

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Saturday 11th June 2016

We, the undersigned, are a group of women who have been friends, colleagues, co-workers or partners of Jacob "Jake" Appelbaum over many years.

We have decided that we must speak out due to the nature of this coordinated and one-sided attack on his character and work. It has become clear the mainstream media are unwilling to fact-check, and only too willing to persist in spreading uncorroborated and unfalsifiable rumor. This statement is to give our positive experiences with Jake from our first-hand, long-term perspectives, over many public and private situations.

We do not claim to know what happened in precise situations that we were not present for, and we do not want to trivialise and minimise any pain that may have been caused. But we are observing – beyond the allegations, that are not for us to comment on specifically – an egregious character assassination is being played out with numerous defamations online and offline. This is not how the truth can be determined, or justice for anyone done, whether law enforcement is to be trusted or not.

We would like to state that our experiences with Jake are different than what is often being portrayed. We know Jake to be a kind, loyal and dedicated person. We do understand Jake can be outspoken and provocative regarding a number of issues – which can come across as offensive – however, we have never found Jake to be as is being alleged.

We are not apologists for any genuine wrongdoing, and as women working in this community we know that there are struggles around sexism. However, simple punitivism is not how the human rights that we all defend should be enforced or framed.

We believe that an open and evidence-based discussion in this situation is necessary to allow our community to develop better processes to handle any allegations. Furiously targeting one person without allowing for proper fact analysis will never solve the bigger structural problem that has been highlighted. We should use this moment to grow and make things better, not destroy the movement and create divisions. We need to create a channel for discussions on how to make things better.

We stand in solidarity with Jake against the way this is being handled and on the side of justice for all, in hope the truth on all sides will be able to come to light in a rational and constructive manner.

Renata Avila, Human Rights Lawyer  
Susan Benn, Artist  
Cathleen Berger, Policy Advisor  
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Angela Richter, Theatre Director  
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The initial signatories to this statement (named above) have opened an email address to receive additional signatories as well as any other constructive comments.

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