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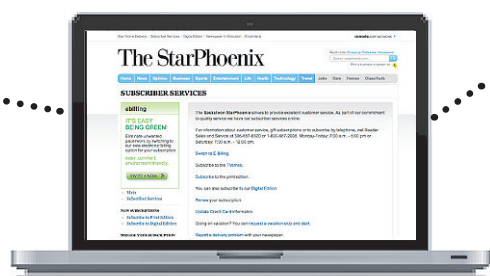
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COMMENTARY

# Jian Ghomeshi has just one choice left



JOHN GORMLEY

If the CBC hadn't discovered former student activist and drummer Jian Ghomeshi, they would have invented him.

A multi-cultural immigrant kid from the burbs, finished with a left-wing indie band, he was snapped up by the CBC. Ever hip and empathetic, Ghomeshi had it all — eternally cute and youthful, great smile, hair and permanent five o'clock shadow.

With a cool buzz and a warm, listenable baritone voice, he endeared himself to loyal CBC fans. Some called him an icon. Others, the 'god of the CBC.'

Now it's over, likely for good. As a full-blown scandal has immersed Ghomeshi, the most I've heard of the guy was his occasional opening monologues, which, on any issue, purveyed towering heights of political correctness

earnestly delivered more with the philosophical and intellectual weight of Justin Trudeau than the crowd I run with.

But now, as nine women make serious allegations about violence at the hand of Ghomeshi, and some relate creepy yet independent stories about a teddy bear he calls "Mr. Big Ears," this is a scandal that may even metastasize into the executive offices of the CBC.

Ghomeshi miscalculated how far this would go. It began with him accusing the CBC of making a moral judgment on his private life and firing him for his personal preferences of kinky and rough sex because vengeful ex-sex partners were lining up to conspire against him.

Ghomeshi pointed out, through lawyers, he "does not engage in non-consensual role play or sex and any suggestion of the contrary is defamatory."

But this scandal isn't about sex — kinky or otherwise.

It is about allegations of violence against women; allegations of slapping, punching, beating, humiliating, choking and groping young women. And for any of us — man,

woman, CBC cult member or not — this is deeply disturbing.

It is also revealing and sad how, among women, there is a well-known but apparently unspoken social norm that plays out. From Winnipeg Free Press reporter Melissa Martin's brilliant essay "Do You Know About Jian," to knowing looks among certain Saskatchewan 20-something women, it's been there for years; there was something about Ghomeshi that women knew, but wouldn't talk publicly about.

Some regarded him, at age 47, as a cheesy player with bad pickup lines who creeped out women young enough to be his daughters.

Others, like Trailer Park Boys actor and Royal Canadian Air Force Captain Lucy DeCoutere, now allege something darker and more violent.

Anyone at the top of their game, particularly in the entertainment business, can succumb to the litany of sycophants who tell them what they want to hear and eventually help tilt the table so that rules simply don't apply.

Before long, like the ego and hu-

bris of a pro athlete out of control, there is a risk that entitlement, power and wealth can be used to dissuade, discredit and intimidate women and dissenters from coming forward.

The Ghomeshi scandal followed such a predictable path. It began with his firing, something any employer can do for any reason provided that employment contracts are honoured.

But Ghomeshi's immediate indignation implied the CBC had no 'right' to fire him, as if he was entitled to his job for life.

Soon, his histrionic fans began overheating social media and Ghomeshi penned a long and creepy Facebook post, over-sharing his "private life" and kinky sex practices and suggesting that CBC was "judging" him.

Struck by the 'he doth protest too much' tone of Ghomeshi's post, many reasonable observers knew there would be more to the story.

Within hours, there was. The Toronto Star unveiled an investigative piece, months in the making, involving four unnamed women, three claiming physical

abuse and one, workplace harassment.

Undeterred, Ghomeshi pressed on with a dubious lawsuit against CBC for over \$55 million in damages, despite the fact that, as a union member, he is barred from suing his employer.

As his lawyers dressed up the action as CBC defaming his character and wrongfully using confidential information against him, Ghomeshi's statement of claim — complete with a Pierre Elliot Trudeau quote at the top — looked more like the product of a public relations copy writer than a lawyer drafting pleadings.

But the scandal has deepened with additional allegations of violence, some of them stomach-turning, made by five more women, spanning 2002 to last year.

Will the scandal's concluding arc follow the formula where the subject comes clean with a mea culpa, weeps for the cameras and admits that he is flawed and broken, and blames it all on childhood issues, substance abuse or something else? It's seems to be about the only strategy left.

## CARVING OUT A SPOOKY TIME



RICHARD MARJAN/STARPHOENIX

Arbutus Properties held a pumpkin carving contest in the Rosewood neighbourhood on Oct. 29 in Saskatoon. The judging will take place on Halloween and prizes will be awarded.

## RCMP cruiser involved in crash

LEADER-POST

There were no injuries when two vehicles — one of them a marked RCMP cruiser — collided near Melville Wednesday night.

The incident started when a Melville/Ituna detachment officer was responding to a complaint of another collision near Dubuc.

As the RCMP vehicle

was eastbound on Highway 15 with lights and sirens on, it attempted to cross Highway 10 when it was struck by a northbound vehicle.

Neither driver — who were both the lone occupants of their respective vehicles — was injured, although both cars were totalled.

A Yorkton RCMP traffic analyst and the Melville/Ituna RCMP are investigating.

**LOTTERY NUMBERS**  
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