguments raised again and again in chapter five by some commenters is that what many people were upset, angry or offended by was ‘just Facebook’, with the associated implication that something which happened on Facebook did not really happen or was somehow removed and irrelevant to ‘real life’. This is in direct opposition to Turkle’s observations, that the way in which interactions online play out mean that the words used to communicate on these websites have significant impact on other users, in some cases as much as actions would offline.

Turkle’s claim that ‘words are deeds’ is supported and enhanced by Zappavigna’s comments about online text based discussions being closer to speech in their formation and function. In many ways, this is also enhanced by Trottier’s

commentary about the ways in which discussion and activity on social media is observed, as it would be if it took place in a physical semi-public space. The activity and commentary on social media is obviously considered important enough to warrant ‘creeping’ and ‘stalking’ as described by Trottier’s interviewees. It is seen to give a sense of a person’s interests and character, and Trottier’s interviewees mentioned that they were cautious who they would friend on social media websites if they felt the person lacked discretion in ‘real life’ as they would also be indiscreet online.

This indicates a direct link between how people perceive behaviour in the offline world and how they expect a person to behave online. There is no longer the demarcation between online events and events in person speculated upon by Turkle in 1997, which existed when online personae were not linked to the online personae of offline friends and acquaintances. Now the two have become inextricably linked, and so the argument that something is ‘just Facebook’ cannot be reasonably used to excuse a report of an assault as unimportant or not requiring concern. Facebook is a part of people’s real lives, and the discussions which take place on there are, as Turkle puts it, “deeds” to a degree which has become more apparent now that the words are connected to a single discrete offline person, who must be given due consideration and treated with appropriate seriousness. A report of an assault on Facebook is not, or should not, be a joke or something of little importance.

Therefore in considering the ways in which discussion on social and online media talks about sexual assaults against men, this thesis will treat it as contributing to the wider societal discourse about assaults. Social media postings are exempt from many of the restrictions which impact on other text based media – no requirement for journalistic balance, or requirement for moderation – while also having many similarities with speech. The instantaneous back and forth conversations for example are similar to offline discussions, although the anonymity afforded even where a real name is used may prompt users to be bolder or more open about their experiences than they would be in a spoken discussion. As evidenced in chapter five, some commenters use the anonymity to disclose that they have been victims of sexual assault and discuss the incident with regard to how such approaches affect them personally, while others use the illusion of anonymity to attack and dismiss these comments often very bluntly or aggressively in a way they possibly would not if speaking face to face.

In *Social Media as Surveillance* (2012), Daniel Trottier defines social media as a ‘dwelling’, and comments extensively on a survey of Facebook usage undertaken in which undergraduate students from a Canadian university were surveyed to determine how they understood and coped with interpersonal social media surveillance (62-84). In discussing how they expected their writing on Facebook to be used and understood, one comment from students was that public posts and comments were written with the intention of them being seen by others. They were not intended or expected to be a private correspondence, and this is especially true and evident in some of the analysis in the Hell Pizza case, where commenters address other writers in the comment threads or aim their comments at anyone who disagrees with their point of view effectively writing the online version of an open letter to other commenters. The comments being made are intended to be widely read, although it isn’t evident if the writers are aware that some of those reading their comments about assault may be victims of assault themselves. This will be discussed in further depth in chapter five, but it seems plausible that the commenters who are dismissive of the effects of assault on male victims would be similarly unconcerned that these victims could be further traumatised or hurt by their statements.

#### Social Media as a Data Source.

Trottier also discusses some of the considerations which come with using online media, Facebook specifically, as a data source. He notes that data obtained from Facebook has the advantage of not being affected by the interviewer or the way in which questions are phrased, and in answering the questions which this thesis seeks to address this is a distinct advantage too. The comments which are analysed in chapter five are drawn directly from social media, only from sources which are publically available, and were therefore written with the knowledge, if not the direct intention, that they would be read by a variety of people. The comments in response to reports of sexual assaults are uncensored and perhaps not as cautiously phrased as they might be if collected in the course of an academic interview where subjects would be aware that their comments were being monitored and assessed. As such, the comments being analysed are closer to the commentary about assaults which male assault victims would hear and internalise. The comments are able to be viewed as a data set which, although mediated, is less heavily self-censored than speech.

In considering ways that social media commentary should be analysed and what commonalities it has with day to day conversation, Zappavigna notes that although micro-blog posts such as those found on Twitter are text based, the format of the conversations they enable is more like spoken conversations, and she endorses a method of analysis which treats the tweets more like speech. She observes some advantages in capturing online exchanges:

The conversation-like interactions possible with social media can be tracked in ways not readily achievable with face to face interaction in the real world, where it would be invasive to monitor a person's private interactions. (6)

Zappavigna also comments that posts on social media tend to show evidence of 'upscaled graduation' where they accentuate the positive or negative aspects of an issue; posts in which someone is ambivalent or neutral on a matter are less compelling and create a less interesting online persona. This pattern is evident in the comments analysed in chapter five, with much of the commentary representing extremes of opinion and these significant differences leading to much of the disagreement and debate.

### Constructing and Enforcing Masculine Identities Online

A key consideration within this thesis is the way in which social media discussions may influence victims and contribute to reinforcements of hegemonic masculinities. Although this will be discussed in more detail in chapter five with regard to analysis of individual comments, the issue can be approached more generally by considering how social media fits into wider conversations about victims. As discussed in chapters two and three, the ways in which male victims are viewed and considered are apparent from the responses gathered from interview subjects in the studies detailed in those chapters, and the comments on social media websites echo many of the myths and misconceptions detailed in the literature on the subject.

As Connell notes in her writings on masculinity, the lack of alternative approaches and responses to assault which are visible contributes to the reinforcement of hegemonic masculinities. Facebook allows people to respond as they would in a spoken conversation but also provides the space and time needed to formulate a more complex argument. It is evident some people saw the Hell Pizza post as an opportunity

to speak out against traditional notions of hegemonic masculinity which denied the existence of male victims, but these posts seem to inflame fury on the part of other posters who considered anything outside of the narratives condoned by patriarchal structures to be threatening and borderline offensive to their worldview.

Facebook and Twitter are used to construct identities online, as an extension of the physical self formulating a new kind of complex identity. These complex identities are carefully constructed, however, sometimes more deliberately than those in the physical world, and in chapter five I will discuss in more depth whether the performances of masculinity outlined in chapter two occur with similar vigour to those in real life or whether they can be challenged more easily online. The identities online are not linked to physical personhood, but this again has been outlined by Butler extensively in her work on the interpellation of gender as being largely an active process often based around a retrospective view of acts (Cover 2012).

Butler's theories are based on the notion that personal identity is formed and maintained by acts, outside the physical body, and the identities formed on social media websites are precisely this. They exist in relation to the user's physical body and are understood within the social rules and norms which govern the physical body but are not created by physical acts. The reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity online through statements and comments which support the normative approach to assaults on men are part of the formation of identity for the people who make the comments. The act of leaving the comment or making a post indicates that they consider upholding the status quo of masculinity to be an integral part of their identity, or important enough that they are willing to post in a way visible to their Facebook or Twitter friends and strangers who also read the page.

In considering the way that commentary and discussion unfolds in chapter five I will be examining the ways that social media is used as a tool to enact performances of masculinity and to police expressions and opinions which challenge conventionally masculine behaviours. As Matthew Bannister notes in "Kiwi Blokes":

A strong masculine iconography resists scrutiny – "what are you looking at?" - in that sense it is profoundly ideological. The association of such gender discourses with the "national" thus discourages too close an examination of their construction within a larger system of authority. Rather it presents national

identity as self-generated and autonomous. Representations of "tough" masculinity can also function themselves as a defence against anxiety about identity - because it is dangerous to question them.

The comments which challenge or question the performances of masculinity and the behaviours accompanying them are those likely to be challenged. The archetypal 'Kiwi' masculinity resists scrutiny and inspection: this too is part of its construction. The construction of masculinity cannot be unpacked and challenged because it is presumed by those enforcing it to be an immutable part of what it means to be masculine.

The issue of both friends and strangers reading the same post and interpreting it differently is also evident in social media. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter can be used in different ways and the delineation between conversations among friends and conversations among strangers is not clear. Commenting on a post or responding to a comment on a public page is nominally a public conversation, but it is not uncommon for two or more people who know each other in real life to comment back and forth on a third party page carrying over the kind of discussions which they would normally have more privately. This uncertainty about how people know each other can make it difficult to ascertain the tone of a conversation. Is it intended to be threatening, or is the banter back and forth jovial and friendly? This is certainly an example of interactions in the offline world affecting behaviour on social media, and it seems churlish to suggest that the interaction doesn't run in the opposite direction too, with interactions online affecting people's behaviour and views in offline life.

As such in this thesis I will be assuming that to some degree at least discussions which take place online have some impact on those who read them, and their behaviour and attitudes offline. The discussion takes place within, and contributes to, a wider societal discourse about sexual assaults against men. The influence of such online discussions may be less than what would have occurred if the comments had been overheard or as part of a spoken conversation, but it does not seem reasonable to contend that such discussion has no impact whatsoever on interactions in the offline world.

Analysing commentary on social media has various benefits, sufficient to outweigh the drawbacks. The discourse can be lifted in its entirety, including the phrasing, spelling and word choice of the commenters. It is less vulnerable to subjective

interpretation about things such as tone, as these can be determined from choices made by the commenter, such as word choice and use of expletives. Social media also provides an insight into a less censored set of views, with the censorship in place limited to that carried out by users themselves. The comments made are also publicly viewable, and therefore likely to be seen by victims and offenders alike, given the number of active users who took part in discussions on the Hell Pizza Facebook page and the number of likes the page has. In short they are highly useful for determining the kinds of views and behaviours which male victims of assault are likely to be exposed to, and which are likely to inform their choices to report or not report their assaults, among other things.

In the analysis in chapter five the content of the comments and posts made will be examined to determine which trends are evident among the people taking part in the discussion. I will be specifically looking for comments which show evidence of the myths and prejudices outlined in chapters two and three, and I will also consider how comments show responses to statements from other participants in the discussion. Among the comment threads I will analyse are comments which condemn Hell Pizza's decision, and the responses which such comments attract. Further detail of the analysis and the theories which underpin the discussion is contained in chapter five.

## Chapter 5: Hell Pizza's Confessional Competition: A Case Study

In this chapter I will examine the posting made by Hell Pizza on their corporate Facebook page (quoted in the opening chapter of this thesis) and the responses to it. In the lead up to the posting, which was made on August 15th 2012, Hell Pizza had been running a competition called 'Confessional' which encouraged entrants to 'confess your sins' and be in to win free pizza.

The Confessional competition was in keeping with Hell Pizza's previous marketing campaigns and corporate identity. They frequently run 'edgy' promotions and advertising campaigns which are designed to push the boundaries of good taste, and some of the campaigns have had official complaints laid against them with the Advertising Standards Bureau. The Confessional campaign could be entered through Hell Pizza's Facebook fan page, with one tab of the page an application which allowed confessions to be submitted. Announcements of winners were also made via the Facebook page. Hell Pizza's previous promotions which had attracted criticism included a campaign in which a billboard was erected reading 'At least our brownie won't eat your pet dog' which was criticised as racist, and a Halloween advertising campaign which included a depiction of Sir Edmund Hillary and the Queen Mother as skeletons, one of the only other campaigns for which Hell Pizza have issued an apology (Fox 2009).

Hell Pizza's brand image is also based heavily on courting controversy, and their use of the phrase 'Confessional' is deliberate, in keeping with the use of Christian concepts of hell and salvation in their advertising and branding (their pizzas are named after the seven deadly sins, for example.)

Following the 'confession' being posted a number of comments were made on it, and the post was subsequently deleted. Analysis of the comments on this post will be limited to those made in the first hour after it was posted using screencaps taken at the time of the posting in August 2012. The deletion of the post happened before a second post was made, in which the page owner explained the Confessional posted was seen as

‘a prank between mates’ but had been deleted. This explanation was also deleted from the page, and the following afternoon Hell Pizza’s owners made a third post in which they said their social media manager was responsible for the original Confessional post, but made the wrong decision in posting it. The post and their response to it generated a significant amount of discussion on their Facebook wall, as well as on Twitter, blogs and in mainstream online news sources.

### Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss Facebook postings, Twitter discussions and online commentary made on blogs and online news sources. In discussing Facebook commentary, ‘post’ will refer to the parent comment or link posted directly to a Facebook wall, either by the page owner or by a fan or commenter. ‘Comment’ will refer to comments made on Facebook wall posts. At the time which the discussion being analysed took place nested comments were not enabled on Facebook. One comment will be deemed a ‘response’ to another when the later comment is addressed by name, or makes mention of specific arguments or points raised by the preceding posters. Due to the length of some Facebook comment threads analysed (in excess of 200 comments in some cases), comments will be quoted selectively to explain specific trends or views present in them. Entire comment threads analysed are available verbatim in the appendix. In considering the most appropriate layout for this chapter I briefly considered copying entire comment threads, but opted against this approach on the basis that it would impede clear and easy understanding of the discussions at hand.

In discussing Twitter ‘tweet’ refers to an individual twitter posting of 140 characters, sometimes including a hyperlink or image embedded in the text. A reply is a tweet which includes an ‘@reply’ where a users Twitter handle is included preceded by the @ symbol, indicating the Tweet is directed at them.

When discussing blog postings and new articles ‘comment’ will refer to a comment left on the parent article, or in the case of blog postings on Tumblr to any commentary added either in a response or as part of a reblog of a blog posting. Depending on the source and the formatting of the host website some comments may be nested and some may not, but this will be made clear in the analysis of each source.

The analysis of each Tweet and comment will consider the arguments and approaches made by the commenter and will, where possible, attempt to link the commentary to a particular method of enforcing masculinity, or method of dismissing or minimising the seriousness of sexual assaults against men as discussed and identified in earlier chapters. These may include behaviours and attitudes such as victim blaming, minimising the seriousness of assault because of the gender of the victim, suggesting the assault doesn't constitute a real sexual assault because it doesn't adhere to the commenter's view of what a rape of assault is, or questioning the legitimacy of the report.

Following the analysis of the comments I will discuss the views which were expressed most often and the ways in which they were articulated. I will outline how the discussions of sexual assaults against men rely on and reinforce conventional notions of masculinity if that is the case, and I will speculate on how the reinforcing apparent in the comments may be contributing to low rates of reporting by male victims, as outlined in chapter three.

In choosing which comments to analyse further, I have ignored one word comments on the basis that such comments are effectively impossible to analyse in a way which allows the intention and messages conveyed by the writer to be reasonably ascertained. Many of the comments analysed make use of sarcasm and humour as a tool to convey their point and this will be discussed on a comment by comment basis.

Each comment will be quoted either by itself, or with surrounding comments if they are necessary to give context. A qualitative rather than quantitative analysis will be undertaken, as some comments show evidence of reinforcing more than one attitude and determining which is the dominant attitude or point being made is too prone to error and bias. The comments will be grouped, as much as is practicable, by the discursive theme which they show the most evidence of reinforcing.

The comments on each post will be discussed, with references made to the rape myths and expectations of hegemonic masculinity outlined in chapters two and three. The myths and damaging stereotypes which I will be specifically identifying include victim blaming, comments minimising the damage assumed to have been inflicted on

male victims, doubt that male victimisation exists, claims that men should not report victimisation or identify as victims, and scorn directed at people who express concern for male victims or critique other myths listed here. The comments will be analysed with the understanding that they are likely to be viewed by assault victims and the views expressed may impact on their internalised views of themselves and willingness to report and acknowledge their experiences as assault.

In *Mapping the Language of Racism: Discourse and the Legitimation of Exploitation*, (1992), Margaret Wetherell and Jonathan Potter discuss the role which spoken discourse plays in reinforcing racist beliefs and ideologies, and the ways in which discourse can be analysed to reveal the ways in which the ideologies it supports are maintained and institutionalised (60). One of their key arguments is that discourse and ideology are embedded in a variety of social structures and practices. Discourse therefore impacts on people's understandings of and beliefs about a particular social circumstance and occurrence. Although the authors focused on the ways in which discourse supports and abets racist behaviour their argument can equally be applied to the ways in which discourse is used to excuse and normalise assaults against men. The discourse which is analysed in this chapter is contributing to the ways in which sexual assaults against men are understood and talked about, and the attitudes which people hold towards those assaults and their victims.

Similarly, many of the comments analysed in this chapter show evidence of what James Paul Gee refers to as "figured worlds" wherein the only way in which a word, phrase or concept can be expressed is within the bounds already articulated and expected by a speaker's understanding of the world they live in. Gee cited Hollan's definition of a figured world as:

A socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognised, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of state as moved by a specific set of forces. (77)

Gee elaborates: “One way to think about figured worlds is as images or storylines or descriptions of simplified worlds in which prototypical events unfold.” (Gee 77)

Within the scope of this thesis the figured world theory may explain why commenters are so resistant to the notion that men can be victims of rape and assault: the idea is simultaneously jarring to ideas of hegemonic masculinity which demand that men are always strong and able to defend themselves and the notion does not fit with more general ideas about what constitutes a victim of sexual assault. Those being spoken about are not young, female, defenceless. Furthermore I will use Gee’s figured worlds theory when considering comments which are suggesting that particular acts do or do not constitute sexual assault. As discussed in chapter three, the ways in which people may interpret the phrase ‘sexual assault’ or ‘rape’ may in fact deviate considerably from the legal definition. Gee’s approach to discourse analysis has been favoured over others because of his approach that all discourse analysis must by necessity be critical and recognises the use of language as a political tool. He also suggests that discourse analysis can be used to highlight problems and controversies through the way things are expressed in language, which is particularly applicable for the issues at hand in this chapter (9-10).

I will also pay attention to comments which attempt to delineate between ‘online/offline’ events and to imply that discussions which take place online are less important, less legitimate or less real than those which occur offline. As discussed in chapter four, this appears to be an attempt to deny that discussions which take place online have impacts to relationships and events offline, and that what people say and do in online spaces reflects upon and shapes their persona both on and offline. In considering the online discussions and their impacts on offline behaviour, and internalised beliefs about personal experiences, it is important to consider that discussions which take place on the internet are still taking place within discourse. The discussions which take place are still shaping the worldview of those who read and participate in them, and are not divorced from discourse because of the medium in which they are presented. This is a recurring theme which will emerge throughout the comments in this chapter, and will be returned to with commenters both arguing for and against the notion that online discussions should be taken as seriously as discussion which takes place face to face or via other mediums.

### Initial Posting and Response.

In August 2012, Hell Pizza ran the Confessional competition mentioned earlier, and announced weekly winners. The initial post made by the Hell Pizza Facebook page admin which began the controversy read:

Don't read below if you're easily offended. Below is last week's winning confession in our confessional:

"I was once at a party and saw this utter wanker, he passed out so I put a mask on and stuck my cock and balls into his mouth til he woke up. To this day he still has no idea who it was, and gets shit for it all the time."

The post begins with a caution that the 'easily offended' shouldn't read the rest of the post, which places the blame for anyone who is offended or upset by the post on the reader, rather than on Hell Pizza for publishing material likely to upset, cause offence, or trigger PTSD type symptoms in assault survivors. The phrasing of the 'confession' also makes it clear that the offender was relying on the 'taint' of homosexuality which Savakumaran outlined in "Male/Male Rape and the 'Taint' of Homosexuality" in order to humiliate the victim. That the victim allegedly 'gets shit for' being the victim of the assault further serves to reinforce the point that the culture of hegemonic masculinity which exists in New Zealand supports the homophobic viewpoints and behaviour outlined in the paper, which dissuade assault victims from coming forward.

The 'confessor' also says the victim is an 'utter wanker' thereby attempting to absolve himself of responsibility and to pass blame onto the victim. Using this phrasing could also be seen as an attempt to smear the victim's character and reduce sympathy for him, as though he deserved to be assaulted. He also specifically mentions that he wore a mask during the assault. There could be multiple reasons for this decision. Possibly the offender was concerned about charges being brought against him and wanted to protect his identity for that reason, or possibly he was concerned that the same 'taint' which affects the victim would affect him as the offender too.

The initial comments on the post treated the incident as an amusing anecdote, with the first four commenters expressing varying degrees of amusement or making quips about the incident, with one (Roxy)<sup>2</sup> commenting : “hahah that’s awesome” [sic]

The initial comments don’t appear to be responding to the events described in the context of being a sexual assault, they view it as an amusing prank or joke. Other comments later in the discussion also express approval or amusement, and one of the commenters (James) who comments implying he finds the incident funny later responded angrily to another commenter who criticised Hell Pizza’s decision to publish the Confessional.

The comment by Wendy which attracted the anger from James read, in part: “this isn’t press at any cost it is actually congratulating an offender-seriously-a police report is likely in this case – suggest you take it down – it isn’t funny to those of us who have been raped in any shape or form”

Wendy’s comment brings her personal experience into her response. She places herself among the group of people who have been raped who would not be amused by the Confessional. She also mentions the police, which indicates the seriousness with which she thinks the assault described should be treated. Jennifer also comments on the post, linking to a website which has the definition of rape and unlawful sexual connection in New Zealand, and Katie-Mae also comments, saying in her reply:

It is sexual assault in every aspect of the term. The fact that half of you are apathetic about it actually frightens me. The fact that because it was done to a man does not change the fact that it is sexual assault. And acting so flippant about it only serves to highlight why men will never feel comfortable about coming forward. If it was me I’d have prosecuted the fuck out of the offender.

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<sup>2</sup> NB: in the analysis of this post and its comments I will use commenters first names, because the original post was deleted and the screencapped versions posted online have blurred last names. In all subsequent analyses I will use the commenter’s first name and initial to make it clearer who is commenting, while still retaining their privacy.

Hell pizza you should be ashamed of yourselves for condoning this act. Putting a disclaimer beforehand doesn't detract from the fact that some asshole just openly admitted to assaulting another person.

Wendy, Katie-Mae and Jennifer are among the commenters who criticise Hell Pizza and the other commenters for their approach to the issue. Katie-Mae specifically names issues with the post mentioning that the flippant attitude displayed by many commenters could contribute to why men who are sexually assaulted are reluctant to come forward about it. She also mentions that the fact the victim was male doesn't change the seriousness of the crime – another commenter makes a similar point, with Jayce asking if Hell Pizza would have published the Confessional if the victim had been female. Jayce and Katie-Mae point out that sexual assaults against men are generally not taken as seriously and are more likely to be dismissed as a joke than assaults against women. As discussed earlier in this thesis, assaults on men are frequently assumed to be non-existent, or less serious than assaults on women in terms of their impact on the victim.

Further comments on the post attempt to shut down criticism of the original Confessional post by Hell Pizza, with Steff and James commenting generally and directly in response to those who expressed offence. Steff comments: 'Don't read below if you're easily offended' yet people still making butthurt comments...

Steff's comment suggests they think the problem with the post isn't that what it describes is sexual assault or that Hell Pizza awarding the confessor vouchers for confessing the assault, but that rather the issue is that it offends some people. They also make it clear that they don't have sympathy for people upset or offended by the post by describing them as 'butthurt'. The comment shows little respect or empathy for people who are the victims of sexual assaults who might be re-traumatised by reading a description like this and puts the responsibility for avoiding triggering and traumatising material onto the victim. James then responds angrily to Jennifer's earlier comment which linked to a page of legal definitions of sexual assault, saying: "have a sense of humour Jennifer!!!! buzz killa. dont like it? Lump it and gap the page then!!!" [sic] This response is similar to the comment by Steff above in which Steff criticises people for being 'butthurt' by the post. Both Steff and James believe the solution for people

offended by casual descriptions of sexual assault is for those offended to remove themselves from the place where the joking and casual descriptions are taking place.

James' comment also implies that Jennifer is in the wrong for not finding the description of the incident humorous. This demand that people find descriptions of rape and sexual assault amusing is possibly a way of further humiliating victims and silencing them. The stance of forcing them to be complicit in their own oppression and humiliation, at the risk of being labelled as a 'whiner' or worst of all a 'humourless feminist' places victims and people who are concerned about the treatment of victims in a position of having to defend themselves, often by disclosing their own experiences of being victimised. This personal experience is then alternately dismissed as meaningless or needless complaining (Jennifer is being a 'buzz killa', ruining the amusement of others on the page) and demanded in order that a commenter's position be taken seriously.

Another two commenters (Anya and Marilyn) who criticise Hell Pizza specifically note that they aren't 'easily offended' as a qualifier before complaining, and Anya's comment appears to be partly in response to commenters like Steff and James who criticised people who named the offence as sexual assault as being easily offended or having no sense of humour. The idea that being easily offended is a negative attribute seems to have links to the forms of masculinity particularly valued in New Zealand, as outlined in chapter two, where being stoic and uncomplaining are traits valued as positive and inherently 'blokey'. Steff and James' notion of what it means to embody these traits seems to assume that any complaint is a negative reflection on the complainer, if the complaint is about something they find amusing or inoffensive. This approach denies that other commenters could have different and valid experiences, or that alternative points of view could have any merit. It follows then that being 'easily offended' is seen as a weakness and a sign of excessive sensitivity, which is not in keeping with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity.

Another exchange includes a commenter expressing that the offender was lucky the victim didn't "bite them [his penis and testicles] off" and a reply from another commenter (Jamie) saying "unless he liked it". Jamie is suggesting that a non-consensual sexual encounter can be made consensual, or the fact it is assault negated if

the victim enjoys it. Jamie is here possibly attempting to make a joke, but is also referring to one of the rape myths identified in chapter two by Mitchell, Hirschman and Nagayama Hall's in which it was found that survey respondents were more likely to expect male rape victims to derive pleasure from their assaults than female rape victims. Jamie's comment is possibly also tying into the notion that sexual assaults are shameful for men because of the homosexual 'taint' assumed to be caused by them, the notion that the victim may inadvertently enjoy the assault and be 'turned' gay. A later commenter, Mike, then comments with a link to a website: [www.hahgay.com](http://www.hahgay.com). When visited the website contains a video clip from the television show "Community" with one of the characters yelling 'hah! Gay!' Mike's comment reinforces the 'taint' of homosexuality described by Savakumaran's paper in the second chapter.

### Retractions and 'Apologies'

By the following morning, August 16<sup>th</sup> 2012, many mainstream news websites were carrying the story and although the original post had been deleted it had become a topic of conversation on the Hell Pizza Facebook page as well as in individual tweets.

In one of the earliest responses, @juhasaarinen tweeted:

“Screenshot of the winning entry in Hell Pizza's "Confessional" Facebook competition. <http://yfrog.com/z/h2kshfp> “

@mjec retweeted the original message manually, adding “Well that's awful” to the beginning of the message.

@juhasaarinen later tweeted:

“RT [@hamfritta](#): <http://imgur.com/a/f61pj> Full Facebook thread on **Hell Pizza's "Confessional"** competition.”

That tweet was then retweeted six times.

Toby Manhire, a journalist for the Listener later tweeted a link to a story he wrote about the issue, with updates as of 10:47pm on the night of August the 15<sup>th</sup>. He criticised Hell Pizza for their recent ‘Pratfalls’, and noted the Confessional consisted of “the “confessor” jovially recall[ing] placing his penis in the mouth of someone who was sleeping.” He further noted that after removing the Confessional post they posted again, this time saying:

Hey everyone, tonight we posted a fan’s confession seeing it in the spirit of a prank between mates. Once we understood that offence had been taken and saw the bad light the post could be seen in we removed it, and we apologise to those offended. Lesson learned.

Manhire’s article contains updates made over the following days as the story continued to be reported and discussed with each update dated and time stamped. His initial story included a screencap of a tweet from @ishtarsHS which read:

“\$55,000 is small change to a large company facing PR disaster, @hellpizza666. It’s also the shortfall Wgn Rape Crisis need to make up.”

The second post from Hell Pizza is notable for not being an apology, and for shifting blame for people ‘taking offence’ onto those who were upset or offended. They also said they saw the original confession as ‘a prank between mates’ noting they belatedly realised the ‘bad light’ it could be seen in. In saying this Hell Pizza indicate that they don’t consider the assault to have been an assault, defending their decision to publish it and implicitly defending the attacker as having played a ‘prank’. The post denies that the post was more than a lack of good judgement and suggests it could be seen in a ‘bad light’, avoiding the fact that the Confessional described an incident of unlawful sexual connection. It casts the incident as a ‘prank’ and reinforces the fact that the original poster and many of the commenters saw it as a joke. Despite the fact that the original confessional described the victim as ‘an utter wanker’ suggesting that the offender had malicious intent the post describes the victim and offender as ‘mates’. Their comment also indicates the way in which assaults against men are often viewed, as practical jokes or pranks, or in some way which minimises their seriousness for the victim and excuses the attacker from the seriousness of what they have done.

The second post is now also deleted, with the link provided by Manhire in the article leading to a 'page not found' error in Facebook. Regrettably I have not been able to find a screencap of the post and the comments on it. Following this second post Hell Pizza posted again the following morning, in which the owners said:

Last night our Social Media Manager posted a Facebook Confessional post that was not approved by Callum or Stu the owners of the NZ brand. He normally does a great job, but in this case he got it wrong. We unreservedly apologise for this comment and have taken steps to stop it from reoccurring. Sexual assault is no joke and we would like to use the massive level of discussion on this to highlight the need of Wellington Rape Crisis (WRC). Wellington Rape Crisis provides free support and counselling to survivors of rape and sexual abuse but has this week been forced to cut its services due to funding issues. Many of you feel strongly about this so here a chance to put words into action as we are. We are making a 10k donation to WRC today and until the end of the month we will match any donation to Wellington Rape Crisis dollar for dollar to help them get to their target of 55k - so they can stay open 5 days a week!

We encourage you all to join with us in raising money and awareness for Wellington Rape Crisis. Their team will track all the donations from today until the end of the month - you can do it

here [http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=23&products\\_id=193](http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=23&products_id=193)

As part of our commitment to ensuring this doesn't happen again we will also be putting our team and staff through a sexual violence awareness and ethical bystander training run by the Wellington Sexual Abuse Network, of which Wellington Rape Crisis is the lead agency.

### Response to Hell Pizza's Retractions

The number of comments responding to this third post by Hell Pizza on the Confessional topic eventually reached 238. These comments expand upon the key

discursive threads evident in the initial response to the original post. Among them were a significant number of comments expressing displeasure that Hell Pizza had deleted the Confessional and repeatedly stating that the post was ‘a joke’. Another, by Antoinette, says the confessional was “gross” but “no one was raped, no one was violated”. The comments show extensive efforts by some commenters to avoid classifying the incident as an assault or violation. Many of the comments which state the original offence was a joke also criticise people who asked Hell Pizza to apologise as being too sensitive, or easily offended. This again is an attempt to avoid classifying the incident as a sexual assault or rape and to deny that Hell Pizza were wrong to award pizza vouchers to the offender. This trend is evident throughout the comments analysed in this chapter: the attempts to deny that such incidents constitute sexual assault using a variety of different methods. Many commenters also picked up on the fact that the Confessional was posted on Facebook, denying that this was a ‘real’ form of discourse and suggesting concern about the posting was invalid because of the medium through which both the offending Confessional and the objections to it were expressed.

After the post in which Hell Pizza announced the winner of their Confessional competition was deleted following an outcry, commenters began responding to other posts on the Hell Pizza Facebook wall including a post promoting the Confessional competition. The intended reader of the comments made on the post are often earlier commenters, or other people who have had input in the discussion either in the specific comment thread being discussed or elsewhere on the Hell Pizza corporate Facebook page. In some cases the intended reader and audience are Hell Pizza themselves particularly in cases where the writer notes they will no longer be a customer of the business, or address their disgust specifically to the company. In further analysing the comments made I will group them according to the discursive theme which they reinforce most – in some cases this will require the breaking up of larger comment threads, but these can be found in their entirety in Appendix 1 for a complete picture of the chronological discussion.

### Online Discourse and ‘Truth’

A recurring theme in the commentary on the issue was that it was less serious or irrelevant because the original posting and subsequent discussion occurred online, and specifically on social media. Many commenters expressed ideas to the effect that they viewed Facebook particularly as an entertainment medium and denied that ideas and opinions expressed within the service could have an impact on the wider discourse around sexual assaults against men.

One comment made in response to a poster who expressed disgust at Hell Pizza's actions, by Nick S reads:

Hahaha Reuben, unfortunately you may not know the difference between fact and fiction. In your little mind you may think that there's acceptance for sexual assault but in reality it is based on the "STORY" of the confession, not the underlying moral principles, laws, rules, regulations, statutes etc that may or may have not been breached in the story.

Nick's comment appears to be simultaneously denying that the confession is real or that what it describes is illegal and attempting to mock Reuben, who commented earlier criticising the post, for his concern. Nick's comment appears to indicate that he doesn't think Hell Pizza condoning a sexual assault by rewarding confessions about it with vouchers is a concern unless it can be proved that the incident described actually took place. He claims that people accepted and were amused by the assault described because it was a fictionalised account, even though the writer presented it as an account of events which actually happened. Nick does not provide any evidence for his apparent belief that the incident may have been fictionalised, but suggests Reuben is foolish (the phrase 'in your little mind' is intended to be insulting) for expressing outrage at the post.

Nick's comment also suggests that he believes only accounts of events which can be proven to have occurred warrant concern, and does not address the fact that the comments expressing amusement didn't appear to be predicated on if the commenter believed the assault was fictitious. Another comment from Hamish B also expresses disbelief that people are upset by a Facebook post, concluding with him suggesting people "hit up the Westboro Baptist Church to get advice on how to be an uptight soccer mum. Hell they may even teach us how to sue someone over a FACEBOOK POST". Comments such as those by Hamish and Nick, draw a distinction between

discussions which occur online and discussions which occur in the ‘real world’ or offline. Their comments deny the impact which online discussions have on those who read and engage in them, and their place in the wider discourse about sexual assaults against men.

Further comments by Ashley J and Shevy M, along with those from Nick S and Hamish B also express the idea that making joking posts about sexual assault on Facebook isn’t a cause for concern or anger, and seem to indicate a belief that Facebook is removed from real events and real people, with Ashley J saying “ITS A JOKE WIERDOS” [sic] and Shevy M commenting “lol, omg. you faggots. you really think hell is condoning sexual assault because this guy did this? you've got to be kidding me” [sic]. The full comments can be found in the appendix. Edward’s post in this comment chain attempts to jokingly use victim blaming as a comedic device (victim blaming is identified in chapter two as a contributor to low rates of reporting assaults to police) and also compares the seriousness of the assault to ‘assaulting’ a pizza or pasta by eating it, indicating he doesn’t think the assault described in the original attack was worthy of concern.

In a later comment thread one poster, Bazza S, draws parallels between a comment made by another poster Hugh who derided his views, and the original post by Hell Pizza, suggesting both were done without thinking, but said that he doesn’t think Hugh will make a contribution to a charity or support group. Bazza’s comments suggest that he thinks Hell Pizza have absolved themselves of any wrongdoing by making the donation, and that he doesn’t think there was a degree of thought or consideration put into the awarding of the Confessional prize.

Bazza’s comments treat Hell Pizza’s Facebook page as if it were a private page run by an individual, as seen earlier with his comments that they should be forgiven just as people would forgive ‘friends and family’, and again in this comment where he compares their Confessional with a comment made by Hugh. The implications of the attitudes and actions of Hell Pizza are minimised or negated for some commenters, due to their treating the company’s postings as similar to the behaviour of one individual. The use of social media has blurred the boundaries between what is corporate behaviour and what is individual opinion and action. Bazza and other comments defending Hell Pizza don’t give consideration to the likelihood that Hell Pizza have a dedicated social

media strategy and give considerably more thought to what they post and the implications of it than an individual might.

With this in mind, Hell Pizza were likely aware of the fact the Confessional would attract considerable controversy, as their social media strategy likely relies partially on this – their decision to post the offender’s confession would not have been impulsive, it would presumably have meant they weighed up the harm which could be caused and decided that social media attention was more important. The understanding of Facebook primarily as an entertainment medium seems to contribute to an expectation that businesses participating in online discourse will behave in a way similar to individuals and perhaps reduces the suspicion or cynicism which individuals might otherwise have about advertising, allowing posts such as the Confessional to be interrogated less rigorously than they would perhaps be if delivered via another medium.

‘People need to Chill’ – denying the validity of offence.

Another ongoing theme in the discussion of the post is the dismissal of people who express offence, and this could be seen from the earliest comments on the original Confessional post. Comments which rely on this method of dismissal often refer to the Confessional offence as a ‘joke’ and make use the language adopted by Hell Pizza in their initial two posts mentioning ‘pranks’ to minimise the seriousness of the incident and the validity of people’s sincere offence, upset and hurt about the use of the incident as a promotional tool.

One of the final comments on the third post made by Hell Pizza, from Matt B reads in part: “People need to chill, no rape isn't a joke, by any means, but if you can't laugh at these kinds of things (or at least ignore them) then IMHO you probably shouldn't be on the internet.” Matt’s comment is also among those which attempts to dismiss people’s concerns about the Confessional post by suggesting that the fact it was posted online negates its importance. Matt’s comment that people who didn’t find the Confessional post funny ‘shouldn’t be on the internet’ also places the onus on people offended by the post to remove themselves from the situation, and suggests that they are the ones to

blame for being offended, rather than the poster propagating offensive material under the guise of it being amusing being responsible. He also contradicts his own opening statement saying both that ‘rape isn’t a joke’ but then immediately stating that people should be able to laugh at ‘these kinds of things’. This comment suggests that Matt is attempting to placate commenters who were angry that the offence was being repeatedly described as a joke by agreeing with them in his opening sentence but then immediately dismissing their concern. In doing this Matt is trying to increase the impression that he is being ‘reasonable’ and that it is irrational or unreasonable to take offence at the Confessional post. Comment’s like Matt’s also show evidence of the expectation that violence is an accepted part of being male and inhabiting masculinity as described by Connell in her discussions of the use of the body as tool and weapon (58). This violence is used to reinforce the hegemonic masculinities described by Connell too and in this case Matt is reinforcing the notion that men who are less emotionally affected by the post or willing to overlook the violence described in it may be privileged more highly for not displaying traits associated with femininity (concern and empathy for others). In this way behaviour and comments like Matt’s are used to maintain the position of most men are holding a more privileged position than women, through the dismissal of conventionally feminine behaviours as weak or undesirable.

In responses to an advertising image which Hell Pizza had posted to their wall intended to encourage people to enter the Confessional competition, many commenters expressed their disapproval and offence at the post. Other comments make use of devices such as victim blaming often in an attempt at humour to try to undermine the comments expressing offence. One comment, from Edward F, reads: “If it makes you feel any better, i sexually assaulted[sic] one of your pizza. It was asking for it. I might orally rape some of that pasta next time.” From what Edward has written it is evident he finds the original (by now deleted) post to have been funny. He jokes about sexually assaulting a pizza, making it clear that he doesn’t consider the assault described in the original post to have been serious or legitimate: he is comparing its legitimacy to eating a pizza or a pasta, minimising the seriousness of sexual assault though the comparison and suggesting that concern expressed by commenters is misplaced. Edward’s comment also includes the phrase “it was asking for it”, an allusion to the victim blaming sentiment that survivors of rape and sexual assault are to blame for their attacks through

‘asking for’ the assault or rape by their behaviour or dress. Edward’s use of victim blaming rhetoric as a humorous device indicates that he is aware the ‘asking for it’ excuse is commonly used in cases of assault and rape and that he finds the device amusing.

One post from Warren B on Hell Pizza’s Facebook wall read, in part:

So I just noticed all the controversy about some apparent sexual assault. Seriously? I've never seen so many cry babies in my life! Hell didn't even INVENT that confession, they relayed it, and warned everyone about reading it! This is Hell Pizza guys, not 'we care about your feelings' pizza

Warren’s post did not attract any comments. He defends Hell Pizza’s choice to post the confession, dismissing the offence as an ‘apparent’ sexual assault thereby minimising its seriousness. He also claims that people upset and offended by the post are ‘cry babies’. This choice of wording is dismissive and also serves to associate negative and weak behaviours with those who complained about the post. Crying and being a ‘cry baby’ is used to describe complaining without good reason, although within conventional hegemonic masculinities any kind of crying would be seen as feminine and weak. In his choice of words Warren attacks the credibility of people who complained about the post, also implies that those who complained make a habit of complaining about unimportant issues. Warren also excuses Hell Pizza’s decision to post the confession by saying they didn’t ‘invent’ the confession, they just posted it. His choice of words is telling, as the word ‘invent’ suggests that Warren doesn’t think the incident actually occurred. Warren’s comment also absolves Hell Pizza of any responsibility for making judgements about the effects which their online presence may have on their brand and on people’s emotional wellbeing.

In another post made directly on Hell Pizza’s Facebook wall, Bazza S writes:

dear hell stand tall dont take the media bashing. people need to harden the hell up learn to take a joke, it wasnt directed at them they had no part of it. plus it was funny as faark.  
much luck  
bazz

In this comment Bazza indicates that he believes people are taking the report too seriously and suggests people complaining about the Confessional need to learn to ‘take a joke’. He also suggests that people who were not directly involved shouldn’t be complaining because he believes the reporting of the incident doesn’t affect them. Bazza’s comment and others like it which suggest that only people directly involved in an assault have a right to complain about how it is discussed and represented deny the existence and experiences of other victims who expressed their upset and hurt throughout the threads. Bazza’s comment is in opposition to other discourse from earlier commenters expressing the view that the Confessional post normalises and trivialises such assaults. Bazza also describes the assault as ‘funny’, adding to the people expressing the belief that the offence was a prank or joke, as Hell Pizza originally tried to describe it.

Ariyah V commented in response to a post criticising Hell Pizza’s decision to post the Confessional, asserting: “People are not gonna see that post and start raping people, chill the fuck out.”

Ariyah’s comment is directed at people who took offence at the original post, and linked the trivialisation of assault to rape culture. Comments like Ariyah’s misunderstand the comments made by many people who were offended, in that they discredit their concern by suggesting those who were offended saw a direct causal link between the post and acts of rape. Instead, they ignore the more subtle effects whereby posts such as the Confessional normalise such behaviour and excuse such acts as being ‘a prank between mates’, in the words of Hell Pizza. Such normalisation also discourages victims from speaking out, and is supported by a system of hegemonic masculinity which views any kind of complaint or request for support as unmasculine.

Dion S also posted on Hell Pizza’s wall, saying:

Fuck the haters, Hell! I thought the joke was funny and I love the pizza! A lot of people have taken this way too far and they seriously just need to get a life. I just ordered a pizza! Ha!

Dion’s post is clearly intended to support Hell Pizza, and he criticises the people who expressed offence as ‘haters’, a phrase intended to discredit them and their concern. Dion’s comment in this way is similar to many other comments and posts on the page

dismissing people complaining as being overly sensitive, or telling them to ‘get a life’. Dismissing the people complaining neatly circumvents any need to engage with the arguments which they have put forward. Dion disregards people’s concern about the original post as being unnecessary and uses the language used by Hell Pizza to originally excuse the post, referring to it as a joke. Comments like Dion’s seem removed from the fact that the post was a Confessional submitted by a real person describing events which actually occurred, and seem to regard discourse which takes place on the internet as fictitious or not having any bearing on events which affect real people. His comment ignores that discourse around rape and sexual assault which takes place online is still a part of wider societal discourse about the issues, and shapes how the issues are discussed more generally.

The initial responses to Dion’s post were supporting his comments. In the first comment disagreeing with him Jewels H comments on Dion’s post to say: “Sorry but tbh I think it's disgusting and horrible “ She prefaces her statement with an apology, possibly indicating that she expects her position will not be respected.

Taneora then comments, in response to Jewels, saying: ““I'm a mass murderer who enjoys defiling dead bodies and getting sexual with them" <- do you find this comment offensive?” Taneora’s comment is glib and attempts to undermine the serious nature of Jewels’ comment by putting together a number of offensive things to provoke a reaction. By doing this Taneora indicates that he doesn’t believe the original Confessional post was problematic and dismisses Jewels’ personal response to and feelings about the Confessional. Taneora’s interactions with Jewels are effectively a case study in tactics used to dismiss, bully and intimidate people speaking out about sexual assaults being discussed in an offensive and joking manner. This is an attempt to force them to back down or remove themselves from the discussion. Taneora’s opening comments make it clear that he isn’t interested in having a productive conversation with Jewels about her point of view. Jewels responds to Taneora’s comment by saying: “I just think its not cool to use sexual harassment/abuse as a joke.” Jewels’ response avoids directly answering Taneora’s question and again states that she finds the original Confessional post offensive because it uses a sexual attack as a joke. Her comment is non-confrontational, in response to Taneora’s comment which is confronting and aims to provoke a reaction. Taneora comments again, saying: “why not? Is it as bad as all other jokes out there? What about racist jokes?”

Hamish B then comments, in response to another commenter saying he would “spank” rape jokes: “Oh calm down matt, or I might have to stick my balls in your mouth lol” By saying this Hamish continues to treat the sexual assault described in the original post as a joke, using it as a threat against the previous poster, Matt. The casual use of the offence in a Facebook comment as a way to exchange banter between friends is a way of trivialising the assault, and is an indication that the commenter views such an action as a minor prank or joke, something it is appropriate to threaten light heartedly.

Comments of this nature are likely to have an effect on how assaults like the one described are viewed by victims and by offenders, taking a Foucauldian approach to the analysis. Hamish using the assault described in this way to make a joke of the incident at the expense of Matt reinforces the notion that it was unimportant, and also indicates that he sees himself playing a role as reinforcing and keeping the power structures which require men who have been assaulted to behave nonchalantly about it, or risk being tarred with the accusation that they have been emasculated. Hamish’s use of the threat here is borderline taunting, mentioning the offence committed as a way of showing he feels he can threaten it with impunity.

In the interaction between Taneora and Jewels, Taneora repeatedly demands that Jewels explain why she doesn’t find jokes about sexual assault funny or ‘cool’, and asking if the original Confessional post (which he calls a ‘joke’) was as bad as ‘all the other jokes’ or as bad as racist jokes. By doing this Taneora derails the discussion. He repeatedly refers to the original confession of sexual assault as a joke, and likens it to other jokes thereby minimising the seriousness of it and reinforcing that he thinks it is a humorous post intended to amuse. Taneora doesn’t explain why he believes the post is a joke and instead all of his comments make this assumption based on how Hell Pizza described it in their original defence of the post. Rather than engaging with Jewels about why she finds the Confessional to be offensive Taneora demands that she explain if the ‘joke’ is as bad or worse than other jokes. This is a borderline intimidation, as it places Jewels in a position of having to either enter into an argument with him, the terms of which he is dictating, or to back down and lose the argument by default.

Hell Pizza described the original Confessional as a ‘prank between mates’. This use of language implies the assault was supposed to be amusing or funny, but has a different connotation to calling it a ‘joke’. The insistence of Taneora and other

commenters on referring to the Confessional as a joke undermines it further, and calls into question if it actually occurred. Hell Pizza's original post and all subsequent posts (including their later comments within other threads) spoke about the offence as having really occurred, including when they later stated the offender had gotten in touch with them privately to clarify some details about it.

Commenters such as Taneora had turned their use of the word 'prank' into 'joke' in their own description, a subtle and important distinction. 'Prank' suggests that the offence was committed without malice while joke implies that it didn't occur at all and is possibly a story invented by the offender. The notion that the assault was invented seems likely to be linked to the notion that assaults against men are rare or don't occur at all. If this attitude is held by the commenters it would make sense for them to refer to the offence using a term which suggests it didn't happen at all.

### Homophobic Responses to the Confessional

As evidenced in chapters two and three, writings on masculinity and attitudes towards sexual assaults against men both suggest that the stigma which is attached to victims is frequently based in latent homophobia on the part of those making judgements about them. A number of comments made on the issue evidenced casual homophobia, but some of these are included in other sections as they also reinforced other discursive themes. Many commenters criticising Hell Pizza's behaviour and decisions however, picked up on the homophobic nature of some comments.

One commenter, Ivy P argues in response to Hell Pizza's third post:

And it doesn't matter what orifice it was, it's still a sexual assault, it's not a matter of mouth=OK, bum=not OK. Would it still have been funny if the penis had been put in the passed out guys arse instead of his mouth?

Ivy's comment attempts to address the view that some incidents of sexual assault are less serious than others because of what the exact act was. She asks if the incident would be treated as amusing if the victim had been anally violated rather than orally violated. Her comments speaks to the homophobia which underpins many of the comments, that the assault is funny because it is presumed the offender did not derive sexual pleasure from it and instead committed the offence as an expression of his

disdain for the victim and his power over him. The comments which find the offence funny assume that any sexual interactions between two men are intended either to insult or humiliate, or as a joke, denying the existence of gay or bi-sexual men entirely and presuming that everyone being discussed is heterosexual. The supposed humour of the situation is both in the humiliation of the victim and the supposed ridiculousness of sexual contact between two men being anything other than an act committed with a sexual intention.

It appears that the offender is viewed as a 'bloke' and many of the comments suggest that the commenters identify with him and his behaviour. Many of the comments excusing the offence attempt to normalise the behaviour and to suggest it occurs frequently. Perhaps then the attempts to normalise the excuse the offence are from commenters who have committed similar offences themselves, been witness to them, or would not think twice before committing such an offence while intoxicated. The comments excusing the offence as a joke, a prank, or a common occurrence must have some motivation and it seems plausible that this motivation is possibly an attempt to excuse their own past behaviour and attitudes.

In a later comment thread Tim R links the attitudes expressed by many comments on this post and elsewhere on the Confessional issue to the specific kind of masculinity expected in New Zealand and to New Zealand's broader national identity. He identifies the dismissive attitude as a 'She'll be right', a phrase typical of the 'bloke' which Bannister discusses in his work,. He says the decision to post the winning Confessional entry was effectively a glamorisation of sexual assault: this is possibly an accurate statement, and is the first time in the comments that this angle has been raised. In their decision to publish the Confessional entry and award it, Hell Pizza provided a greater platform for the events described and their initial comments failed to condemn the behaviour, only labelling it as possibly offensive. From his comment it is evident that in Tim's opinion Hell Pizza's behaviour went further, effectively endorsing the behaviour. Tim concludes his comment by saying: "As a conservative society we don't condone same sex marriages but we condone same sex sexual assault as a 'laugh with the boys' sort it the fuck out New Zealand!"

Tim's comment points out the homophobia which is still embedded in New Zealand society (although same sex marriage has since been legalised) in a more obvious way, and then links it to the lack of concern about the Confessional incident. Tim's comment points to the homophobia embedded in much of New Zealand society being a key reason why such assaults are more acceptable: the failure to believe that they constitute a sexual assault, as articulated by Stefan, because they aren't considered to be sexually motivated, ignoring the power dynamics at play in sexual assaults between men and assuming that a sexual motive must exist for such incidents to constitute assault. The homophobia intrinsic to the comments comes from assuming that it is automatically 'funny' or humiliating, or both, to be involved in any kind of homosexual encounter, consensual or not.

#### Victim Blaming and the Validity of Assaults.

Another discursive theme evident in much of the online conversation around the Confessional issue was the repeated claims by commenters defending Hell Pizza, or otherwise excusing their behaviour as not serious was the suggestion that if the victim had been upset by the assault then he would have reported it formally, to the police. This assumption ignores the climate in which victims find themselves and in many cases the commenters themselves display the attitudes which make reporting a sexual assault such an intensely intimidating prospect. Many of the comments also carry with them the implicit assumption that an assault only really occurred or was only really an assault if it has been formally reported. Obviously the reporting rates quoted in chapter three indicate that this is not the case: that few assaults are reported generally, and reporting rates among male victims are even lower.

In a comment thread following the third post by Hell Pizza a commenter, Catelin S, repeatedly dismisses the assault by saying it 'isn't sexual assault' even though the acts described would be defined as unlawful sexual connection under New Zealand law. Catelin's comment minimises the seriousness of the assault and puts the onus to object on the victim by saying if the assault has upset him he would have complained (she has no way of knowing if the victim has reported the assault, but assumes he has not.) She also assumes that if the victim was upset by the offence he would have 'done something

about it', in the same comment where she entirely dismisses the seriousness of the offence. Catelin's comment is indicative of many of the views which male sexual assault victims are likely to encounter in that she simultaneously puts the onus of proof and complaint on the victim to identify what occurred as sexual assault while also dismissing it in the same way Hell Pizza did in their initial apology by describing it as a prank, and saying "so some c\*\*\* got a tea bagging? who cares, it's not sexual assault".

Jessica E comments in response to Catelin, saying: "Actually putting your penis inside someone's mouth without consent IS sexual assault." Jessica's comment corrects Catelin's assertion that the offence described isn't assault. Catelin comments again, reiterating her suggestion that if the victim was upset by the offence he would have reported it, and ignored Jessica's comment clarifying that what occurred was assault. Catelin's statement gives the impression that she doesn't see the offence as a problem if the victim has not made a formal complaint about it.

Jessica E reiterates her earlier comments and expands on it:

Like I said above, the confession could very well be someone's idea of a joke. However, the main problem is in that someone in Hell's marketing PR thought it was a good idea to post this and trivialise sexual abuse. I mean, I'm all for humour but the thing with a joke is that it's meant to be funny. This really isn't. Sexual assault is a really serious issue and the trivialisation of it and the responses that have been seen on this page are a perfect example of why many rape victims feel uncomfortable in coming forward with information. When we are told that tea bagging is "just a joke" do you really think people will feel okay in complaining about it when they are met with such a patronising and disrespectful attitudes. [sic]

Jessica's comment is directed at Catelin and possibly Andrew who also made comments to a similar effect. She notes that her objection is to Hell Pizza's marketing department making the decision to publish the confession and believing it was an appropriate topic to make light of. She addresses Catelin's comments about the victim complaining if he was upset by the incident, noting that comments like the ones on the Facebook page and in the comment thread she is participating in are an example of the social attitudes which rape victims are exposed to, which may contribute to the fact victims are often reluctant to report their assault. She notes people who may consider reporting an assault

are faced with attitudes which treat them with disrespect and dismissive attitudes which paint their experiences as ‘a joke’.

Catelin comments again, to say:

EXACTLY.

omfg.

so if the guy had been as offended as you, wouldn't he of gone to the cops?!

i bet it was a joke between mates, i have been to plenty of partys when some c\*\*\* has gotten a cock in the mouth when they've passed out.

all of them heard about it in the morning & i've never heard any of them go as far as calling the cops for sexual assault.

it's a joke between guys for fucks sake.

after a few punches to the arm & a bit of name calling it would have been sweet.

in fact, i bet he would have gotten the dude back by doing the same thing. [sic]

Catelin's response goes to significant lengths to dismiss the incident as minor and not serious enough to consider an assault. She responds by saying she has seen people assaulted in this way many times, and minimises the seriousness of the assault by referring to it as getting ‘a cock in the mouth’, the colloquial language used to make the assault sound casual rather than using the clinical language of the Crimes Act which another commenter, Rachel, quoted in response to her earlier comment.

She refers to the assault as ‘a joke between guys’, a very similar phrase to Hell Pizza's chosen description: of a ‘prank between mates’ and her recounting of the incidents suggests it is being used as a form of humiliation. She again states that she thinks the victim would have contacted the police if he was upset, ignoring Jessica's earlier explanation of why dismissing assault as ‘a joke’ makes it difficult for rape and assault victims to report what happened to them.

Catelin is unwilling to accept that the offence described could be upsetting to a victim or that any of the people she has witnessed being assaulted may in fact have been uncomfortable with the assault but may not have displayed that discomfort and upset outwardly. She has normalised it in her comment, by saying she has seen assaults like this occur at ‘plenty of partys’ [sic] suggesting that as it is a common occurrence as far as she is concerned it isn't serious or deserving of offence. Catelin also states the way

such offences are resolved is with ‘a few punches to the arm’ reiterating that assaults such as these and the response to them are viewed as a performance of masculinity in some social circles, with a ‘punch to the arm’ a casual display of violence dismissed as an appropriate response.

Daniel Z then rebuts Catelin’s comments:

'so some cunt got a tea bagging? who cares, it's not sexual assault'

>it is

'you would think if the dude had such a massive problem with it he would have done something about it, considering he gets "shit for it all the time" '

> he probably hasn't gone to the cops for this very reason. that's the problem, even if he was hurt/offended/felt terrible, because of how many people make fun of it he most likely wouldn't speak up about it. that's what happens in a lot of cases of abuse, the victim will just live with it because they have no idea that it is wrong.

Daniel first points out that ‘tea bagging’ is in fact a form of sexual assault. He then responds to Catelin’s claim that the victim would have ‘done something’ about the assault if he was upset by it, noting that as he ‘gets shit for it’ this probably dissuades him from going to the police about it because he fears being made fun of further for what happened. Daniel’s comment highlights the shaming associated with the victims of sexual assault as being a key reason why they choose not to disclose their status as victims, and to report assaults.

### Definitions of Sexual Assault

Stefan K posted a lengthy comment on the page, with the first paragraph reading:

“I can't believe the controversy that's been stirred up based on such a minor comment. It was a funny prank between a couple of guys - if it had happened to me, I wouldn't be happy about it, but I certainly wouldn't be so ignorant as to compare myself to a rape victim or demand that the trite incident be investigated as stringently as that of someone who's suffered a violent assault.”

Stefan's comment is also defending Hell Pizza and dismissing the concerns expressed by some commenters about the confessional post. He reiterates Hell Pizza's decision to define the incident as 'a funny prank' between friends, recasting the original confession in which the confessor said the victim was a 'wanker', thereby giving suggesting that the offence was committed maliciously and that the attacker considered it justified because he disliked the victim. Stefan also makes comments about how he thinks he would feel if the incident had happened to him, but fails to note that the offender may have felt differently, and says the incident is 'trite' compared to a violent assault. Stefan's decision to place himself in the role of imagined victim is the device mentioned earlier in this chapter, which puts those who disagree with him because of their own personal experiences in the position of having to disclose their status as a victim in order for their views to be taken seriously as a rebuttal of his claims. Stefan also says it would be 'ignorant' for people who had experienced an assault like the one described in the Confessional to expect it to be investigated in the same way as other more violent assaults. By saying this Stefan is expressing that he doesn't believe people who have experienced assaults similar to this should report them. Stefan's view dismisses the seriousness of the incident and is very prescriptive in how he believes victims of assault should be allowed to feel about them.

Stefan seeks to make a distinction between this offence and other violent offences, based on his own perception of how damaging the incident would be to the offender. Stefan's comment is typical of the kind of comments this incident attracted, in that it minimises the damage and trauma which the assault would have caused to the victim. These attempts at minimisation can also be seen in Hell Pizza's decision to cast the incident as 'a prank between mates'. A number of commenters replied to Stefan's post, and he engaged with them, responding to comments made. Scott B sarcastically asks: "If you feel this strongly will you be writing to your local MP to ask that the legal definition of sexual assault be redefined?" In part of his response, Stefan K says:

In any case, this isn't about the criminality of the act. A child stealing a chocolate bar from a dairy, and a hardened criminal snatching a women's purse are both equally instances of theft - but both the public, and the judge trying each case would understand that they're quite different examples, and they deserve different degrees of investigation and/or punishment.

Stefan compares the assault by using the example of a child stealing a chocolate bar and a 'hardened criminal' stealing a purse, by saying that although both are theft they would be dealt with very differently. The implication here is obviously that Stefan thinks the offence described in the confessional is akin to a child stealing a chocolate bar. The example of a child stealing a chocolate bar brings to mind a misdeed which is minor, inconveniences someone at worst, and is committed with no real understanding of the consequences. By making this comparison Stefan is also minimising the seriousness of the incident described, particularly by suggesting that it is a crime which causes only a minor inconvenience rather than an invasion of personal bodily autonomy.

Alice R then comments on Stefan's post, saying in part:

If anyone had thought it was an amusing idea to shove their cock in my mouth while I was passed out, I would want them charged. And the whole 'oh, because you're a woman, that's all, if it's a woman that's not okay' feeling that plenty of people reading this comment will have is a sad part of the culture of men having to pretend to be fine with stuff like that, because, you know, being traumatised by someone forcing oral sex on your unconscious body is womanly and weak and not in the upstanding tradition of mates.

Maybe in this case there was only embarrassment and even amusement caused, but sexual assault in \*all\* its forms can horribly fuck up people's lives. And there's more than enough victim-blaming around rape without the purveyors of delicious pizza jumping on the 'it ain't that serious' bandwagon..

Alice's comment critiques Stefan's comments and identifies that much of the commentary around the issue has been affected by the fact that the victim is a male. She says if someone assaulted her in the way described in the original post she would want them charged, in opposition to Stefan's statements comparing the assault to a child stealing chocolate and suggesting the offence wasn't serious enough to require criminal charges and police intervention. She also says that many people reading the comment will believe that if the assault had been on a woman it wouldn't have been as generally accepted and excused as it was, but men have to 'pretend to be fine with' such assaults because being traumatised or affected by the assault is 'womanly and weak'. In this

comment Alice identifies that the way which assaults on men are often dismissed or expected to be taken in stride because being affected by them is contrary to traditional performances of hegemonic masculinity.

Stefan then comments again, saying:

I never said that performing a prank like this is 'fine', nor can I think of any mate who I'd let get away with it. My central point was that 'sexual assault' isn't some blanket word to be applied to a circumstance like this, and that to do so is detrimental to victims of more serious, violent sexual assaults. It's in the same vein as my belief that labelling someone a sexual predator and having them register as such because they were charged with statutory rape when they were 18 and their girlfriend was 17, as happens in several US states, both degrades the seriousness of rape and unfairly places negative labels on the guy involved.

The fact is, that without more information, it's impossible to tell how serious the incident was. It could well have been a genuinely traumatic experience for him, in which case sure, some investigation and intervention is necessary. It could also have been a meaningless prank to which he has given no second thought, in which case to compare his experience to that of someone who was just violently assaulted and raped only demeans the meaning behind the 'sexual assault' rhetoric. If the victim in this case was indeed mentally damaged or scarred, then I would certainly hope that no misguided sense of machismo prevented them from reporting a crime or getting help (though not from the Rape Crisis Centre obviously, despite them being the main beneficiaries of his purported suffering).

I don't see how Hell Pizza posting it as a confessional condones or encourages sexual assault though. The humour behind the posting stems from it being such a shocking and taboo recount - and in fact, anyone who failed to find it appalling contributes far more to the acceptance of such 'jokes'.

In this comment Stefan appears to be making a number of statements which contradict his previous post and comments. He begins by saying that he didn't say the assault initially described in the confessional post was 'fine', but rather than he thinks it is wrong to describe it as sexual assault. This is a prime example of the figured worlds theory described by James Paul Gee, in which Stefan has decided that the sexual assault described in the confessional does not fit with his personal notion of what constitutes a sexual assault and therefore he believes it is a misuse of the phrase to call the incident sexual assault, even though from a legal standpoint it fits the description of unlawful sexual connection as described in the Crimes Act. Stefan's key argument seems to be that the assault isn't serious enough or likely to have caused enough trauma to the victim to be considered a sexual assault. As mentioned in my discussion of masculinities, men are often considered to be more sexually driven or motivated than women, and therefore perceived to suffer less trauma in sexual assaults. Stefan is possibly taking this assumption (combined with his own definition of what constitutes a violent assault) and determining that the assault described in the original confessional isn't a 'real' sexual assault. Stefan also identifies the pressure to adhere to conventional masculinities, but refers to this as 'a misguided sense of machismo', stopping people from reporting that they have been assaulted.

Stefan's final paragraph is also contradictory. He begins by saying he doesn't think posting the account as a confessional does anything to condone or encourage sexual assault, but then says he thinks people who didn't find it appalling do more to encourage such assaults (which he refers to as 'jokes' in inverted commas). His comment is possibly reflecting a cognitive dissonance, whereby he doesn't wish to accept that the decision to post the Confessional indicates an acceptance of sexual assault given he has already stated he thinks posting it wasn't overly problematic and doesn't want to place himself in a position of himself supporting assault. He then goes on to say that reasonable people would be offended and upset by the posting, possibly in an attempt to indicate that he does find the act described in the offence wrong. He simultaneously states that posting the Confessional is both amusing because it is 'shocking' and that posting the Confessional with the intention of shocking the audience doesn't normalise such assaults.

Alice R responds to many of the points which Stefan raised in his latest comment. She refutes his suggestion that it minimises the suffering of people who had

been the victims of more violent assault to call the incident described in the original confessional 'sexual assault' by saying that no rape victims would feel degraded because an account of sexual assault is being taken seriously. In this comment, she implies that seeing an account of sexual assault which had been presented as an amusing anecdote criticised would be a sense of validation and reassurance to rape victims that their experiences are being taken seriously and people do have concern about them. She also notes that the ultimate beneficiaries of Hell Pizza's decision to donate to Rape Crises are the women who have been raped (Rape Crisis does not provide counselling services to men). Scott B then commented again, in response to Stefan's earlier comment.

So we're supposed to find a joke appalling AND humourous but you'd never let a mate of yours get away with it? Do... do you know how humour works? Especially humour on as sensitive a topic as this?

I would certainly hope that no misguided sense of machismo prevented them from reporting a crime or getting help" What about shame? Look at all the people who think people need to harden up. Who wants to look like a pussy or a wuss or whatever, and want to be threatened with rape for standing up to sexual assault? I'm not necessarily saying this is the case in this situation, but the views of society influence decisions like that. If you're going to feel like what happened to you is funny, you're less likely to go to the police because you'll feel like it's no big a deal. Studies have backed this up. Welcome to rape culture.

In this comment Scott articulates many of the issues with Stefan's earlier comment, and links them to specific attitudes which contribute to the behaviours and myths about sexual assault which are commonly termed 'rape culture'. He criticises Stefan's contradictory approach in describing the Confessional as amusing but also something he wouldn't let a friend 'get away with'. He also mentions that people's decision to report or not report an assault are influenced by the views and norms of a society and highlights that a man might be seen to be emasculated if he reports an assault. He also highlights the shame which can be cast on victims of assault, specifically mentioning other comments on the Hell Pizza Facebook page which instruct people complaining about the Confessional to 'harden up'. Scott's comment indicates he sees a link between online discourse and people's behaviour offline.

Stefan then responds to Alice and to Scott, saying that he believes calling the incident described sexual assault “serves to further warp what is implied when someone talks about sexual assault”, and describes the offence as ‘petty’, and that calling it assault unfairly maligns the offender. Stefan insists that calling the incident described in the Confessional as sexual assault is a misapplication of the term, arguing that the offence isn’t sexual assault because there was no sexual motivation as both the offender and the victim were straight (although this was never mentioned and is an assumption of Stefan’s part). In saying this Stefan is attempting to cast assaults which are sexually motivated as more serious than those which intend to humiliate or degrade the victim. This is the type of intention described in “Male/Male Rape and the Taint of Homosexuality”, where a sexual assault on a man is intended to embarrass and shame him. Shame was also singled out as a key reason why men may choose not to report sexual assaults against them by Scott in an earlier comment, and is labelled by Scott as forming a part of what he identifies as rape culture, the combination of rape myths and misconceptions which contribute to the low reporting and conviction rates for rape.

Stefan’s comments indicate that he believes it is incorrect to call an assault which isn’t sexually motivated ‘sexual assault’, even if it involved sexually violating the victim. Stefan is operating inside his own very specific figured world in this instance: his definitions of what kinds of assaults ‘deserve’ to be called sexual assault are highly specific and excuse incidents like this by attempts to downplay their seriousness, despite his lack of first-hand knowledge of the victim or offender. His language is discussing the assault is also telling – he expresses doubt about the impact the incident would have had on the victim and then further blames the victim suggesting that if he was affected by the offence then he shouldn’t let a ‘misguided sense of machismo’ keep him from reporting it. Stefan’s comments further place the blame and onus on the victim, and remove any possibility that the this victim’s failure to come forward (and by extension, any man affected by a similar assault) is a personal failing rather than a response to an unsupportive and doubtful society.

Stefan also talks about Hell Pizza’s decision to donate to Wellington Rape Crisis using the term ‘quickly offended public’ which is intended as a criticism, with the way it is used in the comment implying that the offence taken is unjustified or in Stefan’s words, petty. Stefan concludes that if someone found the attack ‘pleasurable’ then they would have no need to report it to the police. In doing this Stefan is modelling the kind

of attitudes uncovered in Smith, Pine and Hawley's "Social Cognitions about Adult Male Victims of Female Sexual Assault" where it was found that men were assumed to have been less traumatised and more likely to have enjoyed non-consensual sexual contact than women.

Alice J comments again, saying in part:

The problem with not labelling perpetrators of sexual assaults as such in order to acknowledge the horror that 'real' rape victims have been through is that it doesn't do that at all. The phrase 'it was a joke' has appeared in a lot of very serious rape cases, accompanied by 'I thought she was enjoying it' and 'well if she was that wasted what did she expect to happen'.

These 'defenses' have been used in cases of rape, gang rape and rape and sexual assault of disabled men and women and the underlying message is always 'why are you people being such a bunch of drama queens, stop whining, get over it'. Not naming one act as sexual assault and downplaying it to the point of having a giggle on the internet isn't helping victims, it's helping people do the same with more violent crimes.

If a person being a 'wanker' makes it funny for you to force your dick into someone's mouth, then a person wearing a short skirt and getting inebriated makes it hysterical when you rape them, right? While there are definitely degrees of harm and degrees of intent, there are no degrees of 'wrongness' when it comes to consent, and letting abusers believe that there are - that as long as they didn't assault someone 'that badly' they're in the clear - creates a slippery slope which continues to hurt victims everywhere. The idea that sexual assault \*can\* be taken 'too seriously' is what hurts victims, not anything else.

In this comment Alice refutes Stefan's arguments sequentially. She first responds to his suggestions that treating the offence described in the original Confessional post as

sexual assault undermines the seriousness of other assaults and rapes. Alice points out that allowing offences like the one described to be dismissed as a joke or a prank makes it easier to excuse other offences as a joke or not serious, and creates a situation where victims who complain are subjected to victim blaming statements including suggestions that they are ‘whining’ or being ‘too sensitive’. This can be seen in some of Stefan’s comments, including where he mentions the ‘easily offended public’, the same kind of attitude which Alice is mentioning here. Alice also makes the point that believing any sexual assault can be taken ‘too seriously’ hurts victims, which neatly refutes Stefan’s suggestion that his comments speak for victims. Stefan’s comments presume that he understands the needs and requests of victims, ignoring that many victims commented in the aftermath of the Confessional to express how they would prefer sexual assault to be discussed.

Alice’s comment articulates the issues with the kind of minimising and excusing comment that Stefan and other commenters have made on the Confessional, specifically noting that excusing one offence provides an expectation that other offences will similarly be dismissed and ignored. She also notes that Stefan and other commenters are promoting the idea that it is possible to take reports of sexual assault ‘too seriously’, suggesting that it is a crime which shouldn’t be accorded too much concern or time.

### ‘I’m not asking for life stories’ – the dismissal of lived experience

As the discussion about the incident progressed some commenters began expressing their personal feelings about the posting and in some cases disclosing their own experiences with assault to express how the dismissive comments affected them.

In response to a post on the Hell Pizza Facebook wall by Dion, Sam G comments: “I find it interesting how females seem to take it so seriously but guys don’t really give a Damn.” Sam’s comment reflects the comments already made in response to Dion’s post, with the only woman commenting (Jewels) being the only person saying they were unhappy with the original post. All other (male) commenters seemed to find the offence described either amusing or un concerning. This is an interesting observation, as there are numerous possible reasons for the gender divide in response to the Confessional post. The first and perhaps most apparent from the material covered so far in this work

is that men feel they cannot comment negatively about the Confessional without risking damaging their own appearance of adhering to conventional masculinity, that expressing condemnation or disapproval means they can't 'take a joke' or don't have a sense of humour, which is closely linked to the idea of being stoic and uncomplaining. That women feel more able to comment is perhaps less an indication that they are the only ones bothered by the issue and more than men feel they are restricted in what they can say by social norms and pressures.

The second possible explanation for more women than men commenting on the issue is that sexual assault and rape are seen as 'women's issues' even when the victim is a male, so more women than men feel compelled to comment and are more informed on the discourse around rape and sexual assault. For example, discourse which uses phrases such as 'victim blaming' and 'rape culture' may be more familiar to women and so they may be more able to articulate why posts such as the original Confessional contribute to the trivialisation of sexual assault.

In comments throughout all of the coverage and discussion of the issue, many people offended by the post went to significant lengths to explain to commenters who didn't see anything offensive about the post why it was harmful and was representative of the attitudes encountered by victims who seek help or wish to report their assault. Many of these commenters engaged in discussion on multiple comment threads, often repeating arguments to other commenters who repeatedly insisted the Hell Pizza post was 'a joke' and people offended should 'harden up', 'get a life' or otherwise stop caring about the post.

The repeated comments by parties on both sides indicates a desire to see their view of the situation triumph, although the motivations are potentially very different. Those protesting that the offence was 'a joke' have an interest in seeing the status quo upheld, and often appear to wish to defend offenders, potentially indicating that they suspect or are aware that friends or acquaintances of theirs may have committed such acts, or be capable of doing so. The protests that such offences do not constitute a form of sexual assault may also be a way of rejecting that offences which the commenter may have been the victim of were sexual assault, if they personally have not identified those offences as an assault.

Opposing that view, many of the commenters stating emphatically that the Confessional post was inappropriate and offensive composed lengthy and well researched and phrased comments to rebut the points of commenters defending Hell Pizza. The motivations here are also possibly varied, but the most obvious is that the commenters have either been affected by or know someone affected by sexual assault. This clearly won't be the case for all, but many comments include the personal experiences from the commenters to explain their points, backing up this as a motivation for commenting.

For example, Roz E proposes an apology on Hell Pizza's Facebook wall that they believe would be more appropriate than the apology proffered by the company:

How about this: "Dear New Zealand. We are sorry. We are sorry that we posted someone bragging about sexually assaulting a stranger. We're sorry that we held this assault up as behaviour to be celebrated, even rewarded. We apologise unreservedly and understand that this behaviour is contemptible, not just in the eyes of the law but also society. We will be undertaking staff training to better understand this issue and will be making a donation to Wellington Rape Crisis, who we have learned have had to close their doors one day a week due to lack of funds.

This will never, ever happen again."

Sam G, then responded to this post, saying: "jesus stop fucking caring"

Sam's dismissive post indicates he is annoyed that other people are commenting on the issue criticising Hell Pizza. His comments are among those mentioned earlier in the chapter, where the commenter for whatever reason appears to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and defending the behaviour and not being worthy of concern or offence.

Roz E then comments again to say:

Tell you what, you live in a world where you've been assaulted. Where you have to change your behaviour because of fear of rape or assault. Where companies

try to use examples of something extremely traumatic to sell you fast food. Where teenagers have to be educated that gang rape is not OK because that's what the media has told them bitches want. You live in that world and then stop fucking caring.

Roz's comment is an angry response to Sam's, outlining the reasons why Roz will not adhere to Sam's suggestion that she 'stop fucking caring'. Roz casts the Hell Pizza Confessional as a company selling fast food by presenting a traumatic event in an advertising campaign, similar to Jessica' using the rewording of the Hell Pizza Confessional in the previous example to cast into relief the behaviour they were endorsing. Roz and Jessica utilise this to exemplify how shocking this should be to other readers of the page. Roz also mentions the realities of sexual assault being trivialised for many people: they have to alter their behaviour out of a fear of being assaulted. Roz's comment explains her own reasons for continuing to criticise Hell Pizza.

Genevieve F comments, to say:

Well said Roz. I hope that people like Sam never have to go through being raped, though spending years blaming yourself and feeling like it was your fault. I guess someone like you Sam would like to agree with my own foster mother that I was asking for it?! And then I have to see the dregs of society applauding this sort of crap. Is it any wonder that so few assaults are reported. It's because we're told it was a prank, an accident, it was nothing. I hope you never have to go through it because it is the most degrading experience you will ever go through. Well at least until people like you tell us to stop caring. I'll stop caring when people like you stop thinking it's ok.

Genevieve supports the points made by Roz and criticises Sam's lack of concern. Genevieve mentions her own personal experience of being raped, and then told that the assault was her fault because she was 'asking for it', a victim blaming attitude which other commenters had earlier applied to the victim of the assault which Hell Pizza's Confessional described. Genevieve mentions the arguments often made against taking sexual assault and rape seriously, that it was an accident, that it was a prank (as Hell

Pizza initially said) and that it was ‘nothing’ or so minor it didn’t warrant concern. Her mentioning that assault is often dismissed as being ‘nothing’ also echoes the comments from people defending Hell Pizza’s decision, including Stefan who repeatedly argued that the offence described wasn’t serious enough to be described as a sexual assault. She links these attitudes to the fact that few assaults are ever reported.

Sam G comments dismissively:

i'm not asking for life stories? i just think people are making a huge deal about it. it was a prank, made by drunken idiots. sure, it was a tad inappropriate, but if the victim had such a huge issue about i'm pretty sure he would have laid charges.

Sam is dismissive of the personal experiences put forward by Genevieve and Roz, saying he wasn’t ‘asking for life stories’. In this Sam is utterly dismissive of their lived experiences and the ways in which attitudes like his and like the attitudes which informed Hell Pizza’s decision to post the Confessional affect people’s real lives. Sam restates his argument that the offence was a ‘drunken prank’, despite Genevieve saying specifically that views like these prevent people from feeling that they can report assaults. Sam also says he thinks if the victim thought the offence was a ‘huge issue’ he would have pressed charges ignoring Genevieve’s point that many victims don’t press charges because of the way sexual assaults are talked about. Sam’s comment that if the victim was upset by the assault he would have reported it is one in a series of comments saying this, or a variation to this effect. The attitude that the victim’s (presumed) decision not to report the assault indicates it wasn’t upsetting is one which was prevalent in the comments on the Confessional case.

Roz E then comments again to say:

Christ almighty. Point missed much? A MAJOR NZ COMPANY USED AN ACCOUNT OF RAPE TO TRY TO SELL YOU PIZZA. They think you think that's acceptable. Obviously you do. But a lot of people think using an example of sexual assault as a marketing campaign is disgusting. And how do you know the victim didn't lay charges?

Roz's comment is in response to Sam, but her comment is also intended to be seen by Hell Pizza and others who take Sam's view – the casting of the events as a company using an account of rape to sell a product is arguably an accurate description, but is also a way of describing the events which is deliberately shocking. Roz's comment aims to alter Sam's view by reframing the events to remove any ambiguity in the situation.

Genevieve F comments again, saying:

He wouldn't lay charges if people like you say it's just a prank and to get over it. That's the point. NZ has a rape culture that says this is ok when it's not. I didn't lay charges, does that mean it wasn't a huge deal?

Genevieve restates her previous point, that many assaults, and this assault specifically are often not reported because of the pressure the victims feel from the societal discourse which dismisses such attacks as pranks or not a 'huge deal'. Genevieve also shares her own experience of being assaulted, saying she didn't press charges but that doesn't undermine the seriousness of what occurred.

Sam G comments again, saying:

Look - I do not approve of rape any less than anyone else on this page. I'm just saying, if you want to do something about it, complaining on a Pizza company's Facebook page isn't going to do you much justice.

This comment shows a change from Sam's previous stance. Earlier he repeatedly said that the offence was a prank and demanded people 'stop caring'. Following Genevieve and Roz's latest comments he instead moves to suggesting that if people want to effect change then posting on the Hell Pizza Facebook wall isn't an effective way to do it.

Nick C then comments, saying: "Er, yeah it is. It already got a half-arse apology out of them." Nick accurately points out that Hell Pizza responded to criticism on their Facebook page by withdrawing the Confessional and apologising, disproving Sam's claim that complaining online won't have an effect.

Roz E comments again, saying:

Actually, that's not what you've said, but I'll take your last comment as genuine intention. If people hadn't said anything against this, they'd have gone for their celebratory drink for a funny competition winner and all the idiots who think sexual assault is funny would have had more thing to back up their incredibly dangerous view of the world. As it is, Hell now realise they have offended people. If people who actually think rape is not acceptable and it goes beyond a "sorry we offended you" "apology", then maybe they might just look at this a bit deeper.

Roz's comment is in response to Sam. Roz points out that Sam's latest comment contradicts his earlier comments, then Roz outlines why she believes it is important and valuable to criticise incidents such as this online. She says that without the criticism which had already taken place immediately following the Confessional the offender may have been awarded the prize, reinforcing their behaviour and suggesting to others who read the Confessional that the offence was fun and not serious

Anya M comments again, quoting Sam's comment from earlier in the comment thread in which he said he wasn't asking for 'life stories', and then saying:

OR the victim felt he couldn't or shouldn't lay charges because he lives in a world where people think that sexually assaulting someone while they sleep is hilarious and "just a prank" and then has to deal with the guilt of it somehow being their fault or that they should feel ok with it when they dont for the rest of their lives. awesome. [sic]

Anya quotes Sam's earlier comment in which he says if the victim was bothered by the assault he would have laid charges, and refutes this claim by explaining how the victim may have felt about the situation, reiterating that many commenters on the page expressed that they found the account of the assault amusing which would represent a barrier that exists for victims who want to report their assaults. Anya also points out that one of the possible outcomes of this situation, in which the societal attitudes expressed value and reward stoicism in the face of assault, could be the victim feeling guilty and

that it is their fault they aren't 'ok' with the assault. Anya's comment highlights the ongoing negative impacts on victims who feel they cannot disclose their experiences or ask for help.

Genevieve's responds to Sam's earlier comment in which he suggests that complaining on Facebook will be fruitless, and explains that she has taken action aside from commenting on their Facebook wall. His comments have placed her in a position where she feels the need to prove she has taken appropriate action in the 'real world' and is an indication of the way in which discussions in social media are seen as removed from the real world and irrelevant, even though as other commenters in the thread have pointed out attitudes such as Sam's can affect victims whether they are expressed in real life or on the internet. Sam's comment and Genevieve's response are indicative of a prevailing view that discourse on social media is somehow removed from wider social discourse, rather than being a contributing part of it.

Sam G comments again, saying:

^That's great. I do apologize if I've caused offence to you Genevieve. I hope everyone can forgive Hell for what one person thought was a good idea to post on their Wall. I'm sure good things will happen as a result (including that person getting fired, what an idiot).

Sam's comments appear to have changed approach following the most recent responses from Genevieve and Roz. He apologises for causing offence, but continues to request that people forgive Hell Pizza, saying the post was what one person put on their wall. Sam's comment seems curiously naive in that it assumes the social media manager was using Facebook more or less as an individual would, rather than considering that the Confessional was a campaign with an advertising budget behind it as evidenced by the graphics designed for it, and that awarding the winner would have required a short list of entries and consideration about who to award the prize to. However, by this point Sam has moved on to calling the social media manager an idiot for making the post, a development in his opinion of sorts.

Later comments in this chapter, including some by Stefan have commenters suggesting that calling the Confessional a sexual assault is demeaning to other sexual

assault victims, placing victims in the uncomfortable position of having to reveal intensely personal information about themselves and their experiences in order to be considered ‘qualified’ to refute them. While victimisation is still considered shameful then this is an effective technique to silence people speaking out against the dismissal of sexual assault evident on the Hell Pizza issue.

### Conclusion to Chapter Five.

There are a number more posts and following comments on the Hell Pizza Facebook wall from August 2012 on the same issue, but not all of them could be analysed in this manner for reasons of brevity. An attempt was made to select posts which displayed an approximate cross section of the views expressed, and there are definite trends which emerge in the discourse around Hell Pizza’s decision to publish an account of unlawful sexual connection as a winning Confessional entry.

Among the most commonly repeated views evident are people objecting to the post on the basis that using sexual assault and rape to sell a product is offensive, especially to victims of such assaults. Among those supporting Hell Pizza or objecting to those who found the original post objectionable, are commenters who believed the original post was funny, commenters who didn’t think the original post described an offence, commenters who objected to others taking offence and expressing it in public (Sam G’s ‘jesus stop fucking caring’ response would be the epitome of these), and commenters who believed the only people who should care about the issue were those directly involved and repeatedly stated that if the victim had been traumatised he would have laid a complaint. A few other commenters attempted to claim that the offence described didn’t meet the definition of rape and were technically correct, although it did meet the definition of unlawful sexual connection. Despite the vehement protests from a number of commenters that the offence was ‘a prank’ or otherwise not serious the Twitter account of the NZ Police sent a tweet to the Hell Pizza Twitter reading:

@HellPizza666 if there is any truth to that confession then please report it to your local police station.

Which was then retweeted 91 times, indicating the depth of support this action had among Twitter users.

In considering the comments and posts made on the issue, a quantitative analysis seems entirely unsuitable. One of the key questions I hoped to interrogate with this analysis was the way in which online discourse about sexual assaults against men could be affecting victims. As many victims who commented said (although mostly female victims) the messages that the assaults they had experienced were unimportant and minor dissuaded them from reporting them. The evidence of how people who spoke out against such assaults were treated online is also telling, and suggests that people who speak out against such assaults in person would be treated little better. Social media provides a veneer of privacy and protection which likely works both ways: people are both more comfortable disclosing that they have been assaulted and condemning Hell Pizza's behaviour, but people also feel more insulated from the consequences of using angry and aggressive language to try to stifle such discussion.

In considering the example of Hell Pizza's confessional post when compared to other online discussions of sexual assaults against men, the Hell Pizza example is also unusual because the victim is not identified and is never given a chance to speak, so any discussion about his feelings about the assault are purely speculative. However this also means that comments about the victim are often made with no apparent concern or awareness that he may be reading them. As Hell Pizza noted in one of their comments on the matter, the offender was following discussion on the wall closely, given the Hell Pizza incident received significant mainstream media coverage, so the victim is likely to have been aware of the controversy and possibly read the comments. Yet much of the discussion on Facebook and Twitter treats the victim as invisible or even non-existent, a person to be given no regard or concern. Even in the eventual apology which Hell Pizza issued their apology was addressed to those who were offended by their post, not to the victim who may have suffered further trauma through having his experiences posted as an amusing prank then commented on by multiple strangers expressing opinions on what an appropriate response from him to the assault would have been. It is impossible to say if this is due to the continuing invisibility of male victims in mainstream discourse, but the effect is to further marginalise their identities and concerns.

This again has relevance when considered through the lens of Gee's figured world's theory. In the figured worlds of many commenters male sexual assault victims do not exist; therefore the victim described in Hell Pizza's post does not exist as a real person. This is evident in the things taken for granted by many comments: an assumption in the commentary that men are not victims of sexual assault, or that offences which would constitute sexual assault if the victim was a woman are not assault if the victim is a man, therefore what occurred cannot be sexual assault because the victim is a man. The figured worlds are also reflective of the way that expectations of traditional performances of masculinities are embedded in discussions of sexual violence. Many comments say the offence wasn't a 'real' sexual assault, or wasn't serious enough to be considered sexual assault. This viewpoint is based heavily in a culture which values men's ability to ignore pain, whether physical or emotional, and to be staunch and tough, not complaining or expecting sympathy and is also evident in the comments analysed.

Many of the comments in this chapter can also be considered with a passing reference to Foucauldian discourse analysis, where emphasis is placed on the ways in which discourse shapes and reflects systems of power (Toews p890). Additionally Foucault's work had an interest in determining how shared meanings, where a statement has negotiated through discourse to arrive at the final understanding of it, were arrived at (Hall 42-43). Many of the comments analysed earlier in this chapter can be more easily understood when viewed through the lens of Foucault's approaches to power, discussions of sexuality, and discourse.

Foucault mentions that discourse is often shaped by power and that it can be a tool for reinforcing power. It is evident in many of the discussions that this is occurring, particularly when a woman is the person to speak up to object to Hell Pizza using sexual assault in a light hearted manner, and the person who then dismisses her concerns is male. This particular dynamic occurs in many comment threads, including in response to Dion's post where Jewels objects to the Confessional campaign and Sam G and Taneola dismiss and minimise her comments and opinion, and in the responses to Roz's post where Sam repeatedly attempts to stop women commenting and expressing their opinions this can be seen to occur, at one point commanding them to 'stop f\*\*\*ing caring'. One commenter even mentions this specifically, saying that he has noticed

most people with concerns about the campaign are female, while men appear to be largely unconcerned or dismissive.

Using Foucault's approach this phenomenon can be seen through a lens of power. Men are still often privileged above women, and their voices are valued or given more weight. Men's views are often ascribed positive attributes such as being sensible, reasonable, or calm while women's views are often dismissed using words such as unreasonable, emotional or ridiculous, thereby painting all of their sincere and legitimate concerns with these dismissive words.

In responses to Sam G's post, some women share their own experiences of being sexually assaulted, and Sam dismisses these in comments saying he didn't ask for their 'life story'. This comment is designed to shame and silence them for relating the Confessional to a personal experience, and for acknowledging that it is personally affecting (the 'emotional' dismissal described above.) The views which these men are dismissing would challenge their position within traditional hegemonic masculinity, and the views would also challenge shared views about what constitutes sexual assault and rape, with many of the shared views having their roots in hegemonic masculinities. Such views include that only sexual interactions which include a woman constitute sex, therefore only those interactions could be sexual assault, as well as the privileging of heterosexual penetrative sex as being a more legitimate sexual interaction than others, and therefore the only interaction which can constitute rape. Therefore there is a motivation to dismiss or shut down these approaches as they challenge the status quo and if the views they express were enacted they could alter how the commenters would be able to behave and interact with other people.

In Foucault's *History of Sexuality Vol I* he begins discussing how discourses about sexuality were sequestered off and confined to discussions of sex within the bounds of marriage, which was economically beneficial and intended for reproduction. He also provides an argument that the key reasons for this were rooted in power and economics, specifically that a capitalist society valued hard work and therefore sex which was for pleasure wasn't economically beneficial, and neither was sex which didn't help to grow populations. Sex then became a topic which couldn't be discussed

directly – although Foucault extensively discusses the ways around this, such as the extent to which the repression around sex was instead discussed (17-35).

The shutting down of discussions about how discourse such as Hell Pizza's Confessional post affect victims and offenders is reminiscent of this in some ways. The gatekeepers of these spaces, predominantly men, many of whom are reinforcing sexist and homophobic attitudes are quick to stop the discourse about how commentary like this affects socially mandated ideas about sexual assault. Sexual assault and rape fall within two areas where open discussion is discouraged, the intersection of sex and power. Although sexual assault and rape are clearly not an example of sex for pleasure distracting from productive work they are still affected by the notion that sex shouldn't be discussed openly because they fall into the other genre of forbidden sexual practices: the illegal and indicative of a sickness. They are also used as an expression of power, intended to humiliate or belittle the victim. The power motivator is seldom discussed openly, with the common understanding of sexual assault being that it is sexually motivated with no discussion of the power dynamics behind it.

Attempts by commenters to engage with and analyse how the original Hell Pizza post functioned as discourse were disregarded or dismissed outright by other participants in the discussion. Most attempts to discuss the ways that the post had the potential to influence were dismissed as taking the issue too seriously. Many responses also attempted to defend the post as being an off the cuff comment, or being made without much thought, with commenters comparing the post to comments made by individuals in responses. This indicates a trend of viewing the Hell Pizza corporation as an individual, and the Social Media Manager who made the post as a person using Facebook in the same way that an individual would. It indicates that commenters don't believe or don't consider that companies post on social media with the intention of improving their visibility and in line with their previous marketing attempts. The Confessional post was not an accident and is unlikely to have been made on a whim: the competition would have attracted multiple entries, and the winner would have been selected deliberately. Yet the comparison between a corporation posting a pre-selected winner and an individual commenting again indicates a tendency to protect current systems of power. Hell Pizza in this situation possess the power, and their response to donate to Wellington Rape Crisis is indicative of this power: they have sufficient funds

for this to be a minor concern, while Wellington Rape Crisis are comparatively powerless and are placed in the unenviable position of accepting funds from an organisation who have trivialised rape or being forced to reduce their hours because of a lack of funding.<sup>3</sup> Their response is apologetic but shows no indication of engaging with the power structures which allowed them to make the post and find it amusing.

The Confessional post relied on multiple power structures to function the way it did. The offender clearly felt secure enough to submit it as a Confessional entry, admitting he had committed a sexual offence in writing in order to win Hell Pizza vouchers. This suggests that he has not suffered repercussions for his behaviour, and believes that Hell Pizza will not pass on his confession to the police. Then, Hell Pizza considered the Confessional entry amusing and appropriate to share although in keeping with their edgy and often offensive advertising identity. This indicates they either didn't consider or disregarded the feelings of the victim in the described assault, the implicit message given to him and to other victims was that their advertising campaign was more important than the possibility of retraumatising victims of sexual assault by posting about an offence in such a glib manner.

Following this, comments on the Hell Pizza Facebook wall either defended the company's actions, or suggested people who were offended and laid complaints about the Confessional were taking the matter too seriously or were being unreasonable. Many of the comments also relied on traditional notions of masculinity to underpin their insults or criticisms, the notion that people complaining couldn't 'take a joke', or using the offence described in the original post as an insult against others involved in the discussion. Although many commenters did engage with the discussions to try to explain the reasons why the post was offensive and concerning their comments were often disregarded, mocked or dismissed outright. Hell Pizza did not engage further in the discussion.

The entire incident, from original post to comments, indicated a disregard for the experiences of victims, particularly male victims. The comments and the original post indicated that the forms of hegemonic masculinity described in chapter two are

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<sup>3</sup> This is highlighted by a Tumblr blog post written by Coley Tangerina, August 16<sup>th</sup> 2012.

ingrained in the way that people talk about sexual assault. The dismissive attitude towards any comments outlining men's trauma is similar to the findings outlined in "Attributions of Victim Responsibility, Pleasure, and Trauma in Male Rape" by Mitchell, Hirschman and Nagayama Hall. The comments both reflect and construct the society in which male victims find themselves: without sympathy and support networks, and the society in which offenders operate: amused, happy to hide their behaviour or excuse it as boisterous masculinity at work.

The final series of comments analysed in this chapter contains some of the comments which are most poignant. Sam G was one of a long line of commenters who expressed the opinion that if the victim was upset by the offence he would have laid charges, and Genevieve responds by turning his words against him, pointing out that the reason victims don't report their assaults is because of people like Sam and their behaviour and comments. She cites her own experience being assaulted as an example, asking directly: "I didn't lay charges, does that mean it wasn't a huge deal?" Following this direct challenge from someone affected by the claims that sexual assault isn't something to make a 'huge deal' out of Sam's approach changes and he becomes more apologetic. It is unfortunate however, that he has to be confronted by someone who has been affected by exactly the attitudes he espouses before he is more cognisant of what he is perpetuating.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion.**

The intention of this thesis was to provide evidence of the attitudes which exist towards sexual assaults against men in New Zealand, and indicate how the ways in which these assaults are discussed may affect men's ability and willingness to report these assaults and seek professional help in the wake of them, if they felt it would be helpful.

My analysis of the Hell Pizza controversy has revealed that many of the myths and negative tropes about victims of sexual assault are routinely presented as part of a discussion about a sexual assault on a man. Chapter five provided evidence of many comments which used homophobic remarks to slur the victim, and explicitly raised casual homophobia into the debate between the commenters, as well as discourses which placed blame on victims. The intention of offenders to embarrass and shame the victim and the use of sexual assault as a tool of humiliation and an expression of power is certainly evident in the Confessional – and the relentless comments casting the assault as a 'joke' reinforced this. The numerous comments which viewed the assault as a joke or prank were at the expense of the victim, with his suffering the punch line. It made it clear that he was intended to be humiliated and cast as a weaker man than the offender, with the assault itself reinforcing structures of hegemonic masculinity.

Furthermore many of the defenders of Hell's Confessional promotion presumed that the victim would have complained in a formal manner if he had found the assault upsetting or distressing. These comments were often made by the same person who made a statement to the effect that the assault was a joke or otherwise not serious enough to warrant concern. Many commenters also failed to recognise the assault as an offence. This combination of commentary enforced two other masculine identity markers identified in chapter two. Firstly the repeated claims that the offence wasn't a sexual assault made use of the 'myth of male sexual invulnerability' identified by Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson. The commenters' refusal to accept that it constituted an offence was at times bordering on a refusal to accept that men could be assaulted at all. Secondly, the commentary simultaneously denying that the incident deserved attention and concern and suggesting that if the occurrence bothered the victim

he would have reported it is an enforcing of the stoicism identified by Bannister. Whether or not the victim felt upset or distressed by the incident any attempt to report it would likely have taken place in an atmosphere as unsupportive as the comments. Although many comments were made by people expressing concern and sympathy they were frequently criticised, jumped upon and drowned out by demands that those expressing concern ‘stop caring’.

Discussions on social media, then, are largely enforcing and performing norms of hegemonic masculinity. Many of the comments defend the behaviour displayed by the offender even though such behaviour would place the male commenter in a position of having no support if he were to be assaulted in a similar manner. It suggests a disconnect from the incident as something which affected an individual and implies that the commenters defending the behaviour and dismissing concern believe they themselves are invulnerable. The construction of masculinity they are defending has the potential to cause them harm in the future, but their dedicated to defending it is part of a performance of masculinity which places the commenter within the framework.

The framework of masculinity which is being defended that presumes men are always a sexual aggressor, sexually driven and entirely invulnerable both emotionally and physically is the same one which expects women to behave as though being victimised is both a constant threat and their responsibility. This is ultimately an entirely hegemonic power structure in which the threat of force and violence is deemed omnipresent to women, while conversely discounting threats to men. This structure also absolves the offender of most or all responsibility for his actions, and assumes that a woman can never be an offender in a sexual assault – evidenced by some commenters raising the spectre of a similar assault committed by a woman as a ridiculous notion.

The probable impact of discourse like this on men who have been assaulted can be seen clearly in the reporting statistics in chapter three. The discourse that assaults against men aren’t serious, or as serious as assaults against women provides a disincentive for men to report them or seek help: to complain about something which is cast as ‘minor’ is to go against the notion that being masculine means ignoring hurts and injuries. The repeated claim that the offence was a ‘joke’ also removes the ability for male victims to identify what happened to them as an assault, changing the situated meaning of the term to mean something which happens to women and not to men. This

further complicates the issue of men being able to seek help for what has happened to them as it removes from them a way of expressing what happened.

In addition to this, discourse like this minimises violence against men and furthers the notion that assaults against men are uncommon. As outlined in the Struckman-Johnson paper, this belief is so prevalent that even in surveys intended to discover victimisation rates, the questions may be phrased or formatted in such a way that they either presume male victims don't exist or require men to identify themselves as victims, challenging their personal identity. As many of the commenters on the Confessional issue noted, despite the fact that the Confessional post mentioned a male victim, Wellington Rape Crisis who Hell Pizza opted to donate to do not provide support to male victims, only to women. There is no similarly visible organisation to provide support and counselling to men, and given the continued lack of funding for Wellington Rape Crisis which provides services for an issue which has a far greater degree of recognition than assaults on men, it seems unlikely the lack of services will be remedied in the near future.

The overarching conclusion which can be drawn from the conversations evident on the Hell Pizza case is that there is a significant amount of problematic discourse about male victims specifically and sexual assault more generally in New Zealand society. Although there were a number of comments which criticised Hell Pizza and outlined why the post was problematic, these were often attacked and ridiculed. It suggests a continuing structural violence within the specifically New Zealand expression of masculinity and an unwillingness to seek help for issues of health and wellbeing. Connell identifies a reluctance to seek medical attention as a symptom of an invulnerable masculinity but the comments on the Confessional suggest this issue goes deeper than just physical health, instead forming a systematic repression of men's emotions and mental injuries. Rates of reporting are a direct indication of this: men are less likely to report assaults than women comparative to the rates of experiences assaults.

The findings suggest many avenues for further study: a more in depth analysis of the results of surveys which aim to determine reporting rates with comparisons of the outcomes depending on the phrasing of questions asked to improve data sets. More extensive discussion about how sexual assault against men is discussed in other forms

of media, as well as the experiences of men who have attempted to report assaults could also be carried out. Further to this research investigating the reasons behind the vehement denial that behaviour which clearly constitutes sexual assault is acceptable in more depth than the reasons suggested in this thesis could contribute positively to reducing the prejudice which victims face if they wish to report their assaults.

The implications of the attitudes expressed also suggests an opportunity to attempt to present alternative masculinities and reactions to such offences, to create a behaviour which can be modelled in an attempt to disrupt the negative feedback loops which presently exist. It also indicates a problem which needs addressing with regard to how male sexual assault survivors are treated and provided for, and how sexual assault is discussed more generally in the New Zealand landscape. The issues evident do not suggest a simple solution, but they do make clear a need for the discourse around male assault victims to be examined and more vigorously critiqued.

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## Appendix 1.



Hell Pizza

Don't read below if you're easily offended. This was last week's winning confession in our Confessional:

"I once was at a party and saw this utter wanker, he passed out so I put a mask on and stuck my cock and balls into his mouth til he woke up. To this day he still has no idea who it was, and gets shit for it all the time."

Like · Comment · Share · 59 minutes ago

85 people like this.

1 share

-  **Lisi** [redacted] pmsl..... Jonathan was this one of you boys? haha ✕  
58 minutes ago · Like
-  **Roxy** [redacted] Hahahaha awesome!  
58 minutes ago · Like
-  **Jamie** [redacted] but did he cum?  
58 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 2
-  **Nick** [redacted] HAHA, morning buddy!  
57 minutes ago · Like
-  **Jordan** [redacted] WTF  
56 minutes ago · Like
-  **Kelly** [redacted] Dim  
56 minutes ago · Like
-  **Ashlie** [redacted] Thats Fake, I Bet That Never Happened.  
56 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 3
-  **Henry** [redacted] .. Hmmm...  
56 minutes ago · Like

- Abbey** [redacted] That's actually just sexual assault. Not cool.  
57 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 42
- Cristy** [redacted] Wow, you're lucky he didn't bite them off  
55 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 4
- Jamie** [redacted] unless he liked it  
55 minutes ago · Like
- Chloé** [redacted] I love Hell Pizza. But that is illegal  
54 minutes ago · Like
- Shane** [redacted] nec minit  
53 minutes ago · Like
- Mike** [redacted] <http://hahgay.com/>  
Ha, Gaaaaaaaay  
hahgay.com  
53 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 1
- Sam** [redacted] That's actually just fucking hilarious. So cool.  
53 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 1
- Jayce** [redacted] If it was a woman on the receiving end would that have been published?  
53 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 11
- Michaela** [redacted] SEXUAL ASSAULT IS SO FUNNY. not.  
51 minutes ago · Like · ↻ 9
- Edmond** [redacted] Let me help :D  
"I once was at a party and saw this utter wanker, he passed out so I put a mask on and stuck my cock and balls into his mouth til he woke up. To this day he still has no idea who it was, and gets shit for it all the time."  
"Una vez estuve en una fiesta donde vi a este completo imbécil; estaba inconsciente (por el alcohol) así que me puse una máscara y puse mi pene y testículos en su boca hasta que

**Edmond** [redacted] Let me help :D  
 "I once was at a party and saw this utter wanker, he passed out so I put a mask on and stuck my cock and balls into his mouth til he woke up. To this day he still has no idea who it was, and gets shit for it all the time."  
 "Una vez estuve en una fiesta donde ví a este completo imbécil; estaba inconsciente (por el alcohol) así que me puse una máscara y puse mi pene y testículos en su boca hasta que despertó. Hasta el día de hoy aún no tiene idea de quién era, y se enfurece por ello todo el tiempo"  
 (Non literal translation)  
 52 minutes ago · Like · 🍷 2

**Steve** [redacted] I think I would rather just pay for my pizza  
 49 minutes ago · Like · 🍷 1

**Jamie** [redacted] we don't know what happened after he woke up tho.....  
 48 minutes ago · Like

**Rangi** [redacted] Look out guys, we've got a badass over here  
 48 minutes ago · Like

**Rangi** [redacted] Also that's not just gay, it would have been even funnier if he bit your schlong off  
 47 minutes ago · Like

**Kizzie** [redacted] I don't know what's more fked up – that someone did that or that Hell Pizza thought to publish it :-)  
 46 minutes ago · Like · 🍷 12

**Steff** [redacted] "Don't read below if you're easily offended" yet people still making butthurt comments...  
 45 minutes ago · Like · 🍷 3

**Jennifer** [redacted] Way to congratulate a sexual offender. <http://rpe.co.nz/legal-definitions/>

**MYNZ7** Legal definitions | Rape Prevention



Sexual Violation is legislated in the Crimes Act 1964, Section 128. This legisl...See more

48 minutes ago · Like · 7



JasOn ^^^ hahahaha  
48 minutes ago · Like



James Haha golden  
47 minutes ago · Like



Krizteenah sounds like something u would do james =P  
16 minutes ago · Like



James To who??? You? :P jkz  
45 minutes ago · Like



Wendy Guys I love a gag as well as anyone but putting a sexual assault up as a winner is very very wrong - this isn't press at any cost it is actually congratulating an offender - seriously - a police report is likely in this case - suggest you take it down - it isn't funny to those of us who have been raped in any way shape or form  
44 minutes ago · Like · 8



JasOn have a sense of humour jennifer!!!! buzz killa. dont like it? lump it and gap the page then!!  
44 minutes ago · Like · 1



Krizteenah haha u wish jamez!  
42 minutes ago · Like



Anya sexual assault much? this is really disturbing.  
42 minutes ago · Like · 4



Corina Agreed Wendy  
41 minutes ago · Like · 3



Mauryse hope he wasnt a grinder... in his sleep...  
41 minutes ago · Like

- Katie-Mae** [redacted] It's sexual assault in every aspect of the term. The fact that half of you are so apathetic about it actually frightens me. The fact that because it was done to a man does not change the fact that it's sexual assault. And acting so flippant about it only serves to highlight why men will never feel comfortable about coming forward. If it was me I'd have prosecuted the fuck out of the offender. Hell pizza you should be ashamed of yourselves for condoning this act. Putting a disclaimer beforehand does not detract from the fact that some asshole just openly admitted to assaulting another person.  
41 minutes ago · Like · 8
- James** [redacted] Haha no... No i dont :P haha in all honesty who dafuq cares if its sexual aussalt... Its funny end of  
40 minutes ago · Like
- Rich** [redacted] Wow. A new low. Top work Hell Pizza. Maybe next we can have something about assaulting illegally imported and enslaved sex workers ?  
39 minutes ago · Like · 5
- Sarah** [redacted] I cant like or believe this knowing that someone has interfered with u while u r passed out is not cool because i have been a victim of this and no matter what the person is like no one deserves or asks for it.  
35 minutes ago · Like · 3
- Amanda** [redacted] Maybe you'll get lucky next week and have someone confess a murder? This is disgusting.  
33 minutes ago · Like · 1
- Shane** [redacted] has anyone read 50 shades of gray?  
33 minutes ago · Like
- Anya** [redacted] I'm not easily offended, I just don't think that sexually assaulting someone is funny in any way shape or form neither do a lot of other people which is probably why its illegal and why people find the outcomes of this incredibly traumatic (not to mention the morality of the whole thing). It is incredibly surreal to see a company think this is fine to post on their page, and equally surreal to see so many comments questioning why people are upset. horrific.



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Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <https://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/265771383532571>

[Hell Pizza](#) · 49,647 like this.  
16 August 2012 at 13:35 ·

- Last night our Social Media Manager posted a Facebook Confessional post that was not approved by Callum or Stu the owners of the NZ brand. He normally does a great job, but in this case he got it wrong. We unreservedly apologise for this comment and have taken steps to stop it from reoccurring. Sexual assault is no joke and we would like to use the massive level of discussion on this to highlight the need of Wellington Rape Crisis (WRC). Wellington Rape Crisis provides free support and counselling to survivors of rape and sexual abuse but has this week been forced to cut its services due to funding issues. Many of you feel strongly about this so here a chance to put words into action as we are. We are making a 10k donation to WRC today and until the end of the month we will match any donation to Wellington Rape Crisis dollar for dollar to help them get to their target of 55k - so they can stay open 5 days a week!

We encourage you all to join with us in raising money and awareness for Wellington Rape Crisis. Their team will track all the donations from today until the end of the month - you can do it

here [http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_info&cPath=23&products\\_id=193](http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=23&products_id=193)

As part of our commitment to ensuring this doesn't happen again we will also be putting our team and staff through a sexual violence awareness and ethical bystander training run by the Wellington Sexual Abuse Network, of which Wellington Rape Crisis is the lead agency.

### **Wellington Rape Crisis: Save Our Services**

[www.fundy.co.nz](http://www.fundy.co.nz)

Wellington Rape Crisis needs to raise \$55,000.00 before 1st April 2013 to keep our doors open. Otherwise we will be unable to sustain our essential services for survivors of rape and sexual abuse. This year is the 35th year we have provided free counselling and social work support to female survivor...

[37Like](#) · [Share](#)

**James S** Think you guys should be donating the total \$55k.

[16 August 2012 at 13:37](#) · [Like](#) · [29](#)

**Lauren N** Good on you for stepping up, Hell. Try to make sure this doesn't happen again, yeah?

[16 August 2012 at 13:37](#) · [Like](#) · [17](#)

**Raoul D** fak u

[16 August 2012 at 13:38](#) · [Like](#)

**Zac Z** James, rather than bitching why dont you give them ups for making a positive out of said situation? Well done Hells

[16 August 2012 at 13:39](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [69](#)

**Anaru C** The Masked T-Bagger LIVES!

[16 August 2012 at 13:39](#) · [Like](#)

**Claire W** Lauren, that's probably what the "As part of our commitment to ensuring this doesn't happen again..." paragraph was all about

[16 August 2012 at 13:40](#) · [Like](#) · [29](#)

**Jake S** zac pls.

[16 August 2012 at 13:40](#) · [Like](#)

**Ryan I** Go hells pizza. even tho it was posted as a joke, and in some ways could be taken wrong, every one is human and make mistakes. i hope that the people posting comments that where at points rude in them selves will come to see that.

[16 August 2012 at 13:41](#) · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**[Hugh C](#)** lol @ leith. got a problem au?

[16 August 2012 at 13:42](#) · [Like](#)

**[Benjamin T](#)** whaddhe say whaddhe say??

[16 August 2012 at 13:42](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Amanda B](#)** Matching gifts with all of us who will donate is a great idea, more people will get involved with supporting a great organisation and more people will become aware of the incredible work they do. If you ALL donate they could end up donating a lot more than 55k, its up to you.

[16 August 2012 at 13:43](#) · [Like](#) · [8](#)

**[James S](#)** @zac it's great they're donating 10k (it's better than nothing) but the total 55k would be perfect. For all there bad media they've had recently I think they could gain a little more respect. If i was in that situation I would be pulling out all the stops to fix the problem caused yesterday.

[16 August 2012 at 13:43](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**[Em P](#)** James they're also matching donations til the end of the month... you could make a large donation to draw it out of them

[16 August 2012 at 13:43](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**[Eddie H](#)** Good to see. I hope you've sacked your social media manager for incompetence.

[16 August 2012 at 13:45](#) · [Like](#) · [6](#)

**[Lauren N](#)** Claire, it was a long post, I skimmed a little. My post still stands though...

[16 August 2012 at 13:46](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**[Eva J](#)** Brilliant Hells for doing the right thing!

[16 August 2012 at 13:46](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**[Shane W](#)** If you delete the first part where you desperately pass the buck by blaming an underling you'll go a lot further towards not looking like cunts. Just sayin'.

[16 August 2012 at 13:46](#) · [Like](#) · [30](#)

**[Doug S](#)** Engage BRAIN first one would have thought!

[16 August 2012 at 13:47](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**[Thomas A](#)** It's a sad day when Hell Pizza is seen making a public apology.

[16 August 2012 at 13:49](#) · [Like](#) · [8](#)

**Sam W** And people are still bitching.. Unbelievable.

16 August 2012 at 13:49 via mobile · [Like](#) · [20](#)

**Zac Z** Ok, maybe youre not as smart as you make yourself out to be there James, theyre donating 10k right, thats only 22.5k left for the public to donate to match their goal. Im sure, if you were smart enough, you would realise that only a few dollars from each person on the Hells page would more than slay that target, add in the knock on effect of people telling each other about it ect then Hells could end up with a 3 figure bill if the public play their cards right.. But you didnt think of that did you?

16 August 2012 at 13:49 via mobile · [Like](#) · [6](#)

**Genevieve F** The apology is vastly better than what was posted last night. I would also like to know action has been taken against the social media manager, someone in that position should have known better. \$10k is a good start as it matching dollar for dollar though the impression I got through media was that it was the full amount to bail out Wellington Rape Crisis so I am a little disappointed. I'm glad management is stepping up however. That said, this is still the limit for me and I for one will still not be going near Hells Pizza again.

16 August 2012 at 13:50 · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**Bonnie C** Good job hells. Feel sorry for the lil guy.... Wonder if he has a job today....

16 August 2012 at 13:51 via mobile · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Karl R** I hope the Social Media Manager is NOT fired.

Hell has a reputation of sailing close to the wind as far as social acceptable marketing goes.

Sometimes people will cross that line, deliberately or in error. But it's probably in their job description to be shocking.

A written warning should suffice. It's not the first time someone at Hell has cocked up. I'm sure it won't be the last.

Personally, I thought their choice for the winner was sick. But still don't think anyone should be fired because of the post.

16 August 2012 at 13:51 · [Like](#) · [31](#)

**Anthony S** Good to hear you did that, You should of chosen my Cheaky confessional.

16 August 2012 at 13:51 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**James S** Zac, no need to get personal. Do you really think everyone on this page will donate? no they won't. Personally I think everyone should. In my ideal world everyone would donate enough so that when Hellz match \$ for \$ it puts them out of business.

16 August 2012 at 13:52 · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Doug S** obviously Karl has no idea of what is "acceptable in social media...

[16 August 2012 at 13:53](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**[KerryAnne B](#)** I dont know what got posted but why would anyone cut funds to rape counselling and that? Too many people try to hide as it is! People need help! Not just some place in the whops no one knows about!! We cant pretend it doesnt happen anymore!

[16 August 2012 at 13:53](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[宗教](#)** on ya

[16 August 2012 at 13:56](#) · [Like](#)

**[Kristy N](#)** Wow just eat some god damn pizza.....

[16 August 2012 at 13:56](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Carl I](#)** james,  
55k - 10k = 45k  
matched half and half " only 22.5k left for the public to donate to match their goal"  
half of 45 .... 22.5

[16 August 2012 at 13:57](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Kirsty-Funshine H](#)** Well at least this apology was better than the pathetic apology that obviously your 'Social Media Manager" posted last night. He should lose his job.

[16 August 2012 at 14:00](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**[Thomas A](#)** @James They're only matching up to 55k by the looks of it.

[16 August 2012 at 14:02](#) · [Like](#)

**[Heidi N](#)** I am never buying Hell Pizza ever again.

[16 August 2012 at 14:02](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**[Dion S](#)** Are you fuckin serious? It was a joke! Maybe a slightly offensive joke but those jokes are the best imo. Get over it people

[16 August 2012 at 14:02](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**[Dan H](#)** My god - everyone should just chill out. Hell are making a 10k contribution + dollar for dollar on whatever WE donate. Hells doesn't have to donate anything, they choose to. WRC are a great organisation but Hells aren't obliged to give them money - do you give them money? Fuckin people love complaining for the sake of complaining.

[16 August 2012 at 14:03](#) · [Like](#) · [14](#)

**[Vincent T](#)** I agree with Karl... the Social Media Manager should not be fired because of this error in judgement!

[16 August 2012 at 14:03](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Heidi N** I think you should donate just enough money for you to stay an inch away from bankruptcy. And fire absolutely everybody who was involved in any way at all. \$10,000 is an absolutely pathetic pitiful pittance for a company of your size. You make me sick, doing the bare minimum to save face but still without any real compassion for the many people who probably relived their rape experience in their mind and had to fight off a panic attack when they read how you rewarded a rapist.

[16 August 2012 at 14:05](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Sarah S** The best way to stop an argument is if no one participates - respect to hell for this everyone should just let it be now as it cant be worth it and I will not be giving up my love for Hell Pizza as the only ones that suffer will be the ones trying to make a living by feeding us on call

[16 August 2012 at 14:06](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Zac Z** Im not getting personal, im just as blunt as a blunt thing..

[16 August 2012 at 14:08](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**Dan H** Hi Heidi, sweet, how much work do you do for charity? How much money have you donated in the past year? At the end of the day, Hells are a business - lets not forget all the other contributions they make everywhere as well. And endorsements to sports teams etc. Who gives a fuck if hells turn over huge money, they're still contributing. And they're a BUSINESS not a bloody NPO. Jesus Christ.

[16 August 2012 at 14:08](#) · [Like](#) · [17](#)

**Corlika d** Good on Ya Hells

[16 August 2012 at 14:09](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Matt B** We all make errors of judgement occasionally and this is a fantastic way towards redeeming your brand. Just made my donation.

[16 August 2012 at 14:10](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Dion S** Heidi, here's a small piece of advice. It's over, they said sorry. GET THE FUCK OVER IT!

[16 August 2012 at 14:11](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [8](#)

**Anya M** Your social media manager is an idiot and should be fired simply because he seems to not be up to play with legality of running facebook campaigns - this shouldnt have happened and you are still accountable, even the posts on here supporting your original post make you accountable which any good social media manager would know after the recent ASB ruling.

I've already donated money to wellington rape crisis but will again, i hope everyone that was outraged does so too. Sadly this wont change the views held by so many that posted here that sexual assault is o.k. And to me that's the thing that creeped me out the most about this whole ordeal.

[16 August 2012 at 14:12](#) · [Like](#) · [19](#)

**Kirsty-Funshine H** I dont think it's about how much they give (although I am wrapped for WRC), I think it's about being really sorry and the Social Media Manager didn't sound convincing with his light hearted apology last night. He should go.

[16 August 2012 at 14:12 via mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Jeremy A** All good with me HELL, Your pasta rules. Well done for supporting rape crisis. \$10,000 is enourmous. P.S. What was the joke?? go on, tell me..

[16 August 2012 at 14:14](#) · [Like](#)

**Varsha K** What did he say?

[16 August 2012 at 14:16](#) · [Like](#)

**Hristina S** I just donated - I hope everyone else does too.

[16 August 2012 at 14:18](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Trisha S** Agree with you Kirsty, his apology last night:

"Hey everyone, tonight we posted a fan's confession seeing it in the spirit of a prank between mates. Once we understood that offence had been taken and saw the bad light the post could be seen in we removed it, and we apologise to those offended. Lesson learned."

The whole tone of his apology is very unconvincing. Does not come across as genuine at all. Perhaps written to try and save face with his employers.

[16 August 2012 at 14:18](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Hristina S** \$7,970.75 has been raised SO FAR through that link. Get in there!

[16 August 2012 at 14:18](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Alicia M** Here is the thing, the 55k will be from the MARKETING FUND, not the owners pockets, unless Stuart and Callum say otherwise, Hell please respond, is this marketing money, think very carefully (even though it is not your strong suit)!

[16 August 2012 at 14:21](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Vanessa N** nice one hell! good to take responsibilty, you shouldnt blame your underlings for your poor training of them.

[16 August 2012 at 14:23](#) · [Like](#)

**Vanessa N** Nice to see \$8100 raised now! I hope you guys have deep pockets

[16 August 2012 at 14:24](#) · [Like](#)

**Johnno W** everyone here raging needs balls in their mouth

[16 August 2012 at 14:28](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Max B** Its nice to see your trying to redeem your mistake. I laughed at the original post, but thought it was taken out of context, funnily enough I'd do the same in a similar situation to mates, but def wouldn't post it on an online forum. Just a mistake blown out of proportion in my opinion.

[16 August 2012 at 14:28](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Anya M** Speaking of the recent ASB ruling, your social media manager should know that you can serve content based on geography. If you served your content "globally" then you are open to fines from the ASB as your page is international and it counts as advertising in Australia too. Which means you may be fined by the ASB as well as the ASA being involved if Australians complain and there is a high chance they have or are. Some food for thought there...

[16 August 2012 at 14:29](#) · [Like](#)

**Tom T** im buying hells every night this week in support of my favourite takeaways u hells keep up the awesome food

[16 August 2012 at 14:29](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**Robert M** its funny how the people that are up in arms about this are the ones that create war

[16 August 2012 at 14:32](#) · [Like](#)

**Brad C** These people born with no sense of humour really think that not buying hells pizza anymore will teach their head office a lesson?? your only hurting the store owners who are trying to make a living. Thats like your neighbour pissing you off so you go kick his dog in the face..... wake up people.

[16 August 2012 at 14:32](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**Dan H** OK now not only does the fact they're donating mean very little to some, now it's not good enough because it's (assumably!) coming out of their Marketing Budget. It's all their money any way you look at it. Does it matter if you donate money out of your long term savings, or your daily chequeing account? What is wrong with you people. Hells are a company who made their name out of poor taste jokes. This one was over the line, they've admitted that, now you're all expecting them to donate squillions for the mistake. I repeat, HELL DOESN'T OWE ANYONE ANYTHING. They CHOOSE to donate it. It all comes out of their pocket in the end!

[16 August 2012 at 14:36](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Troy H** Good on ya Hell. Some will still grizzle though...

[16 August 2012 at 14:36](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Darnia H** Amazing PR spin. Top work. \*rolls eyes\*

[16 August 2012 at 14:36](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Erin S** Some of the comments on the threads surrounding this were a powerful reminder of just how desperately needed education programs from organisations such as Rape Crisis are. I hope

they far surpass the target needed to stay open five days a week and can extend their services even further.

[16 August 2012 at 14:37](#) · [Like](#) · [11](#)

**[Trevor M](#)** Sausagewallet

[16 August 2012 at 14:38](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Hayley B](#)** Christ people.... It's Hell Pizza. Not Hells, or to be grammatically correct, Hell's. Someone fucked up and they've apologised and they're providing much needed support for WRC and training their staff. Everyone fucks up at sometime. Get off your high horse I you think it's not enough, I bet head office is totally pissed off at this error.

[16 August 2012 at 14:38](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**[Hayley B](#)** If you think... Not I. Stupid iPhone shit.

[16 August 2012 at 14:39](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Rebecca H](#)** Well instead of wasting my time bitching and whining that I am never going to buy their product again or that whatever they gave wasn't enough, I put virtual pen to paper and donated. Your turn people.

[16 August 2012 at 14:40](#) · [Like](#) · [6](#)

**[Tess P](#)** Robert Maisey 'its funny how the people that are up in arms about this are the ones that create war"

WINNING POST, brb just off to create another war somewhere

[16 August 2012 at 14:40](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Sherry C](#)** Finny a decent descision from u guys.

[16 August 2012 at 14:41](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**[Chester Z](#)** Are u hell pizza officer ? I need help. Can u reply me ? please

[16 August 2012 at 14:42](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**[Kirsty-Funshine H](#)** ^ lol

[16 August 2012 at 14:43](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Maria M](#)** So they're damned if they do and they're damned if they don't! No matter their motive, they are doing something to put it right. So all you criticisers,get over yourselves and help them to support such a worthy cause!!

[16 August 2012 at 14:45](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**Blaize P** Get over it kids. It was a JOKE. Perhaps not in good taste, but a JOKE nonetheless. This country needs to harden the hell up and it wasn't rape, and it's 99.99% unlikely to have actually happened. Remove the damned bubble wrap and get over it!

16 August 2012 at 14:46 · [Like](#) · [8](#)

**Glenn C** Totally agree Tacarius, I was about to post a similar rant, this is all fucking ridiculous. People equating a harmless prank between mates to sexual assault is completely over the top, the world is going to hell in a handbasket with such politically correct drivel.

16 August 2012 at 14:54 · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**Mahn R** shuttup and give us free pizza

16 August 2012 at 14:57 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**James F** Agree with hayley, tacarius and Glenn! Well said!

16 August 2012 at 15:03 via mobile · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Shane H** This is not good marketing this is just stupid. I buy food because it tastes good, I have never bought any food for any other reason. this type of bull is not going to make me like the taste of your product more or less. Work on the quality of your food and the people will come. This just seems a little pointless and futile.

16 August 2012 at 15:07 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Jeremy H** Woah, got carried away with the social media thing huh? You're balls deep in trouble now.

16 August 2012 at 15:07 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Melissa M** Wow. As someone in Marketing I just have to say you've done an amazing ABOVE AND BEYOND job of taking criticism and turning it into a productive outcome. Great Job HELLS and I think you guys know how to maintain a good brand even though the bumps and bruises of SOCIAL MEDIA chatter ;p

16 August 2012 at 15:14 · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Matt B** Anyone who thinks the "prank" was between mates didn't read the original post. It was an intentional violation of someone he didn't like. And while I fully support Wellington Rape Crisis, and have made a donation it is slightly ironic that they don't offer support to male victims of sexual assault.

16 August 2012 at 15:14 · [Like](#) · [11](#)

**Oscar D** Good move with the donations. But think about your actions Hell Pizza marketers - there's more to the internet than appeasing jock humour.

16 August 2012 at 15:14 · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Marty S** Your company should also be made to start lobbying the govt to make sure there is continual funding so that rape crisis can be funded. Untill then your company should be paying

all of the bills and firing the muppets involved. Yer sure you said sorry and threw a few bucks, but for something that is clearly becoming a multi national, id say you can do farr better. I mean really was jono shit for brains from the rock posting or some thing!?!?!

[16 August 2012 at 15:20](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Carlos E](#)** That amount is a pittance for a company your size. And if you really mean your apology you should fire that marketing idiot who thinks "rape is fun". Seriously? Is that your target audience?

[16 August 2012 at 15:20](#) · [Like](#) · [4](#)

**[Bazza S](#)** so now tea bagging is classed as rape!? wow sad how so many people get carried away in the seriousness in life and focus on such pathetic things to complain about. i understand that sexual assault is a serious issue but really tea bagging? fuck this world is full of hypocritical drop kicks i bet 100% of the people complaining have done something that can be classed as sexual assault without a second thought.

[16 August 2012 at 15:23](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**[Jonathan C](#)** I think what you're doing (the donation) and how quickly you've responded is actually quite good, lots of people getting worked up here. You guys have made it pretty clear you don't support the joke.

[16 August 2012 at 15:25](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Luke B](#)** Must be cold in NZ then?

[16 August 2012 at 15:28](#) · [Like](#)

**[Sinead M](#)** So, Heidi Boulter, in saying that "And fire absolutely everybody who was involved in any way at all" does this mean to include all the staff that work at Hell Pizza also? All the franchise owners who recently have suffered from all the bad "social media" which has been lurking around too? In saying anyone involved with this campaign should be fired is ridiculous. Many people working as a part in this franchise is seen socially to support this campaign. Maybe you should be a little less outrageous with your comments.

[16 August 2012 at 15:34](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Naomi A](#)** Man you guys stuffed up big time

[16 August 2012 at 15:37](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Orchid T](#)** Brandon you miss the point: it is a sexual assault (let's not get tied up with semantics whether or not the offense constitutes a rape). Likewise any one who says "light up" and "it was just a joke" is smoothing over the fact we have a massive issue with sexual abuse and assault in this country. The Hell's Pizza fiasco and the fact that some people have found the confession funny is disturbing to say the least which in my mind goes to show just how much we have normalized assault. I applaud the company's efforts to readdress their mistake, I will make a donation but nonetheless I will not be buying anymore from this company.

[16 August 2012 at 15:44](#) · [Like](#) · [15](#)

**Joe T** Fair play. Apology given and a fair proposal made. Hope others contribute to a good cause. Donation made accordingly.

16 August 2012 at 15:46 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Sian J** Im sure most people didn't take it seriously and if they did, well lets hope they don't breed. Well done for the donation guys regardless of the reason!

16 August 2012 at 15:46 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Zac Z** It makes me laugh, the people who say theyre gona stop eating Hell where will they turn? Domines 'pizza' is just cardboard with toppings. Pizza huts better than Dominoes, but not by much.. Gona have to go to the much smaller locals haha

16 August 2012 at 15:57 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Antoinette B** Omg people lighten up! The confessional was gross sure but hell it was also kinda funny! No one was violated no one was raped- and no where does it say the beast was there. Hells pizza are crack up people. Their ads are great and so are their product. I think t he problem is you guys have way too much time on ur hands and just enjoy sitting around pissing and moaning about everything.

16 August 2012 at 16:00 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Murray R** Is it fair play tho... ? <http://coleytangerina.tumblr.com/...>

### **Hell Pizza and Wellington Rape Crisis**

coleytangerina.tumblr.com

After giving someone free pizza for admitting to sexually assaulting their frien...See more

16 August 2012 at 16:01 · [Like](#) · [6](#)

**Antoinette B** And look- they have removed it. They have accepted it wasnt the best move they made (although i reckon it was fine) they have taken huge steps to let the country know they wish to fix things and for that we should be saying 'wow nice guys you didnt have to but you did and thats cool'. But no im still reading the crap on here as people continue to throw their little fits

16 August 2012 at 16:03 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**John J** What a load of shit. Since when did tea bagging have anything to do with rape? Some people are a bit precious. Hell Pizza should tell them to piss off.

16 August 2012 at 16:04 · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Antoinette B** O gertalot bite me or is that considered sexual violation as well?

16 August 2012 at 16:05 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Antoinette B** It was a few mates doing dikie things to each other. So get over it and move on already. What next?!

[16 August 2012 at 16:07 via mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

[Pawan K](#) you guys are GCs

[16 August 2012 at 16:12](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

[Hugh C](#) @ antoinette 'a few mates doing dikie things' it was one guy who put his dick in someone else's mouth while they were passed out. that's sexual assault. and not something funny. would you think it were funny if someone did it to you, or expect others to laugh about it? if so, there's some stuff you need to sit quietly and think about.....

[16 August 2012 at 16:16](#) · [Like](#) · [19](#)

[Kama V](#) Good for you for addressing the problem quickly and doing such a good job at helping the centre. Humans make mistakes and bad judgement calls

[16 August 2012 at 16:18](#) · [Like](#)

[Antoinette B](#) LOL hugh my dear friend are you a male? Have you ever been drunk with mates and done something that at the time you found incredibly funny?? Im pretty sure that if the dude involved was worried he wood have done something about it. But id say he gargled some mouth wash kicked his mates ass and they sat around laughing about it later

[16 August 2012 at 16:19 via mobile](#) · [Like](#)

[Anne-Marie H](#) I think if you are easily offended you probably shouldnt be on this FB page - Hells pizza brand is built part on good pizza and part on being ...cheeky for lack of a better word. Its like going to the drags and complaining about the noise - if you choose to put yourself in that situation then dont complain if you dont like it. As to the actual complaint, clearly a line was crossed there and you need to be checking what goes up on the page for your brand, but I fail to see where the Hell Pizza promotes sexual violation is ok angle comes from. I think the donation to Rape crisis was an appropriate remedy to the situation, as well as training for their staff to ensure that the incident is not repeated. I wonder how many people that have complained about the comments are actually going to make a donation - put your money where your mouth is or STFU.

[16 August 2012 at 16:19](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

[Antoinette B](#) Its certainly nothing for you guys to get in an up roar about thats for sure. Just for the record no i havent done anything like that because im not a guy therefore i dont have that 'lets do dikie stuff' gene. Maybe you had yours removed?

[16 August 2012 at 16:22 via mobile](#) · [Like](#)

[Carlos E](#) HI Antoinette Ballard - so what would you say if this happens to you in your next office party? "omg lol epic fail ive been teabagged"? REALLY?

[16 August 2012 at 16:25](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

[Zac Z](#) Did i just see someone saying that people dont put each others sexual organs on/in each other while drunk? Ummmm.. Im pretty sure that how a few teenage pregnancys happen lol..

[16 August 2012 at 16:26 via mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**Hugh C** antoinette: it's illegal. dya think maybe that's for a reason?  
and no, i don't go out with mates and do anything anywhere near that fucking moronic. but maybe that's why there's LAWS: to stop fucking morons by providing legislative and punitive disincentives to behaving like fucking morons?

[16 August 2012 at 16:32](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Antoinette B** LOL carlos i am not a male as i stated earlier. I am also not a young drunk out with his mates therefore i cant put myself in that position. My issue is if you read above is that what happened between the friends is not hells pizzas fault nor is it fair they should be punished for it. The teabagging incident was not rape, nor was it classed as a sexual violation. It was gross yes but nothing to get so stirred up about

[16 August 2012 at 16:33](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**Josh J** Tl ;dr, still buying hells pizza.

[16 August 2012 at 16:34](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Lillian F** Let's think about the bigger picture here and get away from Hells Pizza vs whoever -> the issue is, where something like this happens between friends or strangers or whoever, it's a violation of their right to choice in their sexual relationships. The fact that people, anybody, thinks that's funny or permissible or tolerable, is a sign that we live in a rape culture where this violation is not taken seriously. And that's the problem.

[16 August 2012 at 16:36](#) · [Like](#) · [17](#)

**Antoinette Ballard** Omg im done with arguing with people and their anal attitudes. Now ur putting words in my mouth which is complete crap. I never used the word bastard and howymu choose to take what iv said is ur problem not mine but i feel sorry for you. Truly i do. It must be a sad simple world for you who cant let go of something and move on

[16 August 2012 at 16:36](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Hugh C** One last comment: THE LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR. fuck some people are thick. looooooooooord help us. i begin to see how the USA ended up where it is.  
next: discussion on the merits of post-birth abortion on grounds of mental retardation

[16 August 2012 at 16:38](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Nick B** Good on you Hell... its easy to point the finger but getting off your ass to take positive action takes integrity hopefully people will put their money where their mouths are.

[16 August 2012 at 16:58](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Connor R** Hey. if you're going to post something derogatory, stand by it. Don't back out like a little pussy. Now everyone knows you're weak faggots. Get it together, Hells Pizza.

[16 August 2012 at 16:59](#) · [Like](#)

**Ivy P** Don't know if this has been pointed out to all the people going "lol teabagging isn't sexual assault" but placing your cock in someone's mouth isn't teabagging. And it doesn't matter if they were friends, the majority of rape victims know the rapist and they were often "friends" who

didn't stop at no or took being too drunk to say no as consent, knowing someone doesn't make it OK. And it doesn't matter what orifice it was, it's still a sexual assault, it's not a matter of mouth=OK, bum=not OK. Would it still have been funny if the penis had been put in the passed out guys arse instead of his mouth?

[16 August 2012 at 17:00](#) · [Like](#) · [20](#)

**Ivy P** And Hell Pizza, it's too late to buy your way out of this one with donations for me. You crossed a line and I'm never going back and I've been a loyal customer since you were one small shop in wellington many many years ago.

[16 August 2012 at 17:02](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**Fredrick P** That guy just got a case of banana phone

[16 August 2012 at 17:04](#) · [Like](#)

**Anthony M** Good work Hell. Much better response than that Franchise doco a couple months ago. I still don't trust my money with a pizza from you guys (disappointed from too many shit ones after you sold the business) but full respect for your immediate and demonstrated apology.

[16 August 2012 at 17:08](#) · [Like](#)

**Harrison K** You should donate the whole \$55000, not just \$10000 and expect the public to pay for the rest, the public didn't fuck up.. you fucked up

[16 August 2012 at 17:14](#) · [Like](#) · [11](#)

**Megan D** Well done guys.

[16 August 2012 at 17:16](#) · [Like](#)

**Layla C** Hmm... so Tori turns 18, Antoinette (lets make it legal for her to drink, I'm sure your a responsible parent and all). Gets a little silly, drinks too much. One of her 'friends' puts his penis in her mouth for a 'joke'. Still all good with you?

[16 August 2012 at 17:19](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Catherine B** I have missed this entirely so no idea what it said or what happened. But after reading the comments, while I have no idea about this incident I found it hilarious when Cartman did it...

[16 August 2012 at 17:20](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Nicole P** Heres an idea.. How about everyone just STFU NOW!!!! They made their wrong a right now GTF OVER IT!!!!

[16 August 2012 at 17:21](#) · [Like](#)

**Krissy V** Grow up Antoinette - seriously your 'arguements' are weak and they have no merit and I find your blaze attitude about sexual assaults disturbing to say the least. As a victim of a sexual assault and rape in my teens, I do not find this funny at all and it happened over 15 years ago. You forgive but you don't forget. I believe Hells stuffed up majorly on this one but they

have done the right thing and apologised and I applaud them on their donation to Rape Crisis who were instrumental in the healing process with my counselling afterwards. On a lighter note - Yes Hell Pizza you stuffed up but shit happens, no-one's perfect and all that jazz. You make damn good pizza so you still have a customer in me : )

[16 August 2012 at 17:23](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**[Thomas A](#)** You keyboard warriors are pathetic; happy to sit here bad mouthing Hell Pizza about their jest at such a terrible issue, and yet I bet barely any of you actually do anything to contribute to victims of sexual assault.

Your apathy is just as bad as the 'impacting' status they made.

[16 August 2012 at 17:25](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**[Sarah M](#)** Okay, hypocrites. Ever hug someone at work? That's sexual assault and you should be fired for inappropriately touching someone at work.

[16 August 2012 at 17:31](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**[Morne V](#)** @Sarah Marie Reynolds, the idiocy in your statement offends me, you should have your rights to the internet revoked.

[16 August 2012 at 17:36](#) · [Like](#) · [18](#)

**[Christopher N](#)** @Sarah. Ever had a penis suck in your mouth while you were unconscious? Same diff right?

[16 August 2012 at 17:36](#) · [Like](#) · [7](#)

**[Christopher N](#)** Man there's some munters round here...

[16 August 2012 at 17:38](#) · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**[Chris T](#)** The powers of social networking. Good to see that Hell realized they fucked up and are doing something to correct it. Still concerned about people nonchalant attitude towards tea bagging. Something that was popularised by counter strike, which is a game, so yknow not REAL. Which for the record im fairly certain teabagging doesnt involve a penis inside of ur mouth. Even if it DOES, thats not an excuse... Oh well ill try not leave myself drunk and vulnerable about strangers, which btw if u saw the joke u would have realised that it wasnt a mate tea bagging a drunk mate, it was some guy doing this to a stranger who he thought was a wanker, and did it with a mask on. Sounds like rape.. yknow sexually violating a stranger while concealing your identity as to not get found out...

[16 August 2012 at 17:45](#) · [Like](#) · [12](#)

**[Kelly C](#)** Backpedalling

[16 August 2012 at 17:47](#) via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**[Ahmad R](#)** Yeah, nah

[16 August 2012 at 17:53](#) · [Like](#)

**Brad G** HAHHAHAHAHA

Saw that, right fuck up there Hell but I thought it was funny

16 August 2012 at 17:53 · [Like](#)

**Anya M** how is receiving a hug (consensually) comparable to deciding someone is a "wanker" putting on a mask so your identity cannot be found out and then inserting your penis and testicles into their mouth while they sleep until they wake up. And then after the fact mocking them about it. Or is that how you hug people Sarah?

16 August 2012 at 17:54 · [Like](#) · [24](#)

**Andrew D** Just for fun. Why was the dude unconscious? None of this brings respect to anyone.

16 August 2012 at 17:56 · [Like](#)

**Shane B** the assholes that created this mess should payss the tab. the jackasses in the comments blew everything out of proportion and caused this me

16 August 2012 at 18:02 · [Like](#)

**Shane B** er...mess

16 August 2012 at 18:02 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Andrew D** The way I read it is this. Man who got unconscious. Munter. Man who put xxxxx in mouth. Munter. Man who thought story deserved free pizza. Munter. Man who published story and gave pizza. Munter. Man who apologised by giving 10K to WRC. Gobsmacked munter who had no idea of what else to do. The chain of these events show that some people have lost track of reality. And now I want to hear no more of it because I'm about to eat dinner.

16 August 2012 at 18:03 · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**Sean W** Was this MOSH who did this? They created the app and have worked on HELL for a while now...

16 August 2012 at 18:03 · [Like](#)

**Sam G** Good on you Hell, at least you're trying to make up for the stuff up. Too bad haters are always going to be haters. Get over yourselves and buy some fuckin pizza!

16 August 2012 at 18:09 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Charlotte H** Everybody makes mistakes. Good on ya for dealing with it!

16 August 2012 at 18:25 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**Travis N** Atah bae

16 August 2012 at 18:30 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#)

**Dion R** I thought it was only rape if the victim said no.

[16 August 2012 at 18:36](#) · [Like](#)

**Rachel K** Hells have a long history of this kind of idiocy - I long ago decided to never buy a Hells Pizza and this just reaffirms my stance.

[16 August 2012 at 18:45](#) · [Like](#) · [4](#)

**Georgina D** Well done, Hell. That's much better. Good to see something positive come out of this and I'm sure Rape Crisis will really appreciate the funding, they are a fantastic organisation.

[16 August 2012 at 18:45](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Leanne I** good work. i was pretty revolted.

[16 August 2012 at 18:45](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Beau B** I bet this thread would be a lot shorter if all the butthurt emo crowd put their money where their mouths are. NUT UP OR SHUT UP.

[16 August 2012 at 18:47](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Ben C** I'm very pleased to see this, and the increased awareness for the Wellington Rape Crisis is a positive to be taken.

[16 August 2012 at 18:48](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Jazz G** Thanks Hells for the correction, sorry that your guy messed up so bad. YEAH positive public relations!

[16 August 2012 at 18:53](#) · [Like](#)

**Wraith C** "Cock and balls"  
That is not tea-bagging idiots.

[16 August 2012 at 18:58](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Isuru D** Don't care if it was not politically incorrect. Your pizzas are still the best and that's all that matters.

[16 August 2012 at 19:01](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Miranda T** Damage is already done as far as those who actually take rape seriously are concerned. Shouldn't Hell be trying to stay out of the shock section and sticking to what you lot do best... making food?

[16 August 2012 at 19:11](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Kristin K** Having been abused, and knowing other people who have been as well, I'd like to say well done. It's just a shame we're still struggling financially or I'd make a donation too!

[16 August 2012 at 19:17](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Lisa W** Good on you for stepping up and apologising. I like that you guys have an edgy style. Hope that doesn't stop.

16 August 2012 at 19:35 · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Jonathon H** @dion r What planet do you live on? Is there oxygen there? Rape is rape. That is all.

16 August 2012 at 19:36 · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Hannah H** What about when Hell Pizza's management allegedly bullied franchisees (one of whom was pregnant) out of their business and the co-owner labelled it "Operation Abortion"? This left the franchisees in excess of \$300,000 in debt.

In light of those actions, what is Hell Pizza doing to discourage employment related bullying?

Have they, or are they looking to amend franchise agreements in order to reciprocate loyalty to franchisees?

Are they donating anything to abortion related funds?

Knowing that one termination ended in the franchisees having a debt of \$300,000+, does Hell Pizza have severance packages for franchisees they kick out on the street?

<http://tvnz.co.nz/...>

### **Hell Pizza accused of bullying franchisees**

tvnz.co.nz

Former franchisees of Hell Pizza say the company unjustly terminated their contracts.

16 August 2012 at 19:36 · [Like](#) · [11](#)

**Chris Y** MCains make better Pizza

16 August 2012 at 19:42 · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Hell Pizza** We don't want this to in anyway undermine the seriousness in which we've taken the recent posts but some of you have been concerned about the people involved in all this. We recieved an email from the 'confessor' who has been watching the posts "Just been reading the comments on facebook. Taken way out of context, and I did slightly exaggerate the story - he knows what happened, we are still mates, and we have a laugh about it still. we just we're bitching at each other at the time"

16 August 2012 at 19:49 · [Like](#) · [4](#)

**Lou A** Another controversial post followed by public apology. What publicity stunt is on the cards for next week Hells?

16 August 2012 at 19:53 · [Like](#) · [8](#)

**Jonathon H** Oh no you didn't [hellpizza!](#) Really! You really posted that! OMG you are more dense than I thought.

[16 August 2012 at 19:54](#) · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Jino Y** I'm curious as to how face rape can be taken out of context.

[16 August 2012 at 19:59](#) · [Like](#) · [9](#)

**Genevieve F** Whether this was exaggerated or not, bottom line is that this was published and read as it being one guy who assaulted another guy who was not a mate. We weren't given the context, others assumed it was a prank between mates but that was not given in the "confession". As such, the original prank still reads as sexual assault and there are many people who maintain it was funny. Knowing the full story doesn't alter the rape culture supported by so many on this page. Mates or not, a prank or not, it is still something that could have resulted in charges laid. I'm horrified so many miss this point.

[16 August 2012 at 20:02](#) · [Like](#) · [20](#)

**Tomo C** Thanks for the SCREENSHOT [Hell Pizza](#). Never learn.

[16 August 2012 at 20:06](#) · [Like](#)

**Bryce P** wow, what happened to you guys ? that was so dumb

[16 August 2012 at 20:13](#) · [Like](#)

**Richard P** For some of you commenters -- 'butthurt' is a word with its origins in anal rape. <http://ohinternet.com/Butthurt>



## **Butthurt**

ohinternet.com

Tweet

[16 August 2012 at 20:22](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Tom T** ^sounds butthurt

[16 August 2012 at 20:24](#) · [Like](#) · [1](#)

**Stacey G** Thank you Hell Pizza, and well done. The donation is awesome, raising awareness is awesome, but the best part is "putting our team and staff through a sexual violence awareness and ethical bystander training" A lot of the comments posted have highlighted the fact that education on this issue is sorely lacking!

[16 August 2012 at 20:25](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Karli G** This is another failed, desperate attempt at being 'edgy'...they must be struggling to sell pizzas these days...especially with so much better competition around. Why don't you just concentrate on making a better product...you may just save your business.

16 August 2012 at 20:27 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [2](#)

**Byron B** 10K is nothing for these guys. Why not complete WRC's funding target, and then set up a yearly national fund. Come on Hell Pizza, be the good guys for once, rather than just looking like you're buying your way out of a problem.

16 August 2012 at 20:28 · [Like](#) · [14](#)

**Jessica S** Good on you guys. I won't be boycotting your stores because one person made a bad decision.

16 August 2012 at 20:29 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [3](#)

**Stacey G** And Im putting my money where my mouth is and have donated. I hope you all will too. Its a minimum \$5 - thats less than a pizza. Eat baked beans tonight and donate instead.

16 August 2012 at 20:31 · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Eddie H** @Dion, look up the definition of 'date rape' and you will see that being unconscious and therefore unable to give consent is the same as saying no.

16 August 2012 at 20:43 via [mobile](#) · [Like](#) · [10](#)

**Richard P** What does someone who has been anally raped sound like Tom? I don't actually know, but I'm guessing you might?

16 August 2012 at 20:46 · [Like](#)

- **Anita E** Has Hell given the name of the person who admitted sexual assault to the Police?

16 August 2012 at 21:27 · [Like](#) · [5](#)

**Sarah J** You have not lost me as a customer, cause I was never one, your pizza's are crap. I only feel sorry for your franchises, they are stuck with your foolish marketing, and rubbish product. Of course you're to stuck up your own backsides to consider you are ruining their livelihoods while you dick around thinking your "funny"... your not.

16 August 2012 at 21:29 · [Like](#) · [4](#)

**Dee D** I said there'd be Hell to pay! Nods....at least from this disgusting mess, a good cause has benefitted!

16 August 2012 at 21:36 · [Like](#)

**Hunter T** I think you should give a copy of the confession and the guys details to the police, he seems like the type of guy that would take full advantage of someone who was passed out if there was no one around to stop him, also the email he sent you sounds like he's full of shite, there is no context in which what he did is ok, and i seriously doubt the guy is friends with him, would you like a guy after he put his penis in your mouth without permission? HELL NO! I also

feel that this is one PR accident too many, after the incident with transphobic misfortune cookie and now this I'm not sure i'll be eating at Hells again which is a pity because you have a restaurant right next door to my house and i would eat there frequently, but you have offended me twice very deeply.

16 August 2012 at 21:52 · [Like](#) · 4

**Sarah B** Well done Hell Pizza... Good to see some action instead of a hollow apology.

16 August 2012 at 21:52 · [Like](#) · 1

**Tariqa S** I have donated, and I hope that everyone else here who has the means to do so will make a donation as well. Even if you can just spare \$5, that means WRC will be getting \$10!

16 August 2012 at 21:52 · [Like](#) · 1

**Richard M** After seeing on TVNZ what arseholes the owners of Hell are it put me right off ever buying your product again. You sound like a real bunch of creeps.

16 August 2012 at 22:32 · [Like](#) · 7

**Warick H** Won't Ever be buying your pizzas again...you reap what you sew!!!

16 August 2012 at 22:53 via mobile · [Like](#) · 3

**Duane S** I don't condone rape of any sort, however this whole thing to me seems like a huge overreaction. Someone approves a post that they shouldn't have to, so ALL Hells Pizza staff have to undergo training? How would you feel if your boss told you that you had to undergo this sort of training because Joe from Accounts told a dodgy joke (or posted on a website, or whatever) and it was overheard/read by someone? Talk about taking a molehill and turning it into Everest . . . there will always be off-colour jokes, boundaries overstepped, but FFS . . . you don't like Hells Pizza or their culture, fine, use your discretion and don't purchase their product.

16 August 2012 at 23:37 · [Like](#) · 4

**Nick C** I appreciate the apology, and the donation is a nice gesture. But the fact that Hell decided that this was appropriate to post in the first place (regardless of the head honcho involvement) has destroyed my confidence that Hell Pizza is a brand I want to be supporting. Unfortunately I must take my custom elsewhere in the future.

16 August 2012 at 23:38 · [Like](#) · 12

**Scott B** Duane - look up Rape Culture and understand why it's not just one or two people that're responsible for it. This is the kind of training that ANYONE can benefit from.

16 August 2012 at 23:58 · [Like](#) · 9

**Nick C** @Duane - Calling out an individual or company for attempting to condone and reward sexual assault is never "making a mountain out of a molehill".

17 August 2012 at 00:01 · [Like](#) · 10

**Stephen W** Yeah nah too much. No more Hells.

17 August 2012 at 00:02 via mobile · [Like](#) · 4

**Ottilie G** agree with that blogger "If they were so goddamn sorry, they would have made an anonymous donation rather than use this as a PR stunt." <http://coleytangerina.tumblr.com/...>

### **Hell Pizza and Wellington Rape Crisis**

coleytangerina.tumblr.com

After giving someone free pizza for admitting to sexually assaulting their frien...See more

17 August 2012 at 00:08 · [Like](#) · 9

**Samuel S** arse kissing, suck-ups, a bunch of sycophants, "well done hell for stepping up and apologizing" what? Continued bad and very crass advertising, like the Needle pens with a stupid line about addiction a month or 2 back. Imagine being an ex-junky and getting a needle pen emblazoned with a pro-addiction message on it. Hell make bad food, bad advertising decisions, just bad all round then to save face we unreservedly apologize. Yeah nah not good enough close your stores and go away hell.

I am very liberal but your advertising has pushed me away and I will NEVER buy your Pizza ever again and when I am out and we decide to order out Hell will never be an option. your not edgy or different hell you are Crass, like yoieur product. shame.I feel dirty even writing this. eww.

17 August 2012 at 00:14 · [Like](#) · 4

**Nick L** I always appreciate a business that openly admits wrongdoings and tries to make it right. Give Hell a break, lesson learnt, move on!

17 August 2012 at 00:48 · [Like](#)

**Georgina D** Disagree Coley, I think the public apology (and associated donation) bring much needed closure to the situation. There are those who continue to cling onto bitter feelings and there are those who choose to forgive. Sometimes a mistake is really just a mistake, and I think in the face of a fairly genuine apology, the latter is the preferred course of action.

17 August 2012 at 00:53 · [Like](#) · 1

**Melissa A** Wow - we brought hells today but I had no idea about this as I was away with no internet or news updates. Guess what I would not have brought it. The whole franchise saga put a sour taste in my mouth but I thought well there are 2 sides to every story and I will just see where hells goes from here. Well where hells gone, is to the gutter. I will no longer purchase or even suggest ppl to hells - even though I love the ribs - its not worth it. Apologies are too late - stupidly all round guys. If a rapist abused a victim do you think an apology and a whoops we didnt mean it would cover it! Its on the same par in my eyes and fellow victims of sexual abuse. You owe rape crisis money as part of your social responsibility - but no thank you as you brought it on yourself.

17 August 2012 at 01:49 · [Like](#) · 4

**Sequoia E** Wow, I'm proud to see a company step up like this. Very cool.

17 August 2012 at 07:07 · [Like](#)

**Jenni-May B** too little, too late hells. Your post above shows just how little remorse you have. Shame on you.

17 August 2012 at 09:20 · [Like](#) · 3

**Julie T** this is excellent guys, i have never tried your pizza but I like your apology

17 August 2012 at 09:37 · [Like](#)

**Thomas A** @Melissa In that case you may wish to get your eyes checked.

17 August 2012 at 10:00 · [Like](#)

**Rosemary K** Well done Hells.

17 August 2012 at 11:55 · [Like](#)

**Stacey G** Theres been at least 8k extra showing on the fundy page for WRC since I looked yesterday - at least some good has come of this debacle...obviously a lot of awareness has been raised, people are talking about the issue, and people are donating.

17 August 2012 at 12:45 · [Like](#) · 2

**Harley N** Mwhahaaha, well played [Hell Pizza](#), well played, your brand will recover.

17 August 2012 at 14:20 · [Like](#)

**Heidi N** @Dan H: Actually I spend most of my spare time doing charity work, and when I have graduated I will hopefully find work in an organisation like Rape Crisis. I don't particularly care how much Hell gives to sports teams, the point is that they did something that helped perpetrate the attitudes that literally cause innumerable rapes across the country (which is something Rape Crisis knows well, which is why they won't accept Hell's money unless their staff undergo training) and they think they can fix the problem by throwing what is for them merely loose change at the problem and keep doing what they're doing. No wonder the demand for Rape Crisis' services has doubled in the last two years.

@Dion Smith: If it was over, there wouldn't be a problem. It's not over, Hell haven't learnt their lesson, they've just saved face by throwing what is for them only a few coins at the problem. They will continue to perpetuate rape culture which will only lead to more people getting raped. As soon as it's over, I'll stop complaining.

17 August 2012 at 15:04 · [Like](#) · 3

**Alex K** Lol, what was the comment?

17 August 2012 at 17:09 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Daniel W** The thing is, Hell, that this kind of thing keeps happening. Again. And again. And again. Everytime is the same reaction, you apologize, maybe donate some money somewhere, and promise not to be so dickish in future. And then you do it again. Either there is a massive culture problem that penetrates right through to the upper echelons of Hell, or somebody has decided that this is a really good marketing strategy because there are more than enough rednecks out there to support your business. I suspect both.

17 August 2012 at 20:55 · [Like](#) · 6

**Brian W** Fire your Social Media Manager while you are at it.

17 August 2012 at 20:55 · [Like](#) · 4

**Te R** wow... since when did pizza makers become the one on trial instead of the rapist? and to say there are better pizza places?!! c'mon. unless it's a small boutiquey joint where it only services you and your neighbours, then don't even compare. i think the real issue is the removal of tiramisu from the menu.

17 August 2012 at 21:42 · [Like](#) · 1

**Duane S** Wow! There are some real 'Wowers' on here. The smell of moral indignation is too strong for me. I'm guessing all those who've posted on here, outraged by the huge injustice that has been done, must live in the houses of finest glass, for they are the ones who will throw the first stone - and keep throwing them at anyone who doesn't agree with an alternative opinion. Step back, take a deep break and think about this . . . but, then again, maybe don't think about it. You're too busy being suitably outraged and expecting that in this Politically Correct age that we live in, that everyone/anyone should defer to you because you took offense at something. Guess what, fucktards - everyone takes offense at something. I look forward to the day when someone takes offence at something you think is innocuous, and how you rationalise that. It takes all sorts, I guess - just glad I don't have to deal with you on a day-to-day basis. Now, time to get me some Hells Pizza . . .

17 August 2012 at 22:21 · [Like](#) · 4

**Duane S** One last comment/observation: why are so many posters here to say "your pizza's suck"? Interested to know why, if you're so "outraged" at what happened, that you think that telling everyone who reads this that Hells Pizza sucks. Seems quite a trivial point and, in a way, probably a reflection on you as a person that, in this time where such an injustice has been committed by Hells Pizza - not the person who actually approved the post, but the whole company supposedly - that you feel the need to tell everyone that their pizza's suck. Way to be relevant, fucktards.

17 August 2012 at 22:32 · [Like](#) · 3

**Scott B** Duane, I'd love to hear precisely how making a stand against sexual assault is being politically correct.

17 August 2012 at 22:52 · [Like](#) · 4

**Duane S** Scoot, tell me why every staff member in Hells Pizza undergo "sexual violence awareness and ethical bystander training" because one person was flawed in their judgement? One person makes a lapse in judgement and the whole company is pariahed and all the other staff are suddenly, by association, made to feel like sexual perverts or predators? Riddle me that one, Sir

17 August 2012 at 23:04 · [Like](#) · 3

**Siang T** seems simple... An unjustifiable mistake was made. An apology, made. Actions to avoid such misjudgements happening again, made. A significant financial contribution to an associated cause made. Awareness about the seriousness of sexual assault crimes raised.

Why do people still feel the need to crucify those who have realised the error of their ways? Do these people also feel the need to camp out in front of prison gates to stone ex convicts for their past crimes as they walk by having served their time? Obviously you negos are non believers of rehabilitation and forgiveness.

In fact why stop at demanding HELL pays the entire \$55k... why not demand HELL rid this world of racism, dictatorships, inequality... why not destroy any potential for a significant contribution to our communities because of your righteous moral compass?! Think rationally...

17 August 2012 at 23:05 · [Like](#)

**Duane S** And Scott, never claimed that sexual assault was politically correct. What I said was that there was a huge uproar over something that, if it was assessed in the cold light of day without the lynchmob hysteria, might prove to be a little less than it actually was. There'll always be people like yourself to make it the Everest that it isn't, but let's not make it out to be anything more than an error of judgement by a person working for a pizza company - not a conspiracy to conceal rape, not a high-level coverup, just someone who made an error of judgement - something that you've clearly never been guilty of

17 August 2012 at 23:08 · [Like](#) · 3

**Nick C** This wasn't some rogue facebook "hack". The poster was representing the entirety of Hell Pizza on Facebook. This isn't some random fan page, this is the official one. Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that going to take anything posted on the company's official FB page as the real McCoy, endorsed by the company. The exact same reason you'd assume a TV advert was. The exact same reason you believe the post made that Hell is genuinely sorry for the commotion and hurt they as a company have caused with this blunder.

Honestly, I'm glad that Hell's staff will be attending these courses. Whether or not they thought the original contest story was funny, educating people is never a bad thing. Maybe some will be able to learn that sexual abuse and the perpetuation of rape culture isn't "less than it actually is".

17 August 2012 at 23:51 · [Like](#) · 5

**Scott B** Hey, classy use of the phrase 'lynchmob', no racist connotations there, nosiree Bob. And seriously? You think that a class encouraging people to be sensitive on a sensitive issue is going to make them feel like they're a predator? Maybe this is the reason these classes are needed. Do you also think that people who go on first aid courses all feel like they're psychopaths who deliberately hurt people?

Finally, please submit the following quotes and/or evidence:

- Where I make this subject into an 'Everest'
- Where I infer or explicitly state that there is any conspiracy to conceal rape
- Where I infer or explicitly state that there has been any high-level coverup

18 August 2012 at 00:45 · [Like](#) · 5

**Trevor P** It's a bit of a shame that the particular organisation that you chose does not support males - so would not go to help against the particular type of infraction that you posted. Nice PR stunt but you should really choose something more appropriate.

18 August 2012 at 01:59 · [Like](#)

**Darren M** "Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that going to take anything posted on the company's official FB page as the real McCoy, endorsed by the company". Actually Nick, no. It

isn't reasonable to assume that. Unless you sit the guy who posted this into a board meeting where they all agree that something is appropriate to post is it then, and only then, reasonable to assume this is something endorsed by the company. It it someone's job to run this competition, and this time he screwed up and is facing internal trouble. He made a mistake. Now stop having a cry and if you're still unhappy unlike Hells Pizza.  
God I hate it when a PR disaster affects my taste buds.

18 August 2012 at 02:07 · [Like](#) · 1

**Nick G** Just a story people. It was supposed to be funny.

18 August 2012 at 10:48 · [Like](#)

**Scott B** Maybe I just don't get it. I've been asking for an explanation on why it's so funny, I've yet to hear one. Would you care to enlighten me?

18 August 2012 at 11:06 · [Like](#) · 1

**Scott B** Hmm, or are you perhaps saying that simply because it was INTENDED to be funny, that makes it okay and not immune to criticism?  
<http://genderbitch.wordpress.com/.../>

**Intent! It's Fucking Magic!**

[genderbitch.wordpress.com](http://genderbitch.wordpress.com)

Crossposted to Questioning Transphobia Warning: This post is sarcastic to such a...See more

18 August 2012 at 11:18 · [Like](#) · 1

**Matthew W** While I missed the initial controversy, I'd like to say that you've handled the aftermath of this in exactly the appropriate manner. Good on Hell Pizza for apologizing unreservedly and supporting such a worthy cause. Overall this mistake may end up being positive in the balance because of your fast and appropriate reaction. Cheers.

I also hope you'll be forwarding the comments in question for investigation by the police.

18 August 2012 at 20:03 · [Like](#) · 1

**Natalie G** Thank you so much to all those of you that supported us in the past week, we are delighted to announce that Wellington Rape Crisis will be able to open our doors again on Fridays, after just one week of operating limited services thanks to amazing community support<http://www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz/index.php...>

**Wellington Rape Crisis able to open doors again due to donations**

[www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz)

Joomla! - the dynamic portal engine and content management system

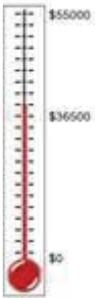
20 August 2012 at 17:00 · [Like](#) · 5

**Shevy M** i think all of you fuckwits need to get over yourselves and take a joke every once in awhile. hell pizza is one of the only companies that uses humour to catch their customers, rather than lies and bullshit. lighten the fuck up and take a joke like you all take a dick. if you didn't like hell's joke, ignore it. they're a fuckin great company.

24 August 2012 at 00:33 · [Like](#) · 2

**Matt B** I'm pretty sure i've seen that story about teabagging a guys mouth well over 100 times online so the dude probably copy-pasted it. People need to chill, no rape isn't a joke, by any means, but if you can't laugh at these kinds of things (or at least ignore them) then IMHO you probably shouldn't be on the internet.

24 August 2012 at 22:35 · [Like](#) · 1



### [Wellington Rape Crisis able to open doors again due to donations](#)

[www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonrapecrisis.org.nz)

Joomla! - the dynamic portal engine and content management system

20 August 2012 at 17:00 · [Like](#) · 5

*Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151139819417225>*

### **Warren B**

10 September 2012 at 20:52 ·

- So I just noticed all the controversy about some apparent sexual assault. Seriously? I've never seen so many cry babies in my life! Hell didn't even INVENT that confession, they relayed it, and warned everyone about reading it! This is Hell Pizza guys, not 'we care about your feelings' pizza. If they offend you so, then don't support them, just go eat that cardboard stuff that Pizza Hut sell.

It just feels like freedom of speech for everyone except if I don't like what you say then it's freedom of speech for me but not you because I have a right to say I don't like what you say but you don't have a right to say what I don't like! WTF

*Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10151084810407225&set=a.119635667224.90799.43522837224&type=1>*

### **Hell Pizza**

Got something to get off your chest? Confess it in our confessional and be in to win HELL \$\$.  
Click the link to confess: [https://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/app\\_241154589328902](https://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/app_241154589328902)  
Like · · Share ·

- 
- 4 people like this.

**Reuben B** Totally awesome to see hell condoning the sexual assault of another human being. Words cannot express how disgusted I am over this. Congratulations on your sexual assault! Here's some hell \$\$ for your troubles <http://imgur.com/a/f61pj>

### **Hell promotes sexual assault - Imgur**

imgur.com

Imgur is used to share photos with social networks and online communities, and has the funniest pictures from all over the Internet.

15 August 2012 at 22:17 · Like · 7

### **Sean S WTF!!**

15 August 2012 at 22:35 · Like

**Edward F** If it makes you feel any better, i sexually assaulted one of your pizza. It was asking for it. I might orally rape some of that pasta next time

16 August 2012 at 01:09 · Like · 4

**Nick S** Hahaha Reuben, unfortunately you may not know the difference between fact and fiction. In your little mind you may think that there's acceptance for sexual assault but in reality it is based on the "STORY" of the confession, not the underlying moral principles, laws, rules, regulations, statutes etc that may or may have not been breached in the story.

16 August 2012 at 02:56 · Like · 2

**Georgina D** Brooke...go get a brain transplant. Please. Anyone who thinks forcibly sticking one's genitals into someone's mouth while they are unconscious isn't rape/sexual assault is clearly mentally deficient in some way. Also, learn how to spell.

16 August 2012 at 07:53 · Like · 1

**Georgina D** And Hell. I used to buy your pizzas. But there is no way I am going to support a company that casually bashes transgendered people and thinks rape is funny. Monumentally uncool.

16 August 2012 at 07:55 · [Like](#) · 5

**Ari G** one time i sexually assaulted one of my unconscious friends.

do i get my free pizza now??

16 August 2012 at 08:46 · [Like](#) · 1

**Paul C** I violate vulnerable strangers, and I enjoy bragging about it. I used to think this was odd behavior, but the promise of free Pizza makes me think it's totally normal.

16 August 2012 at 09:47 · [Like](#) · 4

**Hamish B** Oh hey while we're all at it, how about we get in our people-movers, take our kids to soccer, then hit up the Westboro Baptist Church to get advice on how to be an uptight soccer mum. Hell they may even teach us how to sue someone over a FACEBOOK POST.

Goddamn you all make me lose faith in our species.

16 August 2012 at 11:01 · [Like](#) · 1

**Tom T** im buying hells every night this week in support of my favourite takeaways u hells keep up the awesome food

16 August 2012 at 14:26 · [Like](#) · 2

**Chaste C** Ouch, bad mistake. But no one actually makes mistakes I guess, huh.

16 August 2012 at 14:31 · [Like](#)

**Chantal H** Hell Pizza - You need to check all of your threads.

16 August 2012 at 14:41 · [Like](#) · 1

**Tenealia B** dont we have alot of small minded people living on earth these days! who said it was fact all we know is it was posted for a laugh people i think u need to go onto [We WILL get 'dead baby jokes' group closed down one way or another!](#)and post how offensive there jokes are atleast youll be helping out a good cause and getting into actual sick peoples heads to turn a cheek

16 August 2012 at 15:44 · [Like](#) · 4

**Nick C** Yes, because disgust at the celebration of sexual assault makes one "small-minded"...

17 August 2012 at 01:30 · [Like](#) · 5

**Ashley J** AREN'T YOU ALL SO PRECIOUS. ITS A JOKE WIERDOS.

19 August 2012 at 20:25 · [Like](#) · 2

**Shevy M** lol, omg. you faggots. you really think hell is condoning sexual assualt because this guy did this? you've got to be kidding me.

24 August 2012 at 00:46 · [Like](#) · 2

**Shevy M** take a joke ffs..

24 August 2012 at 00:46 · [Like](#) · 2

*Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151098233837225>*

**Stefan K** to **Hell Pizza**

18 August 2012 at 18:05 ·

- I can't believe the controversy that's been stirred up based on such a minor comment. It was a funny prank between a couple of guys - if it had happened to me, I wouldn't be happy about it, but I certainly wouldn't be so ignorant as to compare myself to a rape victim or demand that the trite incident be investigated as stringently as that of someone who's suffered a violent assault.

The irony of donating to the Wellington Rape Crisis Centre based on that story is that they don't actually do anything to help male victims of sexual assault, or 'survivors', anyway. I obviously don't disagree with funding them, but it's interesting how quickly some proponents jumped on a marginally related case so as to guilt through their agenda.

I understand why you had to backtrack and apologise, but I do hope that you don't punish one of the few Social Media Managers who actually has a sense of humour too severely. In hindsight, it probably wasn't the brightest move on their part, but there wouldn't be any jokes if people tried to placate every single person who might be offended by them.

[Like](#) ·

- 17 people like this.

**Scott Beccard** If you feel this strongly will you be writing to your local MP to ask that the legal definition of sexual assault be redefined?

18 August 2012 at 22:31 · [Like](#)

**Stefan K** Given that my MP is Peter Dunne, I doubt such a letter would be worth the paper it's written on. In any case, this isn't about the criminality of the act. A child stealing a chocolate bar from a dairy, and a hardened criminal snatching a women's purse are both equally instances of theft - but both the public, and the judge trying each case would understand that they're quite different examples, and they deserve different degrees of investigation and/or punishment.

19 August 2012 at 12:10 · [Like](#) · 4

**Oliver B** The child would probably not get charged youth aid would deal with him, and if it was an adult stealing the choco bar they would be charged with shoplifting.

19 August 2012 at 16:17 · [Like](#)

**Stefan K** Yeah, but the point is that such an outcome wouldn't require a redefinition of legal terms, but rather a sensible application of the law and of the legal processes in place.

19 August 2012 at 16:22 · Like · 1

**Alice Rose J** Stefan! I can't believe I actually disagree with you. How are we ever going to direct that hotel hookers with desserts porno if we don't agree on sexual assault? : (

If anyone had thought it was an amusing idea to shove their cock in my mouth while I was passed out, I would want them charged. And the whole 'oh, because you're a woman, that's all, if it's a woman that's not okay' feeling that plenty of people reading this comment will have is a sad part of the culture of men having to pretend to be fine with stuff like that, because, you know, being traumatised by someone forcing oral sex on your unconscious body is womanly and weak and not in the upstanding tradition of mates.

Maybe in this case there was only embarrassment and even amusement caused, but sexual assault in \*all\* its forms can horribly fuck up people's lives. And there's more than enough victim-blaming around rape without the purveyors of delicious pizza jumping on the 'it ain't that serious' bandwagon. And while their pizzas are delicious, given their past transphobia and racism, I can't say I'm crying bitter tears over a company having to donate cash they can easily afford to lose to an organisation that deserves it a lot more.

19 August 2012 at 18:27 · Like · 9

**Stefan K** I never said that performing a prank like this is 'fine', nor can I think of any mate who I'd let get away with it. My central point was that 'sexual assault' isn't some blanket word to be applied to a circumstance like this, and that to do so is detrimental to victims of more serious, violent sexual assaults. It's in the same vein as my belief that labelling someone a sexual predator and having them register as such because they were charged with statutory rape when they were 18 and their girlfriend was 17, as happens in several US states, both degrades the seriousness of rape and unfairly places negative labels on the guy involved.

The fact is, that without more information, it's impossible to tell how serious the incident was. It could well have been a genuinely traumatic experience for him, in which case sure, some investigation and intervention is necessary. It could also have been a meaningless prank to which he has given no second thought, in which case to compare his experience to that of someone who was just violently assaulted and raped only demeans the meaning behind the 'sexual assault' rhetoric. If the victim in this case was indeed mentally damaged or scarred, then I would certainly hope that no misguided sense of machismo prevented them from reporting a crime or getting help (though not from the Rape Crisis Centre obviously, despite them being the main beneficiaries of his purported suffering).

I don't see how Hell Pizza posting it as a confessional condones or encourages sexual assault though. The humour behind the posting stems from it being such a shocking and taboo recount - and in fact, anyone who failed to find it appalling contributes far more to the acceptance of such 'jokes'.

19 August 2012 at 19:40 · Like · 1

**Alice R** Sexual assault is a blanket word for sexual assault, funnily enough. The information that we have is, by the perpetrator's own account, he put his dick in someone else's mouth without their consent. That's sexual assault. Pretty simple. I can't imagine why sexual assault shouldn't always be called that. I don't want to talk about my experiences or the experiences of friends, but I can promise no one who's been raped is feeling degraded because any kind of sexual assault is being taken seriously for once. Pretty validating.

Rape Crisis is benefiting because of Hell Pizza's irresponsible attitude in posting that, rather

than anything else. And Hell is doing the right thing in apologising and paying, if a token right thing - 10 grand isn't exactly a thorn in Hell's side. Wellington Rape Crisis is a not-for-profit organisation, so I'm pretty sure the beneficiaries are the 1 in 5 women who will be victims of sexual abuse. So 50% of the population, and no one is even stopping anyone from eating melted cheesy delight. Pretty happy about that.

19 August 2012 at 20:10 · [Like](#) · 6

**Scott B** So we're supposed to find a joke appalling AND humourous but you'd never let a mate of yours get away with it? Do... do you know how humour works? Especially humour on as sensitive a topic as this?

"I would certainly hope that no misguided sense of machismo prevented them from reporting a crime or getting help" What about shame? Look at all the people who think people need to harden up. Who wants to look like a pussy or a wuss or whatever, and want to be threatened with rape for standing up to sexual assault? I'm not necessarily saying this is the case in this situation, but the views of society influence decisions like that. If you're going to feel like what happened to you is funny, you're less likely to go to the police because you'll feel like it's no big deal. Studies have backed this up. Welcome to rape culture.

19 August 2012 at 20:41 · [Like](#) · 1

**Stefan K** That only serves to further warp what is implied when someone talks about sexual assault. I realise it's getting into semantics by arguing that his actions were not equal to the (in my opinion) worse actions that others have inflicted, but it's this accuracy in applying a phrase that forms the crux of social justice. The misapplication of the phrase works both ways too - now his petty act, which may not even have been malicious, earns him a label as a sexual assailant, and equates him to rapists and child molesters? It's that sort of rhetoric that is also unfair to him, and completely alters what is meant when someone says 'sexual assault'. Especially since there is no sexual motivation on the part of the 'assailant' when something like this happens between two straight men. It's like someone saying they're starving when they haven't eaten for a few hours - it alters the rhetoric to the detriment of people who are actually starving somewhere in the world.

Now don't get me wrong, I think that rape crisis centres are unfortunately necessary, and deserve funding. However, I certainly hope that everyone knows why they got the funding that they did. Hell Pizza did something which resulted in public backlash, and they're basically paying out money wherever they can so as to purchase public goodwill - it just so happens that someone suggested the Wellington Rape Crisis Centre first. If they genuinely gave a damn and felt bad about the specific story that they propagated, they would've given funding to an organisation that in some way actually helps men who have had a penis jokingly put in their mouth while they've been asleep.

Now that this has occurred, and they've given in to this weird "ok we fucked up, so here's some money" deal between themselves and the quickly offended public, please excuse the cliché, but they've opened up the floodgates. From now on, every Hell post will either be vetted and censored, or they'll make it knowing that they need only throw money at whichever charitable organisation is suggested first - irrespective of that organisation's actual ability to help whoever is being propped up as the victim.

Yes Scott, I know how humour works. I laugh at stories, particularly those that go against social taboos, conventions or 'lines'. If I personally were involved, I would of course find it less funny, but I would understand how it could be funny to a third party either viewing or hearing about it.

Since we're quoting things: "If you're going to feel like what happened to you is funny, you're less likely to go to the police because you'll feel like it's no big a deal." Well yeah, because if you find it funny, it probably isn't a big deal, and that's the end of that. If I haven't suffered or lost something in any way, and have in fact found something pleasurable, then how is that something I'm going to report to the police?

19 August 2012 at 20:56 · [Like](#) · 2

**Daniel M** " they would've given funding to an organisation that in some way actually helps men who have had a penis jokingly put in their mouth while they've been asleep." - Pure genius.

19 August 2012 at 21:05 · [Like](#) · 1

**Alice R** The problem with not labelling perpetrators of sexual assaults as such in order to acknowledge the horror that 'real' rape victims have been through is that it doesn't do that at all. The phrase 'it was a joke' has appeared in a lot of very serious rape cases, accompanied by 'I thought she was enjoying it' and 'well if she was that wasted what did she expect to happen'.

These 'defenses' have been used in cases of rape, gang rape and rape and sexual assault of disabled men and women and the underlying message is always 'why are you people being such a bunch of drama queens, stop whining, get over it'. Not naming one act as sexual assault and downplaying it to the point of having a giggle on the internet isn't helping victims, it's helping people do the same with more violent crimes.

If a person being a 'wanker' makes it funny for you to force your dick into someone's mouth, then a person wearing a short skirt and getting inebriated makes it hysterical when you rape them, right? While there are definitely degrees of harm and degrees of intent, there are no degrees of 'wrongness' when it comes to consent, and letting abusers believe that there are - that as long as they didn't assault someone 'that badly' they're in the clear - creates a slippery slope which continues to hurt victims everywhere. The idea that sexual assault \*can\* be taken 'too seriously' is what hurts victims, not anything else.

I've always liked Hell's food, Hell's staff and with a handful of notable exceptions, their attitude and their advertising. I'm just not going to give them sympathy cookies for losing some cash and some face over making a mistake and having to help out a wonderful organisation in return. Because they don't need sympathy cookies. They're doing well. Sexual abuse victims need sympathy cookies, the kind of cookies they can eat without being told they shouldn't be upset when someone makes light of what they've been through, even if it is an accident. Even if the incident being made light of \*didn't\* hurt anyone. HELL PIZZA IS NOT A VICTIM HERE. There is no need for people to be telling sexual abuse victims and the people who are standing up for them by not putting up with our happy-rape-culture right now to shut up, in defense of Hell, as though they love pizza more than other humans.

Admittedly, I'm pretty sure we all love pizza more than other humans sometimes, but trying not to is pretty fucking important: don't rape, don't laugh about it, eat pizza.

19 August 2012 at 22:16 · [Like](#) · 2

**Tim R** It's hard to comment, because I've never been a victim of sexual assault and I hope I never will be, and probably the same to the majority of people who have opinions on this matter. I guess the fact of the matter is that New Zealand as I'm sure we've all experienced before has a 'She'll be right' attitude on occasion which I'm not sure I agree with especially when it comes to sexual assault, so when it comes to the glamorization of a sexual assault in a stupid advertisement campaign it's not exactly something you can just 'Sweep under that rug'. I get sick

and tired of seeing these large companies take advantage of having lots of respect and money, exploiting people like you and me then throw a 'band-aid' over it with a large sum of money and whistle on happily. Not a good look New Zealand, not a good look this 'munter' attitude we have rolling in New Zealand and not a good look on the way a capitalist society works. As a conservative society we don't condone same sex marriages but we condone same sex sexual assault as a 'laugh with the boys' sort it the fuck out New Zealand!

20 August 2012 at 09:00 · [Like](#)

*Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151093689672225>*

### **Bazza S to Hell Pizza**

16 August 2012 at 15:47 near Brisbane, Queensland, Australia ·

- dear hell stand tall dont take the media bashing. people need to harden the hell up learn to take a joke, it wasnt directed at them they had no part of it. plus it was funny as faark.  
much luck  
bazz

[Like](#) ·

- 8 people like this.

**Jessica E** how was it funny?

16 August 2012 at 16:53 · [Like](#) · 1

**Hristina S** So you're saying that because you're not directly invovled, then it's ok? The worrying thing here is how many people think that those "jokes" are ok. It's not about being "too PC" it's about recognising something that's wrong and not turning a blind eye/dismissing it as a bit of banter. That is how rape culture is promulgated and that is why this is wrong.

16 August 2012 at 17:16 · [Like](#) · 8

**Georgina D** Dear Brendon, you need to sod off and grow a brain. Much luck, George.

16 August 2012 at 18:50 · [Like](#) · 6

**Bazza S** do you know what sod means by any chance? also yes i realize that tea bagging isn't the highest form of wit but people are hating on a company for one mans mistake which they promptly resolved by removing the issue and apologizing like every one does, they have also gone out of there way and donated allot to the rape support group in wellington and spread awareness. if people forgive and get over it like you would expect your friends and family to do the world would run allot smoother.

16 August 2012 at 19:05 · [Like](#) · 5

**Kristina L** If it was an isolated incident then yes, that would be the thing to do. But this is just the latest in a pattern and I'll bet you it won't be the last. Every time I think I can order another Hell's pizza they go and do it again. They just don't stay clean for long enough for me to trust them.

16 August 2012 at 22:49 · [Like](#) · 2

**Hugh C** aha, bazz, i heard you like dicks and balls in your mouth. funny? i think it is. faarkin funny even, picturing that.

17 August 2012 at 00:33 · [Like](#)

**Bazza S** in if do you now have a problem with homosexuals? also sexual assault comes in many forms and verbal/written sexual harassment which you have just committed without thinking twice is one. you have not only proven my point but taken the nature of my comment to a personal level which also is classed as bullying so based on the fact that your against all of the above maybe you should think twice about posting a crude objective comments without thinking, allot like hell did but at least they apologized for like i bet you wont nether will you make a substantial contribution to any support groups for sexual assault or harassed victims.

17 August 2012 at 02:18 · [Like](#) · 4

**Ariyah V** People are not gonna see that post and start raping people, chill the fuck out.

17 August 2012 at 08:38 · [Like](#) · 2

**Thomas A** @Ariyah, You are wrong. Ever since the post people have been raping this page non-stop.

17 August 2012 at 19:57 · [Like](#) · 2

**Morne V** @Thomas, don't use that word pls.

17 August 2012 at 19:58 · [Like](#) · 1

**Kayla B** I just hope none of the people on this page making their immature comments are ever sexually abused or raped themselves, or end up knowing someone that has gone through it. However if you had, maybe you would not make such glib comments about such an issue because then you would have first-hand experience of how people glossing over such a comment is not only upsetting, but also shows how low certain people are prepared to stoop in the name of humour or getting a few laughs.

One thing that doesn't surprise me is the obvious lack of education and intelligence of the people supporting the original poster and Hell Pizza. It shows in the poor spelling, lack of punctuation and grammatically incorrect posts.

Oh and Brendon, do YOU know what sod means? I will educate you . . it is a section of grass covered soil. Only the vulgar definition implies it the way it has been used here, however that is not surprising either that most will understand the vulgar definition and likely not the original definition.

17 August 2012 at 20:23 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Bazza S** well done you know the definition of a sod, and what would a vulgar meaning to sod mean? why don't you focus your excellent knowledge on landscaping and the universe on pages that are meant to offend people like the "cancer is funny cause people DIE" and "Adalia Rose Is Ugly" pages, not a page that has admitted fault and did the right thing by removing the comment and apologizing. even with their mistake the have raised more awareness and funding to sexual

abuse support then you or i ever have. i dont condone sexual assault but im supporting hell because there are outlets owned buy a small business owners that had nothing to do with it trying to support their families, just getting buy like everyone else in this world. your just being stereotypical

17 August 2012 at 21:28 · [Like](#) · 1

**Nic M** I got a boner in Hell's one time, it was pretty cool.

18 August 2012 at 00:51 · [Like](#) · 3

*Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151093534907225>*

**Dion S** to **Hell Pizza**

16 August 2012 at 14:07 ·

- Fuck the haters, Hell! I thought the joke was funny and I love the pizza! A lot of people have taken this way too far and they seriously just need to get a life. I just ordered a pizza! Ha!

[Like](#) ·

- 15 people like this.

**Johnno W** Word

16 August 2012 at 14:26 · [Like](#)

**Johnno W** !

16 August 2012 at 14:26 · [Like](#)

**Hamish B** Fuck I'm mad hungry fo' some hells now

16 August 2012 at 16:21 · [Like](#) · 1

**Taneora R** FUCK wish I had money

16 August 2012 at 16:33 · [Like](#) · 2

**Matt D** ^

16 August 2012 at 16:33 · [Like](#)

**Jewels H** Sorry but tbh I think it's disgusting and horrible

16 August 2012 at 16:49 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** "I'm a mass murderer who enjoys defiling dead bodies and getting sexual with them" <- do you find this comment offensive?

16 August 2012 at 17:01 · [Like](#)

**Jewels H** I just think its not cool to use sexual harassment/abuse as a joke.

16 August 2012 at 17:02 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Taneora R** why not? Is it as bad as all other jokes out there? What about racist jokes?

16 August 2012 at 17:03 · [Like](#)

**Jewels H** I just don't find it funny.

16 August 2012 at 17:06 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** fair enough, like how I don't find dead baby jokes funny. I just don't understand people getting all offended and wanting to get the comment taken down just because they didn't approve.

16 August 2012 at 17:13 · [Like](#)

**Jewels H** Well I don't mind if everyone else finds it funny etc. everyone's different. Some more than others.... Personally I think it's not funny at all to use that as a joke.

16 August 2012 at 17:14 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** chea

16 August 2012 at 17:15 · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** oh and fuck I just read that Dion bought a Pizza GAAAAAYYYYYY

16 August 2012 at 17:15 · [Like](#)

**Jewels H** Haha I feel like pizza now... ;/ stuff you!

16 August 2012 at 17:17 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Matt P** no sexual harassment jokes are not funny! why i oughta put them over my knee, pull their pants down and give them a fucking good spanking!

16 August 2012 at 17:20 · [Like](#) · 1

**Conner S** Says Matt

16 August 2012 at 17:25 · [Like](#) · 1

**Hamish B** Oh calm down matt, or I might have to stick my balls in your mouth lol

16 August 2012 at 17:29 · [Like](#) · 6

**Matt P** come at me

16 August 2012 at 17:30 · [Like](#) · 1

**Matt P** [- ]=====8

16 August 2012 at 17:35 · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** HAHHAHAHAHAHA

16 August 2012 at 17:35 · [Like](#)

**Matt P** dayum thos are tiny looking balls

16 August 2012 at 17:35 · [Like](#)

**Conner S** What was the joke anyways? I'm in need of a laugh.

16 August 2012 at 17:35 · [Like](#) · 1

**Sam G** I find it interesting how females seem to take it so seriously but guys don't really give a Damn.

16 August 2012 at 17:56 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Hannah B** yeah what was the joke!?! i missed it!

16 August 2012 at 17:59 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** I can't remember but it had something to do with rape and rubbing your balls on her face

16 August 2012 at 18:04 · [Like](#)

**Hannah B** oooh sheeit

16 August 2012 at 18:13 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Sam G** <http://imgur.com/a/f61pj>

### **Hell promotes sexual assault - Imgur**

imgur.com

Imgur is used to share photos with social networks and online communities, and has the funniest pictures from all over the Internet.

16 August 2012 at 18:15 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Sam G** ^ original post with comments

16 August 2012 at 18:15 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Taneora R** LOL @ HA! Gayyyyyy

16 August 2012 at 18:18 · Like · 1

**Jake H** LOL

16 August 2012 at 18:23 · Like

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151093417177225>

**Serra D** to **Hell Pizza**

16 August 2012 at 12:46 ·

- Sexual Assault to sell Pizza- real classy guys.

Never buying your products again, and will be urging everyone I know, and my workplace, to boycott as well.

Like ·

**Blaize P** rofl it wasn't somethign they themselves said. It was something someone wrote in their 'confession' booth, and likely didn't happen. I bet you you A: never bought hell pizza or B: will be buying in another couple of months. I also suspect your friends won't listen to you. In the mean time? OM NOM HELL PIZZA

16 August 2012 at 14:49 · Like

**Serra D** Hell awarded a prize to that "confession", and so they gave their okay that sexual assault is fine in our society.

I have bought Hell Pizza since back in the day when they were based from the Karori Squash courts. And I won't ever again. My friends can make their own choices, but I'll let them know.

16 August 2012 at 15:22 · Like · 9

**Brooke N** Just in from Hell's Pizza's facebook page:

'Last night our Social Media Manager posted a Facebook Confessional post that was not approved by Callum or Stu the owners of the NZ brand. He normally does a great job, but in this case he got it wrong. We unreservedly apologise for this comment and have taken steps to stop it from reoccurring. Sexual assault is no joke and we would like to use the massive level of discussion on this to highlight the need of Wellington Rape Crisis (WRC). Wellington Rape Crisis provides free support and counselling to survivors of rape and sexual abuse but has this week been forced to cut its services due to funding issues. Many of you feel strongly about this so here a chance to put words into action as we are. We are making a 10k donation to WRC today and until the end of the month we will match any donation to Wellington Rape Crisis dollar for dollar to help them get to their target of 55k - so they can stay open 5 days a week!

We encourage you all to join with us in raising money and awareness for Wellington Rape Crisis. Their team will track all the donations from today until the end of the month - you can do it here <http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php...>

As part of our commitment to ensuring this doesn't happen again we will also be putting our team and staff through a sexual violence awareness and ethical bystander training run by the Wellington Sexual Abuse Network, of which Wellington Rape Crisis is the lead agency.'

## Wellington Rape Crisis: Save Our Services

[www.fundy.co.nz](http://www.fundy.co.nz)

Wellington Rape Crisis needs to raise \$55,000.00 before 1st April 2013 to keep o...See more

16 August 2012 at 15:23 · [Like](#)

**Lori B** My Family and I will be following your lead [Serra Kilduff](#), I am disgusted by the post to be honest (and I am no prude) I also have been a huge supporter of Hell Pizza from when they first opened, but no more, this time they actually have gone too far, and its too late to take it back

16 August 2012 at 15:25 · [Like](#) · 2

**Serra D** interesting- before they said that a computer did the picking. And on the 31st July the prize went to another confession of assault. And putting the onus on the public to contribute is devious- this is not about what amends we need to make- it's about Hell stepping up to the plate. (although by all means, if you are able, please donate to the Women's Refuge, because they need it)

16 August 2012 at 15:26 · [Like](#) · 2

**Lori B** I think Basically they Fucked up bigtime and are not quite sure what to do about it and how to deminish the damage

16 August 2012 at 15:28 · [Like](#) · 2

**Brooke N** yeah i heard about their previous excuses. i'm glad they are finally taking it seriously though and donating lots of money to wellington rape crisis and getting their staff properly trained in sexual violence awareness and bystander intervention. those are pretty positive things. the fact that this happened in the first place is shite - but i'm really hopeful that this could make a difference for wellington rape crisis.

16 August 2012 at 15:31 · [Like](#) · 2

**Brooke N** <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm...>

## Hell Pizza sex 'prank' claim backfires - Business - NZ Herald News

[www.nzherald.co.nz](http://www.nzherald.co.nz)

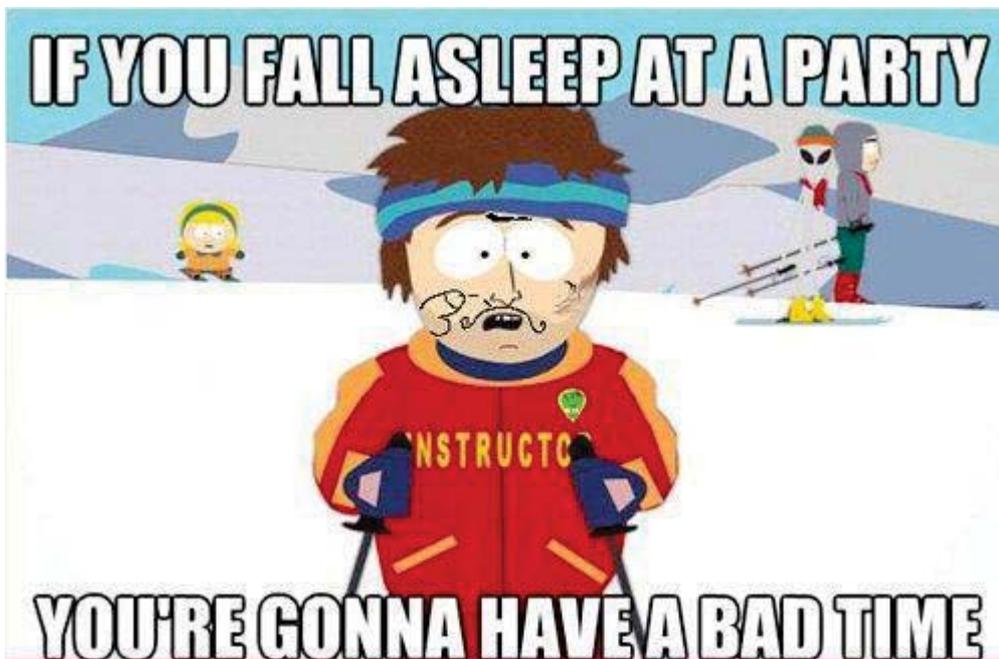
Hell Pizza has offered to help save the cash-strapped Wellington Rape Crisis ser...See more

16 August 2012 at 15:38 · [Like](#)

**Brooke N** ^ sounds like hell only agreed to do the training cos wellington rape crisis wouldn't accept their donation otherwise.

16 August 2012 at 15:39 · [Like](#) · 3

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=457807697586984&set=o.43522837224&type=1>



Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151092070982225>

### **Roz E to Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 23:05 ·

- How about this: Dear New Zealand. We are sorry. We are sorry that we posted someone bragging about sexually assaulting a stranger. We're sorry that we held this assault up as behaviour to be celebrated, even rewarded. We apologise unreservedly and understand that this behaviour is contemptible, not just in the eyes of the law but also society. We will be undertaking staff training to better understand this issue and will be making a donation to Wellington Rape Crisis, who we have learned have had to close their doors one day a week due to lack of funds.

This will never, ever happen again.

[Like](#) ·

**Sam Goodger** [jesus stop fucking caring](#)

15 August 2012 at 23:06 · [Like](#) · 2

**Roz E** Tell you what, you live in a world where you've been assaulted. Where you have to change your behaviour because of fear of rape or assault. Where companies try to use examples of something extremely traumatic to sell you fast food. Where teenagers have to be educated that gang rape is not OK because that's what the media has told them bitches want. You live in that world and then stop fucking caring.

15 August 2012 at 23:08 · [Like](#) · 43

**Genevieve F** Well said Roz. I hope that people like Sam never have to go through being raped, though spending years blaming yourself and feeling like it was your fault. I guess someone like you Sam would like to agree with my own foster mother that I was asking for it?! And then I have to see the dregs of society applauding this sort of crap. Is it any wonder that so few assaults are reported. It's because we're told it was a prank, an accident, it was nothing. I hope you never have to go through it because it is the most degrading experience you will ever go through. Well at least until people like you tell us to stop caring. I'll stop caring when people like you stop thinking it's ok.

15 August 2012 at 23:12 · [Like](#) · 20

**Derek M** Well said Roz.

15 August 2012 at 23:14 via mobile · [Like](#) · 8

**Sam G** i'm not asking for life stories? i just think people are making a huge deal about it. it was a prank, made by drunken idiots. sure, it was a tad inappropriate, but if the victim had such a huge issue about i'm pretty sure he would have laid charges.

15 August 2012 at 23:15 · [Like](#)

**Tess P** Get a clue Sam. People are making a big deal about it because they think it is important. Just because it's not important to YOU, the rest of us don't have to get over it mmkay

15 August 2012 at 23:17 · [Like](#) · 2

**Roz E** Christ almighty. Point missed much? A MAJOR NZ COMPANY USED AN ACCOUNT OF RAPE TO TRY TO SELL YOU PIZZA. They think you think that's acceptable. Obviously you do. But a lot of people think using an example of sexual assault as a marketing campaign is disgusting. And how do you know the victim didn't lay charges?

15 August 2012 at 23:17 · [Like](#) · 20

**Genevieve F** He wouldn't lay charges if people like you say it's just a prank and to get over it. That's the point. NZ has a rape culture that says this is ok when it's not. I didn't lay charges, does that mean it wasn't a huge deal?

15 August 2012 at 23:19 · [Like](#) · 7

**Anya M** this. this is the apology that would have made my soul weep a little less at this whole god awful situation.

15 August 2012 at 23:25 · [Like](#) · 4

**Sam G** Look - I do not approve of rape any less than anyone else on this page. I'm just saying, if you want to do something about it, complaining on a Pizza company's Facebook page isn't going to do you much justice.

15 August 2012 at 23:27 · [Like](#)

**Nick C** Er, yeah it is. It already got a half-arse apology out of them.

15 August 2012 at 23:29 · [Like](#) · 3

**Roz E** Actually, that's not what you've said, but I'll take your last comment as genuine intention. If people hadn't said anything against this, they'd have gone for their celebratory drink for a funny competition winner and all the idiots who think sexual assault is funny would have had more thing to back up their incredibly dangerous view of the world. As it is, Hell now realise they have offended people. If people who actually think rape is not acceptable and it goes beyond a "sorry we offended you" "apology", then maybe they might just look at this a bit deeper.

15 August 2012 at 23:31 · [Like](#) · 10

**Tess P** Sam, if we want to break down rape culture in this country, we need to chip away at it wherever we find it. Part of "doing something about it" is calling people out for their inappropriate comments and behaviour. Seriously, you're either part of the solution or part of the problem.

15 August 2012 at 23:35 · [Like](#) · 10

**Anya M** "Sam Goodger i'm not asking for life stories? i just think people are making a huge deal about it. it was a prank, made by drunken idiots. sure, it was a tad inappropriate, but if the victim had such a huge issue about i'm pretty sure he would have laid charges." OR the victim felt he couldn't or shouldn't lay charges because he lives in a world where people think that sexually assaulting someone while they sleep is hilarious and "just a prank" and then has to deal with the guilt of it somehow being their fault or that they should feel ok with it when they dont for the rest of their lives. awesome.

15 August 2012 at 23:37 · [Like](#) · 6

**Genevieve F** Actually I've also contacted head office sand sent the details along with screen shots I got to the media. They have already come back to me. I'm not just complaining on their wall. I'm doing what else I can to get word out that it's not OK and why.

15 August 2012 at 23:37 via mobile · [Like](#) · 10

**Sam G** ^ That's great. I do apologize if I've caused offence to you Genevieve. I hope everyone can forgive Hell for what one person thought was a good idea to post on their Wall. I'm sure good things will happen as a result (including that person getting fired, what an idiot).

15 August 2012 at 23:54 · [Like](#) · 1

**Rayna R** This does call for remedial activity - donate to them

16 August 2012 at 00:34 · [Like](#)

**Rayna R** Wow that fixes things Sam Goodger... Just because they were "drunk" and it was a "prank" makes it okay and they should get over it... I never looked at it in that way before... Makes perfect fucking sense.

16 August 2012 at 00:38 · [Like](#)

**Sam G** THE SARCASM, IT BURNS

16 August 2012 at 00:42 · [Like](#)

**Serra D** yeah, I don't think I'll be letting Hell's various "stuff ups" go.

As a consumer I am going to not buy their products, and am going to urge everyone I know to do the same. My workplace is large, and in the past has bought large quantities of Hell pizza. I am going to formally urge them to go somewhere else in future.

I feel very sorry for the people who have bought into this franchise, because Hell is obviously intent of screwing them

16 August 2012 at 13:08 · [Like](#) · 1

**Mostyn M** Can I point something out for everyone. It seems Sam, through not fault of his own.... Might be a bit of a cock.

17 August 2012 at 05:29 via mobile · [Like](#)

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151092069522225>

**Sam G** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 23:04 ·

- People should really just get over it. It probably isn't even true?

I'll still buy your pizza, Hell.

[Like](#) ·

- 3 people like this.

**Nick C** Glad to know you condone sexual offenders. You mother must be so proud.

15 August 2012 at 23:26 · [Like](#) · 8

**Sam G** Oh GTFO

15 August 2012 at 23:30 · [Like](#) · 2

**Ryan J** Sexual offenders? Who put their dick in the dough and embarrassed the franchisee?

15 August 2012 at 23:30 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Ryan J** When I worked at McDs I put an armpit hair in the burger of a dude from my school who raped his ex-gf and asked him if it tasted masculine before he left, he mustn't have got it because he said yes.

15 August 2012 at 23:42 via mobile · [Like](#) · 4

**Sam G** CALL THE POLICE, HEALTH AND SAFETY BREACH

15 August 2012 at 23:46 · [Like](#) · 1

**Jessica E** Dude, you are completely missing the point. Whether the confession itself was true or not, making light of sexual assault is extremely distasteful behaviour for a major NZ company to be promoting on its page.

15 August 2012 at 23:59 · [Like](#) · 6

**Catelin S** for fucks sake, i don't actually understand why everyone is so up in arms about this. so some cunt got a tea bagging? who cares, it's not sexual assault. you would think if the dude had such a massive problem with it he would have done something about it, considering he gets "shit for it all the time" he knows it happened. everyone get the fuck over yourselves.

16 August 2012 at 00:14 · [Like](#) · 2

**Jessica E** Actually putting your penis inside someone's mouth without consent IS sexual assault.

16 August 2012 at 00:17 · [Like](#) · 2

**Catelin S** like i said, if the dude who had it happen to him had a problem with it wouldn't he of done something about it considering he knew it happened?

16 August 2012 at 00:17 · [Like](#)

**Andrew B** I think it's pretty funny

16 August 2012 at 00:18 · [Like](#) · 2

**Catelin S** it's fucking hilarious.

16 August 2012 at 00:19 · [Like](#) · 1

**Andrew B** Everyone having a whinge about this should go teabag themselves

16 August 2012 at 00:21 · [Like](#)

**Catelin S** that sounds complicated.

16 August 2012 at 00:22 · [Like](#) · 2

**Rachel B** Everyone who thinks it's funny should go and read the Crimes Act.

16 August 2012 at 00:23 · [Like](#) · 4

**Jessica E** Like I said above, the confession could very well be someone's idea of a joke. However, the main problem is in that someone in Hell's marketing PR thought it was a good idea to post this and trivialise sexual abuse. I mean, I'm all for humour but the t...[See More](#)

16 August 2012 at 00:24 · [Like](#) · 4

**Catelin S** would it also be sexual assault if a girl happened to place her breast in this mans mouth till he woke up?

16 August 2012 at 00:25 · [Like](#) · 2

**Sam G** it would be for me!

16 August 2012 at 00:26 · [Like](#) · 2

**Jessica E** If a girl forced her breasts into a man's mouth until he woke up, yes that would be sexual assault. I don't think you understand that sexual acts without consent are considered assault, regardless of gender.

16 August 2012 at 00:28 · [Like](#) · 5

**Catelin S** but if that had been the case i doubt you would be so offended about it.

16 August 2012 at 00:28 · [Like](#)

**Rachel B** Catelin - yes. The Crimes Act says - yes. You would go before a Judge and Jury of your peers after being arrested by the police. Sexual assault is sexual assault.

16 August 2012 at 00:29 · [Like](#) · 1

**Jessica E** I would be if a major NZ company was going HAHA A GIRL FORCED HERSELF ONTO A MAN WHO DIDN'T WANT HER TO! LULZ, isn't rape funny guise!

16 August 2012 at 00:31 · [Like](#) · 1

**Rachel B** sexual connection means—  
(a)connection effected by the introduction into the genitalia or anus of one person, otherwise than for genuine medical purposes, of—  
(i)a part of the body of another person; or  
(ii)an object held or manipulated by another person; or  
(b)connection between the mouth or tongue of one person and a part of another person's genitalia or anus; or  
(c)the continuation of connection of a kind described in paragraph (a) or paragraph (b)

16 August 2012 at 00:33 · [Like](#)

**Catelin S** EXACTLY.

omfg.

so if the guy had been as offended as you, wouldn't he of gone to the cops?!

i bet it was a joke between mates, i have been to plenty of partys when some cunt has gotten a cock in the mouth when they've passed out.

all of them heard about it in the morning & i've never heard any of them go as far as calling the cops for sexual assault.

it's a joke between guys for fucks sake.

after a few punches to the arm & a bit of name calling it would have been sweet.

in fact, i bet he would have gotten the dude back by doing the same thing.

16 August 2012 at 00:34 · [Like](#) · 1

**Martin E** Id love to be woken up by having a titty put in/around my mouth..  
And Sam wants to be teabagged.

16 August 2012 at 00:37 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Rachel B** This is rape, OMG. Ever studied law Catelin?

16 August 2012 at 00:37 · [Like](#) · 2

**Jessica E** ^ oh dear, really? You can't see how that relates to someone physically forcing their penis into your mouth.

16 August 2012 at 00:41 · [Like](#) · 2

**Catelin S** also, have you ever been rapped rachel?

16 August 2012 at 00:42 · [Like](#)

**Catelin S** omg okay, i seriously can not be fucked with you all anymore.

16 August 2012 at 00:44 · [Like](#)

**Catelin S** i hope you all get a soft cock in the mouth while sleeping

16 August 2012 at 00:44 · [Like](#)

**Cassandra-Leigh H** shit got serious. i thought the whole point of the post was for people to get over it and have a laugh.

16 August 2012 at 00:46 · [Like](#) · 3

**Rachel B** That's a threat of violence Catelin. If you don't retract I will take a screenshot and give to NZ Police. Also, the Crimes Act and associated case law trumps the dictionary in NZ's legal system.

16 August 2012 at 00:47 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Sam G** ^ oh stop being so sour, she obviously didn't mean it.

16 August 2012 at 00:49 · [Like](#)

**Jessica E** Awkward how you deleted your definition of rape: did you realise that tea-bagging is a form of it?

16 August 2012 at 00:49 · [Like](#) · 2

**Daniel Z** 'so some cunt got a tea bagging? who cares, it's not sexual assault'

> it is

'you would think if the dude had such a massive problem with it he would have done something about it, considering he gets "shit for it all the time" '

> he probably hasn't go...[See More](#)

16 August 2012 at 00:52 · [Like](#) · 3

**Catelin S** do whatever you want.  
i hope you all get a soft cock in the mouth while sleeping.  
;D

16 August 2012 at 01:13 · [Like](#)

**Grhys Man** the feds would larf at this convo but do nuthin it dont infer nuthin to curse the lot of ya's with being awoken to a softie in the pie hole,for years in plenty of jobs if ya bent down to pick up wood or what have you a cock would appear on ya shoulder and a comment of ...while ya down there.Thank Fuck those days are coming to an end,aint no respect pulling your cock out and foisting it in somebodys face,om thinking the general attitude out there is terrible if this is the norm,om staying self employed so i can make good food for folks without the cream of some crusty boss sauce

16 August 2012 at 01:15 · [Like](#)

**Timmeh M** All these feels.

16 August 2012 at 02:02 · [Like](#)

**Sam G** Not sure where you're going with this, but okay.

16 August 2012 at 21:33 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Sam G** Deleting comments like a boss I see.

16 August 2012 at 22:01 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151092063327225>

**Fiona GrahamHell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 23:00 ·

- Have supported you guys as a customer for years, and not just in NZ. Bragged about Hells Pizza in the UK and dragged friends there. have always had a bit of a laugh with your antics. You pushed too far today. This is one customer who will NEVER be back.

Calculate the lifetime value of all the now ex-customers on here today and see what that little accident just cost the bottom line.

[Like](#) ·

- 18 people like this.

**Benn C** What happened. I don't understand.

16 August 2012 at 04:19 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Amanda H** Benn - <http://imgur.com/a/f61pj>

## Hell promotes sexual assault - Imgur

imgur.com

Imgur is used to share photos with social networks and online communities, and has the funniest pictures from all over the Internet.

16 August 2012 at 05:04 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Hell Pizza** Hi Fiona, thanks for your feedback. We've taken it very seriously. We are making a 10k donation to Wellington Rape Crisis today and until the end of the month we will match any donation dollar for dollar to help them get to their target of 55k.

You can help in raising money and awareness for Wellington Rape Crisis and their team will track all the donations from today until the end of the month - <http://www.fundy.co.nz/index.php...>

## Wellington Rape Crisis: Save Our Services

[www.fundy.co.nz](http://www.fundy.co.nz)

Wellington Rape Crisis needs to raise \$55,000.00 before 1st April 2013 to keep o...See more

16 August 2012 at 15:13 · [Like](#)

**Janet H** what kind of people do you have working for you?????

16 August 2012 at 17:54 · [Like](#)

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151092005542225>

## Stacey G to Hell Pizza

15 August 2012 at 22:32 ·

- Unlawful Sexual Connection is defined in the Crimes Act 1964 as:  
  
“Person A has unlawful sexual connection with person B if person A has sexual connection with person B –  
(a) without person B’s consent to the connection ;and  
(b) without believing on reasonable grounds that person B consents to the connection.”  
  
This means that unlawful sexual connection covers any sexual contact that happens without consent: ie. Male to female, female to male, male to male, and female to female. Sexual connection includes anal and genital penetration of one person by any part of another or by an object held or manipulated. It also includes oral sex, which is the touching of the lips to the genitals (either giving or receiving).

[Like](#) ·

- 15 people like this.

**Jayce B** Hold on, so are you telling me that it's NOT OK as long as it's done for a laugh? Shit...

15 August 2012 at 22:57 · [Like](#) · 1

**Stacey G** Yeah - I was going to rob a bank once, just for a laugh...but then I grew a brain.

15 August 2012 at 23:06 · [Like](#) · 8

**David B** ^^ Touche Stacey

15 August 2012 at 23:31 · [Like](#) · 1

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151092004602225>

**Hristina S** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 22:31 ·

- So let me get this straight.... Sexual assault is okay as long as it's "in jest"? Sexual assault is okay as long as the offender makes light of it? Sexual assault is okay as a really fucked up marketing tool? You should be ashamed of yourselves. By promoting the self confessed rapist what kind of message are you sending to people? Did you even read the comment threads underneath your post? Doesn't it frighten you that society doesn't see the seriousness of the situation because a company like yours SUPPORTS THE ACTIONS OF A RAPIST. You are promulgating a rape culture and REWARDING it. How DARE you use the most fundamentally degrading action one human can take on another as a reward worthy stunt? You have just disrespected every single person who has suffered through assault. You have shown your lack of regard for the society that you are a part of and humanity in general. Aside from the disgust I feel for you and everyone associated with your brand, I also feel really sorry that you do not have the moral capacity to realise that you are part of the bigger problem. Shame on you.

[Like](#) ·

- 35 people like this.

**David J** Hell's little cabal of rape apologists are no doubt going to maintain that that the victim was probably dressed up pretty and, therefore, totally asking for it.

15 August 2012 at 22:41 · [Like](#) · 3

**Sam G** tl;dr

15 August 2012 at 23:00 · [Like](#) · 1

**Dion S** Meh, Hell's pizza is delicious. Calm down. YOLO

15 August 2012 at 23:03 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Renee T** Euwee, Hells pizzas are a fatty mass of yuck.

16 August 2012 at 09:28 · [Like](#)

**Ben M** Ps. Your pizzas taste stale. Shame! SHAME!!!

16 August 2012 at 10:02 via mobile · [Like](#)

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151091971377225>

**Matt C** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 22:06 ·

- Will you be turning the details of the self confessed rapist over to the Police?

**Melanie N** Just came to say the exact.same.thing. I hope very much that the confession and its owner's contact details are handed over to the police for them to investigate.. and I very much hope this is some dicks idea of funny and it never happened...

15 August 2012 at 22:15 · [Like](#) · 8

**Sam G** Yeah sure, let's all nark on a guy who posted something on the INTERNET.

15 August 2012 at 23:01 · [Like](#) · 2

**Dion S** Meh

15 August 2012 at 23:05 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Dion S** Unless said victim wants to do something about it then just fuck up. It's got nothing to do with any of you. You didn't wake up with your mates junk in your mouth so fuck up.

15 August 2012 at 23:10 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Stacey G** The point is that if people make up shit like that, and then everyone has a good laugh and gives him a prize, then it makes sexual assault seem OK. Then all the men and women that have been assaulted feel that they cant report it, or stop it. Cos its just a joke isnt it? So why do so many assault victims go bonkers, or kill themselves? Obviously they couldnt take a joke, so the worlds better off without them right?

Ha. Ha.

15 August 2012 at 23:12 · [Like](#) · 9

**Dion S** Lol just like all the 'cure cancer' and 'save the whales' pages on facebook. One post on a page isn't going to make a fuckin thing different. If this is how you look at shit like this then go bury your head in the sand cause there's a million things worse than that post in society.

15 August 2012 at 23:15 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Dion S** YOLO

15 August 2012 at 23:18 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Julian O** Sounds like Dion, Luke and Sam have a great deal of "knowledge" and are a little over defensive about this matter? Where did this happen again? Lads?

15 August 2012 at 23:19 · [Like](#) · 2

**Dion S** Sam's house

15 August 2012 at 23:21 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Hell Pizza** Hi Matt and others, we don't want this to in anyway undermine the seriousness in which we've taken the recent posts but some of you have been concerned about the people involved in all this. We received an email from the 'confessor' who has been watching the posts "Just been reading the comments on facebook. Taken way out of context, and I did slightly exaggerate the story - he knows what happened, we are still mates, and we have a laugh about it still. we just we're bitching at each other at the time"

16 August 2012 at 19:52 · [Like](#) · 1

**Matt C** Surely it would be better to let the police decide if its all OK. I mean of course the perpetrator is going to say that everything is fine, they don't want to get in trouble. Asking the police if they want to take it further seems like the responsible thing to do.

16 August 2012 at 23:25 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Dion S** Jesus christ let it go man.

17 August 2012 at 01:43 via mobile · [Like](#)

**Tara J** Hey, Luke now that it's gone public, we the public have a right to talk about it and ask questions?

18 August 2012 at 09:37 via mobile · [Like](#)

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151091896517225>

**Peter G** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 20:52 near Silverstream ·

- Omg calm down, if you don't like it then unlike its that simple. Wanna protest then don't purchase the product. If it was sexual assault the guy it happened too should of gone to the authorities. Chill the fuck out!

'If your offended easily don't read' why did you read it then?

It's a pity people took it the wrong way.

Disclaimer: in no way do I agree with sexual assault.

[Like](#) ·

- 2 people like this.

**Amy C** Did you not like the replies the first time you posted this little rant?

15 August 2012 at 20:56 · [Like](#) · 7

**Peter G** Your more than welcome to re-post, I needed to fix up the mistake of 'CLAIM'

15 August 2012 at 20:57 · [Like](#) · 2

**Sarah K** I see you have corrected calm down from claim down. Awesome

15 August 2012 at 20:57 · [Like](#) · 2

**Amy C** You also took out YOLO LOL

15 August 2012 at 20:58 · [Like](#) · 4

**Sarah K** Good on you Peter. I def would do the same

15 August 2012 at 20:58 · [Like](#) · 2

**Peter G** This comment was re-posted due to a spelling error - Comments from the delete post as follows

Amy wrote: "It was your dicknballs aye?"

Claire wrote: "Claim down?"

Claire wrote: "YOLO is so gay"

15 August 2012 at 21:00 · [Like](#) · 3

**Charmaine F** i love it when people say 'chill the fuck out' like THEY are getting all stressed...people are allowed to protest a dumbarsed idea dude...

15 August 2012 at 21:00 · [Like](#) · 6

**Peter G** Where did I say they couldn't Charmaine? Just making a comment that people need to 'Chill the fuck out'

15 August 2012 at 21:01 · [Like](#)

**Sarah K** You do sound a bit stressed...

15 August 2012 at 21:11 · [Like](#) · 2

**Stacey G** Perhaps the victim didnt go to the authorities because we live in a culture where sexual assault is accepted, made a joke of and rewarded. Doubly if the victim is a man. Just like Hell did.

Telling people to 'chill out' ie: ignore a blatant confession of sexual assault also adds to that culture.

15 August 2012 at 21:14 · [Like](#) · 13

**Sarah K** YOLO = you only live once The dumbass's excuse for something stupid that they did Also one of the most annoying abbreviations ever....

15 August 2012 at 21:14 · Like · 1

**Sarah K** Peter, what if that person was your daughter? Just a thought.

15 August 2012 at 21:16 · Like

**Melanie N** Yeah Peter, tell me, if you woke up that way... would you be saying this? It is Sexual Assault... plain and simple.

15 August 2012 at 21:16 · Like · 2

**Peter G** Daughter? May need to re-read. Mel: I have a sense of humor

15 August 2012 at 21:22 via mobile · Like

**Sarah K** Dude, I read the story, I was just saying what if it was your daughter, and a sense of humour is one thing, a weird shitty problem is another.

15 August 2012 at 21:27 · Like

**Des G** y so serious peter! sesh?

15 August 2012 at 21:35 via mobile · Like · 1

**Peter G** Not serious bro taking the piss haha

15 August 2012 at 21:38 via mobile · Like

**Sarah K** YOLO aye Petey

15 August 2012 at 21:40 · Like · 2

**Blair C** Ermahgerd!!

15 August 2012 at 21:43 · Like · 2

**Des G** yep gota luv takin da pis bahahaha.

15 August 2012 at 21:59 via mobile · Like

**Melanie N** REally Peter, you would find that funny... REALLY! Ok.. keep telling yourself that.

15 August 2012 at 22:17 · Like · 1

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151091859717225>

**Genevieve F** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 20:18 ·

- Deleting that post doesn't change the fact you rewarded and applauded sexual assault. Glad I took a screen print of it though, proof of how low you have sunk as a company.

[Like](#) ·

- 13 people like this.

**Hell Pizza** Hi Genevieve, forgive us for using the same comments as for Jayce but we saw this as a 'Jackass' type confession, guys making fun of other guys which we're sure is the way that it was given and received. We certainly don't condone anything further than that. Have taken all of your views on board though and thanks for the comments.

15 August 2012 at 20:22 · [Like](#)

**Laurie L** send the screen shot to a news agency Genevieve, the apology is half arsed, and Im sure with the recent exposure to the conduct the media would be interested

15 August 2012 at 20:31 via mobile · [Like](#) · 4

**Genevieve F** Yeah well for rape victims, a "your views have been taken on board" hardly cut it.

15 August 2012 at 20:32 · [Like](#) · 9

**Tawna W** So, because the computer picked the winner, that makes it ok? It was wrong on so many levels. Pushing the envelope is one thing, but this time you've gone way too far. Tell me, how would YOU feel if something like that happened to one of your friends or loved ones???

15 August 2012 at 20:33 · [Like](#)

**Natalie S** I wonder how Hell can actually be sure that the whole thing was 'guys making fun of other guys which we're sure is the way that it was given and received.' Really? Were they there?

16 August 2012 at 02:34 · [Like](#)

**Bernadette S** I hope Hells pizza goes bust in NZ....it will by the way its going....just a matter of when.

16 August 2012 at 07:49 via mobile · [Like](#)

Hell Pizza. (2012). In Facebook [Fan Page (product/service)]. Retrieved 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 from <http://www.facebook.com/hellpizza/posts/10151091838297225>

**Anya M** to **Hell Pizza**

15 August 2012 at 19:57 ·

- Really really disgusted by your post in which you glorify sexual assault. Horrific.

[Like](#) ·

- 7 people like this.

**Kizzie N** I completely agree with this

15 August 2012 at 20:16 · Like · 1

**Anya M** and now its deleted as if that actually makes any difference. they honestly thought that was ok to put up. they thought it was ok to glorify sexual assault. they think thats fine.

15 August 2012 at 20:18 · Like · 1

**Laura B** What did they say?

15 August 2012 at 20:19 via mobile · Like

**Amy C** Clearly this company has NO common sense whatsoever, unbelievable that they thought that was a good idea!

15 August 2012 at 20:21 · Like · 2

**Kizzie N** As if the franchise hole wasn't bad enough, add this to the mix too.....seems Hell are on Self Destruct mode!

15 August 2012 at 20:21 · Like · 1

**Anya Merryfield** <http://twitpic.com/ajlytl> you can delete it but we all took screenshots.



**A photo from @noir\_angele**

[twitpic.com](http://twitpic.com)

15 August 2012 at 20:21 · Like · 4

**Emma R** bloody hell! bad stuff

15 August 2012 at 20:23 · Like

**Hell Pizza** Hi Anya & co. Forgive us for repeating these comments but the computer picked the winner and we saw this as a 'Jackass' type confession, guys making fun of other guys which we're sure is the way that it was given and received. We certainly don't condone anything further than that. Have taken all of your views on board though and thanks for the comments.

15 August 2012 at 20:25 · Like

**Kizzie N** Yet you still put a disclaimer about people who are easily offended...so you knew there was something wrong with it.

15 August 2012 at 20:26 · [Like](#) · 9

**Amy C** Smarten up [Hell Pizza](#) think before you post.

15 August 2012 at 20:27 · [Like](#) · 2

**Laura B** Well fuck me like a hooker, that's terrible!

15 August 2012 at 20:29 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Laura B** Just messin with ya Anya

15 August 2012 at 20:29 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Tawna W** So, because the computer picked the winner, that makes it ok? It was wrong on so many levels. Pushing the envelope is one thing, but this time you've gone way too far. Tell me, how would YOU feel if something like that happened to one of your friends or loved ones???

15 August 2012 at 20:29 · [Like](#) · 2

**Danielle C** wow what a bunch of dickheads, your advertising and marketing used to be amusing, shame you couldn't keep it that way

15 August 2012 at 20:30 · [Like](#) · 2

**Charity W** Hell Pizza - how disgusting. You and your pizzas make me sick

15 August 2012 at 20:32 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Anya M** The fact that you thought that it was ok at all, that you went through the act of typing it up and pushing post along with choosing an image and a marketing tagline "dont read this if your easily offended" is utterly disturbing. There were so many opportunities for you to go "hey.. do you know what.. someone being sexually assaulted might not actually be funny". As for your "guys making fun of other guys, which we're sure is the way it was given and received" is again really freaking disturbing. I wonder how many other people that were sexually assaulted were happy with the way in which it was "given and received."

15 August 2012 at 20:32 · [Like](#) · 7

**Kizzie N** Yep, there is a very very clear line aye Danielle.

15 August 2012 at 20:33 · [Like](#) · 1

**Laura B** Agreed

15 August 2012 at 20:33 via mobile · [Like](#) · 1

**Laura B** That person shouldn't be encouraged by having their horrific words promoted. You just patted him on the back, even if it was deleted.

15 August 2012 at 20:34 via mobile · [Like](#) · 2

**Charmaine F** Wow...that is a new low.

15 August 2012 at 20:35 · [Like](#)

**Charity W** I'm pretty sure the Jackass guys never practised sodomy either Hell Pizza. Nice try though

15 August 2012 at 20:42 via mobile · [Like](#) · 6

**Rangi T** Well, they did stick things up their bum. Which counts as sodomy I guess lol

15 August 2012 at 20:53 · [Like](#)

**Jannina C** .... Just as well as I eat Sals Pizza, real pizza without the lame and inappropriate crap we've come to expect from Hells.

15 August 2012 at 21:19 via mobile · [Like](#) · 3

**Anya M** Also why on earth would you have a computer pick the winner of a content driven competition. That makes absolutely no sense. It's obvious that you guys in fact chose the winner, it would be really great if you didn't lie on top of everything else.

15 August 2012 at 21:46 · [Like](#) · 2