

ELITELORE PORN XXX: Stormy Daniels says (2011) Donald Trump's 'porn star affair' with her (2006) led to his paying her (2016) \$130K hush money to protect his 'Presidential Plans,' as exposed by WSJ (2018)

Dylan Matthews

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In July 2006, Donald Trump allegedly had a “sexual encounter” with adult film star Stormy Daniels following a celebrity golf tournament at Lake Tahoe. And the month before the 2016 presidential election, he reportedly sent her a \$130,000 payment through his lawyer as hush money to keep the matter private.

That claim, first reported on January 12, 2018, by the [Wall Street Journal](#), is explosive enough to conceivably topple just about any other politician. Infidelity, and attempts to cover up infidelity, ended the careers or forced the resignations of former Democratic vice presidential candidate John Edwards, former New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer, Republican Sen. John Ensign, and Republican Gov. Robert Bentley of Alabama, just to name a few from the past decade.

But this is Donald Trump we’re talking about. When the Journal blockbuster landed, it was competing for space with Trump’s labeling of Haiti, El Salvador, and seemingly all countries of Africa as “shithole” countries, ongoing congressional negotiations around the [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals immigration program](#), and the Journal’s [own](#)

[bizarre interview with Trump](#) and his subsequent [claims that the Journal mis-transcribed his statements](#) about North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un.

By the following week, Trump's [physical health exam](#) and [attempts to evade a government shutdown](#) were dominating political news.

If anyone is capable of somehow making an affair with a porn star into a non-story, it's Donald Trump.

The Stormy Daniels scandal, however, continues to mount. On January 19, the celebrity news magazine In Touch published an [interview with Daniels](#) conducted in 2011 in which she says she had an affair with Trump, including sex after that golf event. Subsequent reporting by the Wall Street Journal revealed that Trump attorney Michael Cohen [set up shell companies](#) through which to make the \$130,000 payment to Daniels. Other reports have suggested that multiple news outlets, including Fox News and Slate, had the story before the 2016 election and didn't report or publish it. And Daniels might not be the only woman Trump silenced with a nondisclosure agreement.

For her part, Daniels has continued to deny the story, saying "I am not denying this affair because I was paid 'hush money' as has been reported in overseas owned tabloids, I am denying this affair because it never happened."

But that doesn't explain why she told In Touch a very different story in 2011.

Here's what we know about Trump's alleged sexual conduct with adult entertainers, the media's failure to report on them, and what they could mean for his presidency.

The (alleged) Stormy Daniels affair

Daniels — 38, real name Stephanie Clifford — has worked in the adult industry since 2000 (a long time in an industry that prizes youth heavily) and was inducted into the [Adult Video News \(AVN\) Hall of Fame](#) in 2014. While she still performs, she's become a prolific director in recent years too, with [eight credits in 2017](#) alone.

This scandal isn't her first brush with politics. Following revelations that Louisiana Sen. David Vitter hired sex workers, Daniels, a Louisiana native, in 2009 [formed an exploratory committee](#) to run against him the following year. She [declared herself a Republican](#), and made the FairTax, a proposal to replace most federal taxes with a 30 percent national sales tax, the centerpiece of the campaign. But in June 2010 she [dropped out of the race](#), saying, "like Gov. Palin, I have become a target of the cynical stalwarts of the status quo."

Daniels's affair with Trump has been covered in multiple on-the-record interviews. In Touch magazine corroborated her statements in 2011 by speaking with a friend of hers and her ex-husband. [For what little it's worth](#), Daniels also passed a polygraph for the magazine. She says the events took place less than four months after Trump's wife Melania gave birth to her and Donald's son, Barron.

Daniels's description of the affair to *In Touch* is highly detailed, and worth excerpting at length:

It all started at the American Century celebrity golf tournament in July 2006. “[Trump] was introduced to everybody. He kept looking at me and then we ended up riding to another hole on the same golf cart together,” Stormy recalled, adding that the business mogul later came to the gift lounge her adult-film company, Wicked Pictures, sponsored and asked for her number, which she gave him, before they posed for a photo together.

“Then he asked me if I wanted to have dinner that night. And I was like, ‘Yeah, of course!’” she told *In Touch*. Stormy, dressed up to go out on the town, arrived at Trump's hotel room, where she says she was greeted by a bodyguard named Keith, who let her inside. Stormy claims Trump was sprawled on the couch watching TV, wearing pajama pants. “We ended up having dinner in the room,” she revealed to *In Touch*.

At one point, Stormy told *In Touch*, she excused herself to go to the bathroom. “When I came out, he was sitting on the bed and he was like, ‘Come here.’ And I was like, ‘Ugh, here we go.’ And we started kissing.” After having sex, Stormy said, “We hung out for a little while and he just kept saying, ‘I'm gonna call you, I'm gonna call you. I have to see you again. You're amazing. We have to get you on *The Apprentice*.’”

Remember the fact that the bodyguard, Keith, was present, and that Trump was wearing pajama pants. That will become important in a bit.

Later, *In Touch* posted a [full transcript of their interview](#) with Daniels. In it, she recalls Trump telling her she was “someone to be reckoned with, beautiful and smart just like his daughter,” presumably referring to Ivanka. (Tiffany was then only 11.)

Daniels recounts repeatedly teasing and mocking Trump in a way that is striking, given Trump's famously thin skin. “He said that he thought that if he cut his hair or changed it, that he would lose his power and his wealth,” Daniels recalled. “And I laughed hysterically at him. ... [H]e was like, ‘You know what? You're really smart. You're not dumb.’ And I was like, ‘Thanks, dick. What does that mean?’”

Trump, she recalls, kept offering to make her a contestant on *Celebrity Apprentice*. Once the interaction turned sexual, she was concerned he would attempt to pay her for it. “I do remember while we were having sex, I was like, ‘Please don't try to pay me,’” Daniels told *In Touch*. “And then I remember thinking, ‘But I bet if he did, it would be a lot.’”

Daniels recalled staying in contact with Trump and arranging other liaisons for nearly a year. The very next night, she recalls Trump requesting that Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger escort her back to her room; Roethlisberger complied.

After the event, “he called me about every 10 days.” They saw each other occasionally at public events. The two spent some alone time together the following summer at the Beverly Hills Hotel, where she recalls watching Shark Week with Trump:

You could see the television from the little dining room table and he was watching *Shark Week* and he was watching a special about the U.S.S. something and it sank and it was like the worst shark attack in history. He is obsessed with sharks. Terrified of sharks. He was like, “I donate to all these charities and I would never donate to any charity that helps sharks. I hope all the sharks die.” He was like riveted. He was like obsessed. It’s so strange, I know.

But despite *Shark Week* setting the mood, she declined his overtures to have sex again. Trump later called her to apologize for having adult performer Jenna Jameson on *Celebrity Apprentice* (with her boyfriend, UFC fighter Tito Ortiz, who was a contestant) when he couldn’t convince the network to make Daniels a contestant. “She’s a bimbo. You’re so much better,” he told Daniels.

Daniels’s friend and fellow adult performer Alana Evans, who was at the same golf tournament, confirmed that Trump and Daniels had an affair in an interview with [the Today show’s Megyn Kelly](#). She said that Daniels invited her to “hang out” in a hotel room with her and Trump; she [declined](#), thinking that the invitation was for a threesome. (“If you’re inviting me to a hotel room to hang out with another man and a girlfriend of mine, it’s very easy for you to believe there’s going to be more going on than playing cards or Scrabble.”) But the next day Daniels told her, “Picture this: Donald Trump chasing me around the bedroom in his tighty whities isn’t something that you ever forget.”

In Touch and Evans aren’t the only sources who have claimed there was an affair. Jacob Weisberg, who is editor-in-chief of the Slate Group (which owns Slate and Foreign Policy magazines), interviewed Daniels in August and October 2016, [got her to confirm both the affair and the \\$130,000 hush money payment on the record](#), and then didn’t run with the story, in part because Daniels wanted to be paid to talk.

Here is how [Weisberg characterizes](#) his conversations with Daniels:

Daniels told me she’d gone to Trump’s hotel room after meeting him at a celebrity golf tournament in Nevada in 2006. There they’d begun a sexual relationship, which continued for nearly a year. They’d met in New York and more than once in Los Angeles. In early 2007, Trump had invited her to a party to promote Trump Vodka, [where she was photographed](#). He’d also invited her to his Miss USA pageant that year.

In our conversations, Daniels said she was holding back on the juiciest details, such as her ability to describe things about Trump that only someone who had seen him naked would know. She intimated that her view of his sexual skill was at odds with the [remark attributed to Marla Maples](#).

The New York Post famously reported in 1990 that Trump's then-girlfriend and future wife Marla Maples said he was the "[best sex I've ever had](#)"; Trump was still married to his first wife, Ivana Trump, at the time.

Weisberg attempted to corroborate the story, and while Daniels did not share the contact information of some relevant witnesses (to wit, "Trump's longtime personal assistant Rhona Graff and his bodyguard Keith Schiller"), he was able to speak with three friends who backed her up.

So why didn't he report the story then, in October 2016, before Trump was elected? "Given what was going on in the final weeks of the campaign, during which Trump was facing [a torrent of accusations of sexual abuse](#), I didn't think an extramarital affair would be a highly significant story," Weisberg writes. "What interested me more was Daniels' allegation that Trump had negotiated to buy her silence. Daniels said that, through intermediaries, she and Trump had worked out an agreement for the presidential candidate to pay her a six-figure sum to keep quiet."

Daniels even texted Weisberg an unsigned version of the nondisclosure agreement that her lawyer and Trump's had worked out together.

By the time he would have published, Weisberg says, Daniels had been demanding payment for her story, and eventually stopped responding to his emails and texts. He heard from a friend of hers that she had taken Trump's money instead and signed an NDA.

"If I [reported the story], she would presumably disavow what she had told me, and the only people I had corroborating her story were sources Daniels herself had pointed me to," Weisberg explains. He also claims he lacked independent corroboration that she was paid off, despite her having texted him the NDA itself.

In Weisberg's defense, when the Wall Street Journal eventually broke the story, Trump's lawyer sent a statement to the Journal in which Daniels appeared to deny the affair; Daniels never confirmed to the Journal that she actually wrote that statement, but it confirms Weisberg's suspicion that she would attempt to deny its veracity.

Slate wasn't the only news outlet to sit on the story. Fox News reporter Diana Falzone filed a story about Daniels and Trump's affair in October 2016, with an on-the-record comment from Daniels's then-manager confirming the affair. But according to CNN's Oliver Darcy, [Fox News killed the story](#).

Daniels is not the only woman Trump is alleged to have paid off

In Michael Wolff's explosive book on the Trump White House, *Fire and Fury*, former campaign chair turned White House chief strategist Steve Bannon is quoted as saying of Trump's personal lawyer Marc Kasowitz, "Kasowitz on the campaign — [what did we have, a hundred women?](#) Kasowitz took care of all of them."

We don't have 100 names of women Trump allegedly paid off, to hide either an affair or much worse misconduct (recall that Trump [faces at least 15 allegations of sexual assault](#)). But we have names of at least two women, in addition to Daniels. The evidence for payoffs is less overwhelming than in Daniels's case, but the evidence that Trump either sexually assaulted or had consensual extramarital sex with them is strong. During the presidential campaign, adult performer jessica drake (who prefers that her name be lowercase) [accused Trump of kissing and groping her without consent](#) and offering her \$10,000 for sex in 2006, at the very same Lake Tahoe golf tournament where Trump's affair with Daniels allegedly began.

drake's publicist told the Daily Beast that drake is unable to say more [because of a nondisclosure agreement with Trump](#). Then, curiously, the publicist tried to walk back the statement later, claiming to not know if drake signed an NDA. Gloria Allred, drake's attorney, also [denied that she signed an NDA](#).

Regardless, drake's account of being assaulted by Trump matches some of Daniels's details, as told to In Touch.

"Later that evening, he invited me to his room. I said I didn't feel right going alone, so two other women came with me," [drake told reporters](#) at a press conference in October 2016, accompanied by Allred. "When we entered the room, he grabbed each of us tightly in a hug and kissed each one of us without asking permission. He was wearing pajamas. A bodyguard was also present." Recall that Daniels also reported that Trump was wearing pajamas and kept a bodyguard around during their sexual encounter.

The other woman Trump allegedly paid off is 1998 Playboy Playmate of the Year Karen McDougal. In November 2016, before the election, the Wall Street Journal reported that the National Enquirer sat on a story about [Trump having an affair with McDougal](#) in 2006, despite the Enquirer paying McDougal \$150,000 for it. The Enquirer is [famously pro-Trump](#), providing a possible motive for burying the story.

Unlike the drake case, there's no allegation that the relationship with McDougal was coercive or nonconsensual.

How important is this scandal, really?

Whenever a scandal involving President Trump emerges, it is natural for political observers to wonder if *this* is the one that will finally finish him off.

And it's certainly the case that other politicians' affairs have been enough to destroy their careers. There are the cases of Edwards, Spitzer, Ensign, and Bentley, not to mention the impeachment and attempted removal of President Bill Clinton and Sen. Vitter's belated punishment when he lost the 2015 governor's race in Louisiana in an unexpected landslide, largely because his opponent made hay of his relationships with sex workers. Gov. Mark Sanford (R-SC) was censured by the state legislature after his affair came to light.

But Sanford is now Congress member Sanford, and his district appears to have no problem with his past for the moment. Vitter was reelected to the Senate despite his scandal. Clinton was not forced to leave office. And in each of the four other cases mentioned, there were criminal charges at issue. Ensign [allegedly committed obstruction of justice](#), Bentley was [arrested for improper use of campaign funds](#), Spitzer [structured his wire transfers](#) to evade federal scrutiny, and Edwards was [indicted for improperly using campaign donations](#) to hide his affair. (The case was later dropped after he was acquitted on one count and the jury split on the others.)

Moreover, the presidency is not the Senate or a governorship. And Trump is not an ordinary president. Fundamentally, politicians who have been felled by adultery scandal have been felled because they chose to resign or were forced out by indictments.

By contrast, it's not clear that Trump did anything illegal here. Immoral, sure, but being a bad husband is not a crime. Adultery is not illegal in Nevada, where the American Century golf tournament is held. It's a misdemeanor in New York, but that law is almost certainly unconstitutional after the Supreme Court limited states' ability to ban consensual sexual conduct in [Lawrence v. Texas](#).

Ultimately, whether this story damages Trump depends on a) whether Trump is duly shamed and compelled to resign or apologize, both of which seem unlikely; b) whether Republicans in charge of Congress view it as a serious matter and launch an investigation; and c) if the media constantly pursues it as the main political story in the country, which is both unlikely and arguably irresponsible when the military is [moving ships, troops, and planes to prepare for a possible war with North Korea](#). However important you think the Stormy Daniels story is, that one is definitely more important.

There's also a question as to whether the news that Trump was unfaithful to his wife is much of a revelation at all. Marla Maples was Trump's extramarital partner before she became his wife; there is [audio of him bragging to a reporter](#) about cheating on Ivana. If you went into the 2016 election unsure if Trump was a faithful husband and partner, you weren't paying much attention.

In other words, the voters who elected Trump knew that this was who he was when they voted for him. Why should the latest news change their minds, or anyone else's?

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