

MONICA LEWINSKY



Social Activist and Writer

Monica Lewinsky is an activist in the battle against online harassment and cyber bullying.

In 2014, after a decade long self-imposed retreat from public life, Monica authored an essay, titled “Shame and Survival”, for Vanity Fair in which she overlapped personal experiences and cultural observations regarding the shift towards, what Professor Nicholas Mills calls, a “Culture of Humiliation”. The acclaimed piece, which received over two million unique views online, was an entry point for her to begin a process she describes as “taking back my narrative and giving a purpose to my past”. Lewinsky has been working with the UK’s former Secretary of State, Penny Mordaunt, to develop a range of emojis to combat online abuse.

Monica became known to the public in 1998, when it was revealed as part of a federal investigation that she had a close relationship with then President Bill Clinton. Overnight, at just 24 years old, she went unwillingly, from being an entirely private individual to a public figure on the global stage.

The investigation unfolded against a backdrop of a changing media landscape with the advent of both competing 24-hour news networks and the internet. With the birth of social media in recent years, Monica saw the increasing proliferation of shame and humiliation online. As someone who had experienced both, on the widest scale and at a young age, she saw that she could participate in the public discourse about online harassment and work to effect change.

In 2014, Monica gave a speech about the internet’s reputation shredder at the Forbes 30 Under 30 Summit where she spoke from the perspective of being Patient Zero – having been the first person to have her reputation completely destroyed on-line. In 2015, she spoke at the annual TED Conference, the theme of which was “Truth and Dare”. Her speech, “The Price of Shame” was viewed nearly 5 million times in the first month of release.

Topics (Selection):

- Internet Harassment and Protection
- Cyberbullying
- Adversity
- The Price of Shame