

TRIGGER WARNING:

This feature contains sensitive content and may be upsetting to those who have experiences with sexual harassment.

Sexually harassed.*

* He didn't rape us. That doesn't mean that we don't feel. There are many perspectives. Here are ours.
— 3 anonymous students

He laughed, loudly, during the rape and abuse scenes in the movie.
He moved to sit behind us, to talk to us, to see us.
He stared at us. He masturbated.
We were objectified.
Used. Hurt.

I knew. I figured it out. What he was doing, why.
I couldn't move. I couldn't speak. But I knew.
Why did I know? Because of the movie's graphic scenes? Because I read the news, because I watch *Law and Order*?
I didn't want to make a scene. I was scared of being wrong.
I didn't yell, scream, or fight. I sat. I let it happen.

I didn't realize. Why should I? I was listening, focusing, on the front of the room. And when I focus, I focus. So I didn't hear a single thing.
When the lights brightened, I saw his tap, heard his question, pulled and was pulled, and we escaped together. He just seemed like a curious man.

I felt it. I still feel it. Emotionally violated. His hand went on my shoulder, wanting to know me.
What gave him the right to do this? It's illegal. Security knew—but nothing happened to him. He happened to me.

We heard rubbing noises. He moaned. He whispered, "Oh ... f***. Oh ... s***," like he was savoring it.

I feel dirty.
For 15 minutes—15 minutes of hearing moaning and rubbing and feeling sick—I did nothing.
Then it was over, the lights went back on, and I knew what to do. I grabbed them and fled.

After I found out, **I was horrified.** Disgusted. I'm glad I didn't hear his sounds, but I can still see his eyes, his beard, his orange t-shirt.
It is my delayed realization that strikes me most, though. Why hadn't I heard? Why hadn't I known? It worries me that, if—no, when—I'm in a similar situation, I might be as unaware as I was then. That I might only realize after it's over.

He sits inside my ears, and I am there, in the theater again. Smoothly and slowly, he robbed me, stole a part of me. I wonder if he kept the memory. "Stay in touch," he told me, retaining my first name and a fabricated email.
I feel horrible, violated, wronged, mad! **I hate this.**

We hid, ran to the bathroom, crouched, ducked behind the door, and buried ourselves in the crowd of women.

I feel dirty.
I want to scratch my skin, rub it raw, dig, dig deep, until I can feel the pinpricks of blood rushing to the surface. Until I can find the piece of me that let it happen and rip it out.
I feel dirty. I feel different. I feel wrong.

Only a few days later, I relived this realization. I had read a story for English class and didn't understand what it was truly about—a pedophile—until I was sitting in class, trapped in my desk.
I never knew that a harmless piece of writing could push me back toward that movie theater. It was a trigger in my everyday life.
I felt scared by my same innocence. **Again, why didn't I know?** How many times will things like this happen before I know?

I have been doing things to separate myself from what he did to me. In the first few days, the memory stung me at random times. Writing about it helps; I can put it somewhere and compartmentalize. My counselor, the school psychologist—they were good, too.
I don't want him to be a part of who I am. I don't want to feel like a victim anymore.

It was a big deal. We felt it. **We still do.**