



SafeSport is necessary unless and until we all do better.

by Kristin Medall Simpson-Ferguson Hardin (posted on Brian Sean Wee's Next Level Horse Business Facebook group.)

Facebook has been a mob since Rob's decision.

I've never been more saddened by people's lack of decorum and lack of respect for the dead, those left behind, the victims, and the human beings who did the multi-year investigation.

Everyone is suffering right now and, indefinitely, we will be suffering.

Poking blame anywhere is incorrect.

All of us should have done more, starting 49 years ago. The parents should have done better, he should have done better, we all should have.

We need SafeSport, because we didn't do better, he didn't do better, we didn't do better.

July 2019 - In the Aftermath

Written by by Kristin Medall Simpson-Ferguson Hardin (posted on Brian Sean Wee's Next Level Horse Business Facebook group.)

Monday, 01 July 2019 05:53

The entirety of the situation has been overwhelming. Shocking that people I know have so little ability for perspective or to realize that every story has several components. Just like personalities, most people are as complicated personally as this case is.

How many people do you truly know every part of? I mean, the inner workings of their minds, every second of their days and nights. Be honest. No one knows the entirety of anyone.

Rob was kind to me and my family my whole life. I've known him since I was about six years old. I loved him. He took the time to wish me luck the eve before my first Million (Grand Prix class). He always took the time to wish my kids luck, he told me he believed in me, he told me he was proud of me. His words often gave me strength and confidence.

But, I'm rational. I don't know how much of him that was, but I do know that part was not the whole man. People know a part of a person, the part the person allows you to know. I know many people who knew a different part of Rob. I just spoke with a friend of mine yesterday who is "on the list."

I reminded him: The perspective of a girl who thinks that you may have used your power or accolades inappropriately to gain control over her is her perspective and she is allowed to have it.

It is beyond reprehensible, as an adult, to accuse SafeSport of removing your livelihood. That is simply absurd.

If you are real horse trainer, you can still train horses. You can use your skills at home. You can still develop horses and riders, train them and sell them, or send them to shows with a comrade. SafeSport cannot take your skills or knowledge away.

Being present at a horse show should not be your sole livelihood. Being at a show is a gift but it's not your "livelihood." If it is, the way you are approaching the sport, is, in my opinion, the wrong way. There is so much more to horses and riding than showing alone.

July 2019 - In the Aftermath

Written by by Kristin Medall Simpson-Ferguson Hardin (posted on Brian Sean Wee's Next Level Horse Business Facebook group.)

Monday, 01 July 2019 05:53

If you act badly and are found guilty after an extensive investigation, you can still train, you can still make a living, not to mention the fact that there are billions of options in the world for other employment.

Try to think back to when you were 5 years old and the world was your oyster, all the possibilities ... what could you have done with your opportunity to be alive.

I wish Rob had had the support and guidance of all the people who, now, are behind him, but it's too late now. Where were his supporters this last year-plus? He needed you then to support and guide him, to offer perspective on the world, to show him options, to encourage him.

I had ideas for him, but I wasn't the right person in this situation to help him, so I passed my thoughts on to his friends in hopes they could guide him and he would see he had options. I knew he was not a strong man.

SafeSport is not saying you can't get a job anywhere. They don't take your skills, knowledge, or horses away. Unless you are also criminally convicted, SafeSport is just saying you cannot participate in the event where you have used your power to obtain the trust of young people, and have used that power against them to gain trust sexually or in an intimidating manner.

In Omaha this year, at the bar, I ran into a friend of mine from high school in Del Mar. We recognized each other, we laughed about old times and I said let's take a selfie and he said "We can't." I said why? He said because I'm a youth baseball coach and I'm not allowed to brag about being at a bar and put the pictures up, because that sets a bad precedent for the kids, and I don't want to lose my job (as per SafeSport in youth baseball, their rules are tougher than equestrian).

It's not just our sport of horse jumping, it's every potential Olympic sport. I want to believe if my high school friend got in trouble by SafeSport or was suspended, he would be tough enough to find another job. Safe Sport does not keep you from finding work in other fields, it does not stop you from making a living.

July 2019 - In the Aftermath

Written by by Kristin Medall Simpson-Ferguson Hardin (posted on Brian Sean Wee's Next Level Horse Business Facebook group.)

Monday, 01 July 2019 05:53

Safe Sport provides a safety net for the victims who still may want to participate in their sport or event. It's designed to protect, so that the victims are not surrounded by somebody, who, because of their abuses, might give them panic attacks or anxiety simply by seeing them or hearing their voice. In the case of my baseball friend, not to encourage our youth into illicit behavior because they want to emulate the coach that they idolize.

I think the rules of SafeSport are simple to follow, and I believe the people who have been wrongly accused have been found innocent because SafeSport investigates thoroughly. Many have been exonerated and removed from the list.

The list is not public, a person would need to go to the USEF or SafeSport site and search for the SafeSport link and then the sanctions list. Yes, anyone can find it if they try, but it takes effort.

Unfortunately, there are many people in our world who troll these types of lists and live to see who may be in trouble, and then spread the word. To me that is a sad state of our current society.

Any rational thinking person (we have a few of those these days), when presented with the facts of your case, should be able to understand the process. If they can't they shouldn't be around you.

I've been quiet for a few days arranging my thoughts because more than 10 of my childhood friends were victims. No, their names will not be revealed. More importantly now than ever. The climate has shown itself not to support the victims. The victims have had trauma. They need support and love, not the mob. It's an unsafe climate for them.

SafeSport also has retribution set up for anyone that bullies victims or threatens them. It appears with this case, that we will be seeing all sides of SafeSport including these rules moving forward, as more than 300 screenshots of bullying and threats have been submitted already. That is so sad to me, for everyone.

July 2019 - In the Aftermath

Written by by Kristin Medall Simpson-Ferguson Hardin (posted on Brian Sean Wee's Next Level Horse Business Facebook group.)

Monday, 01 July 2019 05:53

If the accused just pays for their behavior with SafeSport it's a slap on the hand and "you can't play anymore, you have used your power and accolades incorrectly."

These women were my friends, my childhood, my life. I will protect them and their anonymity until I die. They deserve some peace. They have all had a tough time simply living.

I helped my friends. I always will support them. I'm loyal and strong enough to take the mob's uneducated backlash. So, bring it. Let's continue the Great Troll Reveal. I'm not scared.

Don't underestimate a victim's guilt and shame. Don't underestimate a perpetrator's guilt and shame. Show respect and decorum.

We need to protect our children and parents need to do better. Period.

If you don't like SafeSport, then create an environment where it is not needed. Simple.

Do better. Do good things. If it is not needed because we all do better, then it is a non-issue. Think about that.

We all failed Rob. We all failed the victims. We all must do better.

I will try, will you?