

Vulture Capitalists

[NYT technology reporter](#) Taylor Lorenz covers internet culture including [The End of Friendly Generational Relations](#), [influencers posting fake brand deals](#), and [Instagram's harassment problem](#) (all on Mefi). Today, it emerged she's been the [target of threats and harassment](#) by prominent tech VCs on the private Silicon Valley social network [Clubhouse](#). Notably, Ben Horowitz, co-founder of [a16z](#), has [declined to help](#).
posted by [adrianhon](#) (18 comments total) [5 users marked this as a favorite](#)

I've been watching this blow up on Twitter today, and I'm still a little confused about it. Why do they hate her so much? There seems to be some idea that tech journalism shouldn't exist, because mere journalists don't have a right to intrude on the tech dudes' tech fiefdoms. And I think that there's probably an undercurrent of misogyny: she's a youngish woman who writes intelligently and sympathetically about the often-maligned cultures of even-younger women, and that makes her definitely a bad and illegitimate person who deserves harassment. But is there anything else to it?

posted by [ArbitraryAndCapricious](#) at [2:24 PM](#) on July 2 [[2 favorites](#)]

Let's first stipulate that any kind of harassment like this is wrong. In Lorenz's case, the bullshit "reasons" include: misogyny; her presence in Clubhouse; her coverage of memes and TikTok

(apparently not real journalism); a hatred of newspapers and journalists in general; and outrage that they are investigating private companies at all.

Witness [this quote](#), apparently from Clubhouse:

why does press have a right to investigate private companies, let the market decide, I don't understand who gives them that right

posted by [adrianhon](#) at [2:34 PM](#) on July 2 [[7 favorites](#)]

"let the market decide" --- Ugh. Even if you espouse the ideas of free market capitalism, those ideas rely on good information transmission. How can market decide when the market doesn't have the information to do so?

posted by [nat](#) at [2:40 PM](#) on July 2 [[10 favorites](#)]

[Some techbro](#): *"why does press have a right to investigate private companies, let the market decide, I don't understand who gives them that right"*

[Let me Google that for you.](#)

posted by [chavenet](#) at [2:41 PM](#) on July 2 [[2 favorites](#)]

Why do they hate her so much?

A woman who speaks truth from a position of authority?

Why, indeed.

posted by [mhoye](#) at [2:41 PM](#) on July 2 [[10 favorites](#)]

How can market decide when the market doesn't have the information to do so?

How can the market decide in your favour when it does?

posted by [krisjohn](#) at [2:59 PM](#) on July 2 [[1 favorite](#)]

Reminds me of when Musk floated the idea of a website rating journalists after negative reports about his companies started coming out. It's funny how Trump and Republicans are mad at the tech industry right now, when they should realize they are united in their desire to end freedom of the press.

posted by [star.gentle.uterus](#) at [2:59 PM](#) on July 2 [[9 favorites](#)]

More on this from [Motherboard](#). It sounds like they basically don't like critical news coverage, and they're fixating on Taylor Lorenz because reasons. And we all know the reasons.

posted by [ArbitraryAndCapricious](#) at [3:01 PM](#) on July 2 [[3 favorites](#)]

Kara Swisher has been doing tech journalism for a long time. Based on [one of her tweets today](#), she's suffered some of the same harassment.

posted by [rednikki](#) at [3:06 PM](#) on July 2

Even if you espouse the ideas of free market capitalism, those ideas rely on good information transmission. How can market decide when the market doesn't have the information to do so?

I assume it's because "the market" isn't what we think of as the market. It's the collection of companies VCs have funded, and everyone who needs to be in the know is already presumed to be in the know via informal private conversations.

posted by [treepour](#) at [3:08 PM](#) on July 2 [[3 favorites](#)]

There's an invite only site for rich white guys called Clubhouse? Can we just give Silicon Valley a big wedgie?

posted by [geoff.](#) at [3:09 PM](#) on July 2 [[16 favorites](#)]

Solid reporting from Motherboard right there. Just incredible to see this gem:

[Balaji] Srinivasan, formerly a general partner at Andreessen Horowitz, claimed that "the entire tech press was complicit in covering up the threat of COVID-19," and claimed that relying on the press is "outsourcing your information supply chain to folks who are disaligned with you," comparable to the United States having outsourced its medical supply chain. He proposed that the approaches to truth and accountability offered by GitHub, venture capital funding, and cryptocurrency all offer better models for journalism than "the East Coast model of 'Respect my authori-tay.'"

Github, VC funding, and cryptocurrency? Beyond parody.
posted by [adrianhon](#) at [3:09 PM](#) on July 2 [[12 favorites](#)]

Can't wait for the Sorkin movie that has the line "Drop the Club... call it House"
posted by [geoff.](#) at [3:13 PM](#) on July 2

The VICE article had this great bit calling out the "clickbait" argument:

"When it comes to our industry, there's a really, really toxic dynamic that exists right now," Nait Jones, an Andreessen Horowitz VC, said on the call while speaking about recent reports about abuse in the tech industry. "Because those stories were so popular and drove so much traffic, they also created a market for more of those stories. They created a pressure on many reporters to find the next one of those stories inside of a fast growing tech company because those stories play very well on Twitter, especially around protecting vulnerable people."

(In 2020, the idea that fishing for "clicks" to drive ad revenue is a successful or even common business model is a fallacy. Publications that rely exclusively on advertising are failing at an astonishing rate; financially, many journalistic outlets are increasingly moving away from an ad-based revenue model driven by traffic, and instead focus on live events, subscriptions, optioning their articles to movie studios, and other models that rely on having a dedicated readership that trusts the publication).

posted by [NoxAeternum](#) at [3:33 PM](#) on July 2 [[5 favorites](#)]

I love the idea that wealthy, connected CEOs with access to lawyers and PR firms are "defenseless."

CEOs are human beings with feelings, but they are human beings with feelings who sit atop a huge power differential.
posted by [evidenceofabsence](#) at [3:47 PM](#) on July 2 [[6 favorites](#)]

Glenn Greenwald, independent journalist and outspoken advocate for unrestricted freedom of the press, comes out swinging in defense of... venture capitalists?

[@ggreenwald:](#)

[If you have a big powerful platform and work for a big powerful newspaper, getting criticized for how you use it - even if harshly - isn't harassment. It's accountability.](#)

posted by [Atom Eyes](#) at [4:25 PM](#) on July 2 [[2 favorites](#)]

Has anyone followed up on the part about people trying to change Lorenz's passwords and get into her accounts? That seems like a bit more than criticism.

posted by [evidenceofabsence](#) at [5:05 PM](#) on July 2

Looking at the article about Away, the company's culture was problematic, but they could have avoided so many issues by just hiring more people and treating them better. Tons of empirical data showing that better work - life balance is good for

companies, but I really think the killer app for this business strategy might not be the moral good, or even the benefit to the company, but the good press coverage.

I guess that makes me an innovator, maybe even a maverick, and yet nobody has offered me VC funding, much less a Clubhouse invite.

posted by [gryftir](#) at [5:57 PM](#) on July 2