

Ghosts Aren't Real

Adam Koebel roleplayed a sexual assault against a player of his.

I want to begin this document with that very cold, very hard truth. It's a fact. [It's documented](#). It was nonconsensual. It was unnecessary. It was triggering.

And a lot of people called him out on it.

A lot of people who [are women](#).

A lot of people who are [POC](#).

Who are [non-binary](#).

And in all of the chaos, [I called him out on it, too](#).

[And he responded to me](#), a straight-passing white male, instead of them.

In my call-out, I asked questions in good faith. It was no mystery that he had fucked up in an uncharacteristically horrific way. What I wanted to know was what his plan was for changing, for holding himself accountable. And he said things that quelled my fury. He said things and I wanted them to be true because I wanted to believe he would change. If he changed, he could lead the way and set an example. If he learned a lesson, he could show people what it looks like to do something wrong and then take responsibility in a graceful, honest way.

One thing I'll point out is that [several folx](#) spoke about how civil the discourse was.

[They were all so proud of Adam and I for how we handled it in a "civil" way](#).

[And they all had something in common](#).

[Can you tell what it is?](#)

Adam [engaged](#) with [almost every reply](#) that assuaged his guilt. People who said "[Hey, mistakes happen](#)" and "[Hey, it's not a big deal](#)" and "[Hey, you're only human, it's okay](#)" and "[Hey I don't even know you but I support you.](#)" Those were the replies he liked and responded to. And this is important. We'll come back to it.

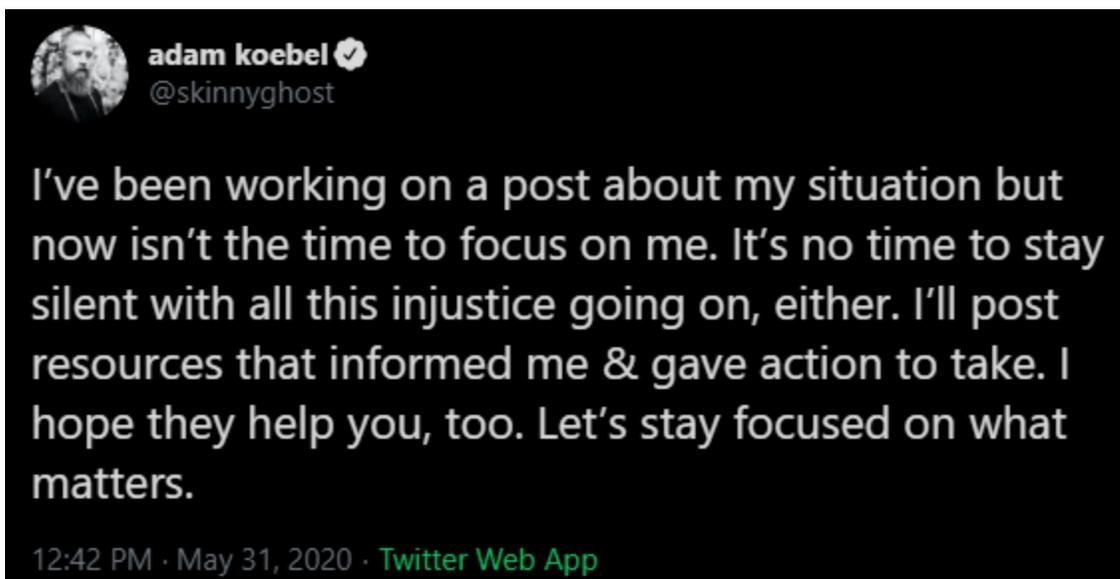
But first I want to talk about what happened immediately after the callout.

Adam took a break from Twitter from [April 3rd](#) until [May 31st](#). He took 59 days away from social media, away from his audience as a streamer. He did this because he had the resources to do so (many of his audience may not). He took what is effectively a long, long break from his job.

[He sought therapy.](#)

[He worked with an accountability partner.](#)

It looked like he was doing the good work. But when he resurfaced on May 31st, to a lot of us, it felt like he was taking advantage of a situation (namely, the Black Lives Matter protests and George Floyd's murder) as a means of squeaking his face back onto people's timelines in a positive light. I'll break down the tweet thread.



His post begins immediately with an attempt to dissuade those who spoke out against him. *"I've been working on a post about my situation but now isn't the time to focus on me."* On the surface, what he's saying is true - during the protests and riots crying out against police brutality, it would be very weird and bad to center the post on yourself. But the language of this tweet is VERY self-centric. In fact, this opening tweet is 1 sentence about the injustice, 3 sentences about Adam, and 1 final closing insidious sentence: ***"Let's stay focused on what matters."***

There's a **lot** wrong with a white guy coming into the fray of the BLM movement, hand-waving away his sexual harassment history, and telling people what they should be focused on. I desperately hope that's clear for everyone reading.

What he does after this opening tweet is good stuff. He centers the conversation on how his massive audience can help. He encourages his audience to listen to black voices. And all of this is good stuff. But, as it turns out, you can do good **and** bad things. Sometimes in the same thread. And that's what this is. Adam doing good things immediately after doing bad things. Some might see this as an attempt to eclipse his actions, to overshadow what he's done. But

there's really no way to know what his motivations were, and if it weren't for everything else I'm talking about in this document, I'd want to give him the benefit of the doubt and say that he just flubbed his opening. But, **for so many reasons**, I don't think this is the case.

Responses to this thread are mixed, but his engagement isn't. Again, there are numerous cases of people jumping in to praise Adam for his hard work. Showering him with unrequited love. [Forgiveness](#). [Admiration](#). [Appreciation](#). [Idolization](#). And he doesn't do anything to correct the people who tell him he did nothing wrong. Which says so much.

If you grandstand and say *"I did a bad thing"* only to incur the love of hundreds upon hundreds of your fans, all patting you on the back and saying *"No, sweetie, you're magical, you could never do anything wrong, and your farts taste like fairymeade"* and you don't do anything to correct them, then you're fostering a community of people who **blindly forgive abusers**. You're fostering a community of people who believe that **celebrities deserve special treatment**. You're fostering the same community that led to people like Harvey Weinstein, Jeffrey Epstein, and Donald Trump **having immunity to the consequences of their measurable, provable actions**.

After Adam's brief return limelighting himself by reminding people not to limelight him, he disappears again until his return on June 8th, with the cancellation of RollPlay and his "Moving On" blogpost. We'll move to analyze this next.

In a tweet which simply reads "moving on," Adam shares a link to a blog post with the metaimage of Adam looking sorrowfully away from the camera. **An image which he chose, purposefully.**



In his blog post¹, Adam delivers a diatribe about the last five years of his life, with a focus on the last few months. He goes on and on about how hard he worked. About the stress of being under

¹ In the event that the blog post is deleted, I have uploaded the full text [here](#).

the microscope, and about the rush of dopamine rewarding his participation on successful projects.

Eventually he arrives at what he calls “a mistake.” This “mistake” he’s referring to is when he said the following, to a player, without her consent. **[TW: Sexual assault / rape. Skip this below box if you need to.]**

“Don’t be scared. I’ve done it before. I can show you.”

“I’m gonna do it real gentle the first time, and you tell me how it feels, okay?”

“Just a little at first, okay?”

If that makes you uncomfortable, that’s because it **should**. Sexual assault survivors I have spoken to about this have said that this is the **exact** vernacular that an assaulter, an attacker, a rapist, uses in order to quell their victims. And if you find it unsettling that this was in Adam’s casual gameplay vocabulary, I think you’re justified in that opinion. Because it’s not unreasonable to assume that somebody who knows **exactly** how to mimic sexual assault vernacular might be **somehow familiar with it. And that is scary.**

But remember, in Adam’s blog post, it’s not sexual assault. It’s not a triggering, scary scenario. It’s just “a mistake.” And in Adam’s 12-paragraph blog post, it’s only the focus of **one sentence, in one paragraph.**

The other eleven paragraphs are focused on Adam himself. On the vitriol he experienced online. The hate and anger from strangers on the internet, unhappy with his “mistake.” And the overt implication of every single one of these references is that Adam didn’t deserve this backlash.

“Many people saw the mistake for what it was, and were angry, but tempered that anger with understanding that people stumble, sometimes. Some, however, believe otherwise. I continue to be the recipient of hate, vitriol and targeted abuse both in public and in private spaces. I’m being emailed anonymous threats of harm if I ever return to broadcasting or attend a convention, messages telling me I shouldn’t exist at all let alone be allowed to “come back” — voices shouting that nothing I had previously said or done or made mattered in the face of my mistake.”

And perhaps the most concerning paragraph of his blog post follows immediately after that. I’ve emphasized a portion here in bold which is not emphasized in the original, but I’m highlighting it here because it’s important.

*"The hateful reaction was so severe that it shattered my previous beliefs about how my community operates. My actions hurt people, and I was actively and intentionally hurt in return. **I don't feel that the trust and support necessary to take creative risks is present in the broadcasting space I belonged to.** Imagining my future, **it's impossible to feel confident or safe** returning to those long days creating the way I used to."*

He describes no longer feeling confident or safe. He describes the notion that nothing will ever be the same. This is the language that a **victim** uses. And he uses it over and over throughout the blog post.

"It's impossible to feel ... safe."

"It shattered my previous beliefs about how my community operates."

"I've had to give in to that fear of loss, the fear of failure, and watch everything I had been afraid of come true."

"Nothing feels better but I can sleep again. I have begun to move through the world (however small, limited and frightening it may be right now) without agonizing..."

And worse, the way this paragraph is worded transforms Adam's take on what happened.

It's no longer a "mistake" to him.

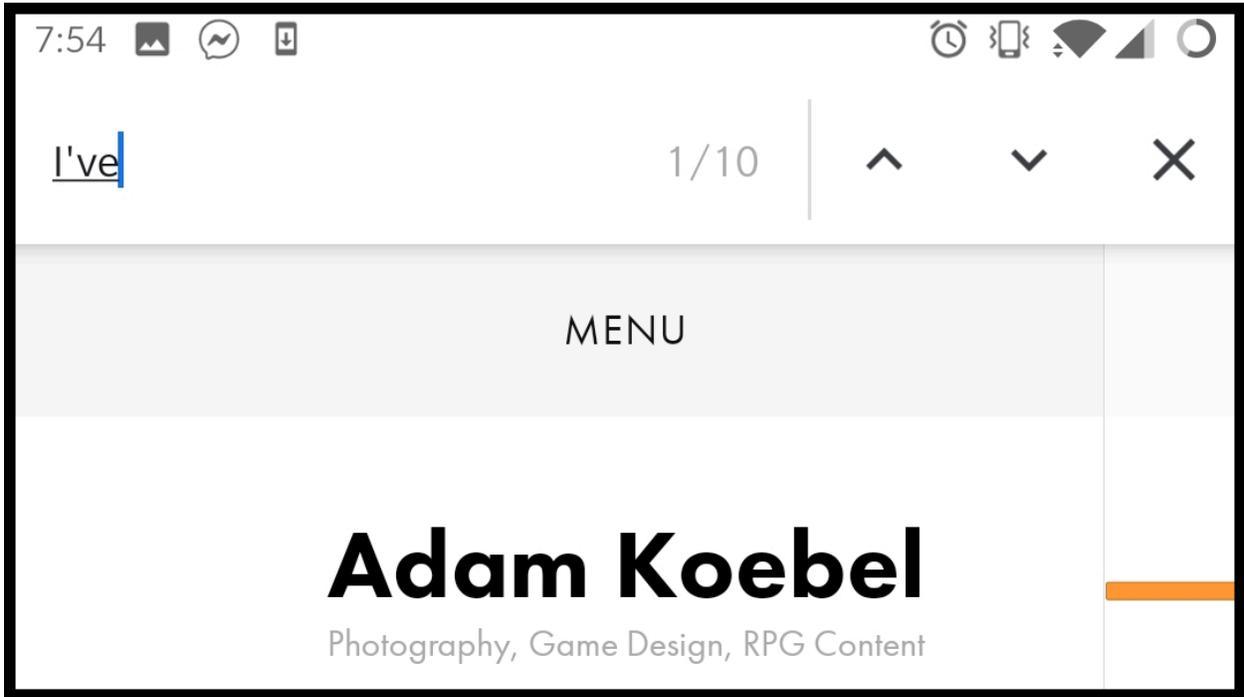
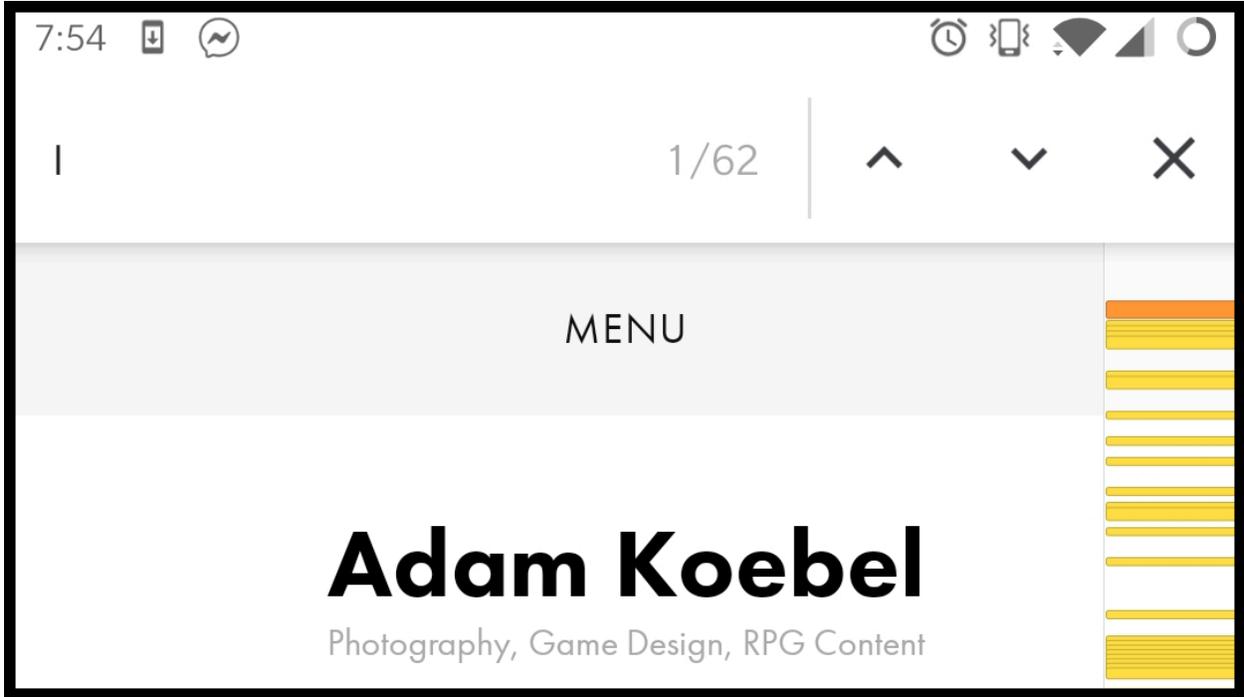
It's a "creative risk."

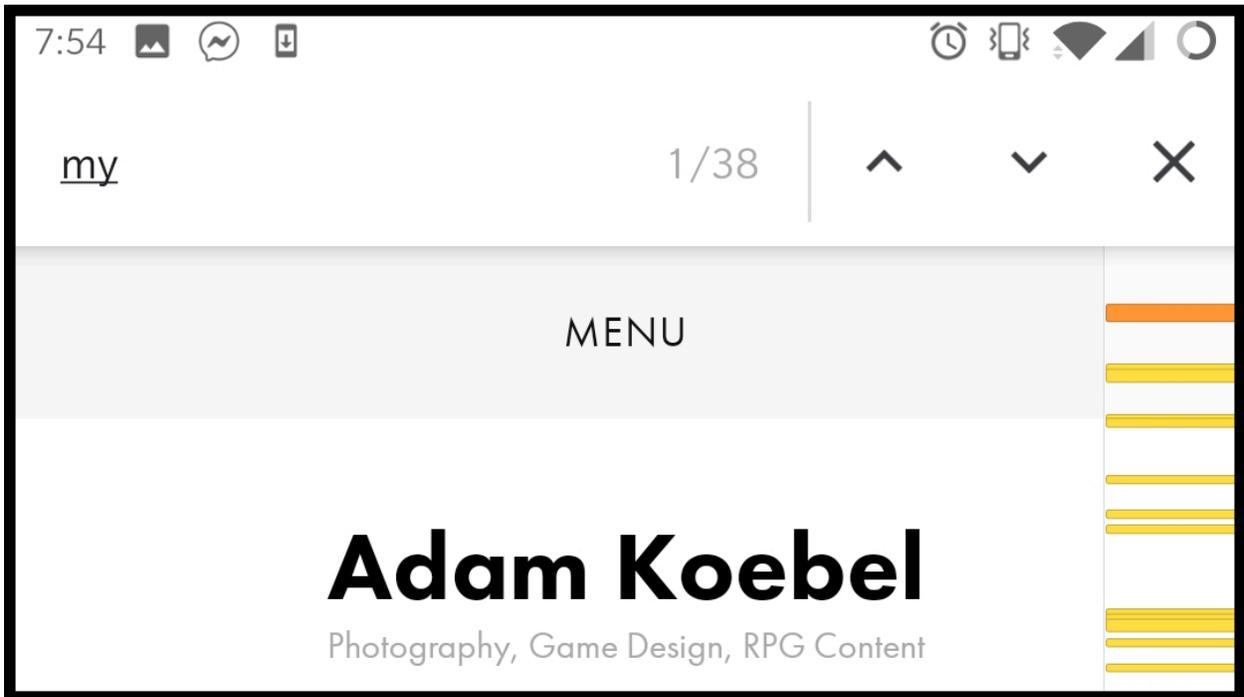
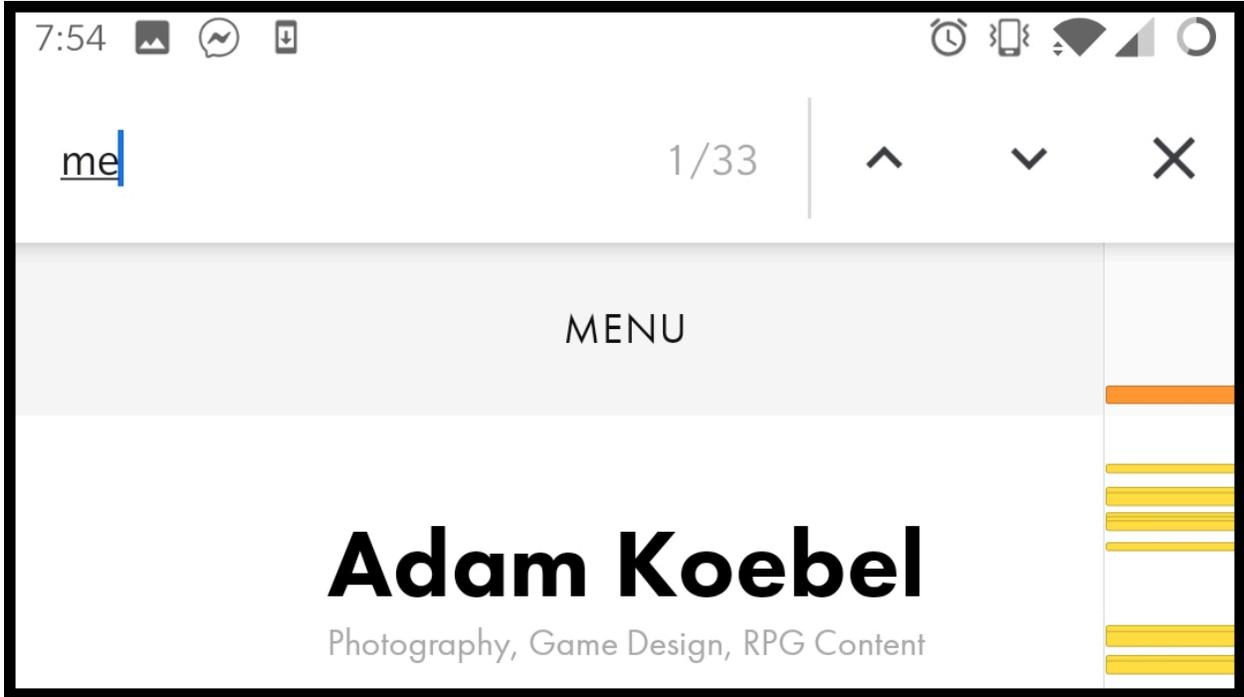
The decision to say those awful things, to put his players in front of an audience and walk them through a rape scene, is now simply a "creative risk." It's just a style for him. Or, if you take his other tweet, it's "just one bad day."

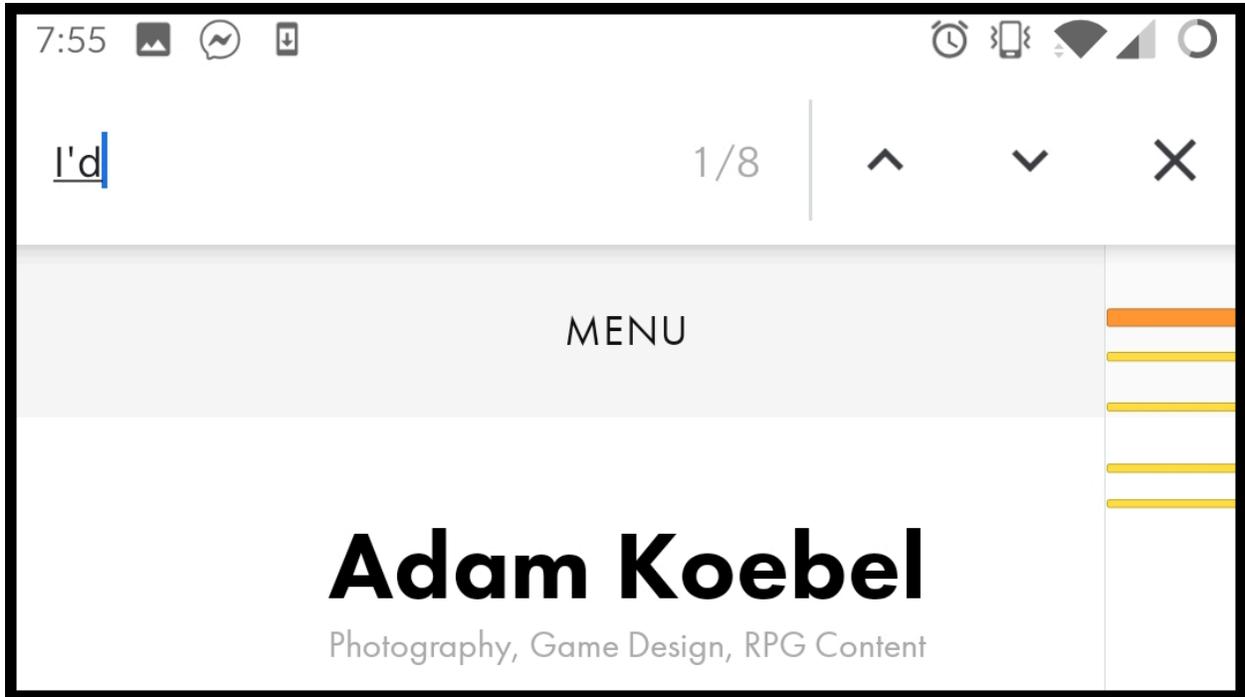


Look at the self-victimization. That he had **“one bad day”** and was made to suffer for it, completely ignoring what happened on his **“one bad day.”** Completely ignoring his forced roleplay rape. Also, look at the reply he’s responding to: Again, one which praises and reassures him. I’ve censored this person’s name to protect their identity, but suffice to say that this person **has a lot in common with the people I highlighted at the beginning of this document.**

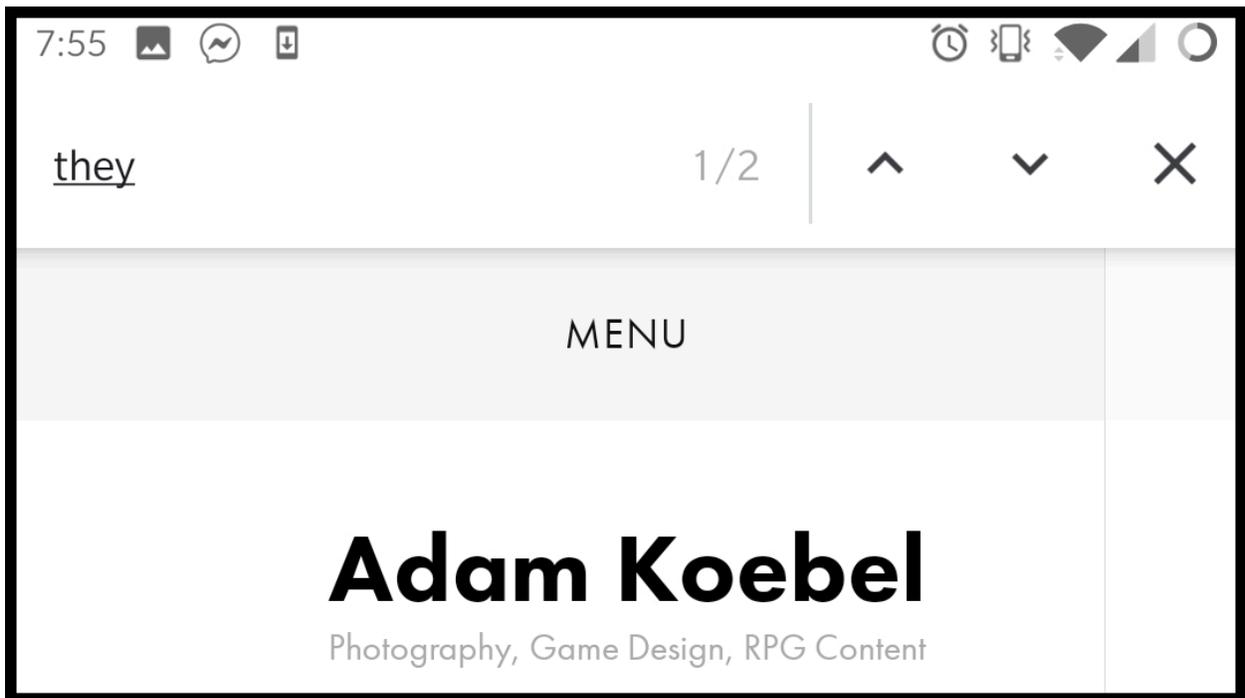
And that’s indicative of exactly what this document aims to prove: That Adam Koebel is not genuine in his regret. That he has, from the moment this all began, centered this travesty around himself—

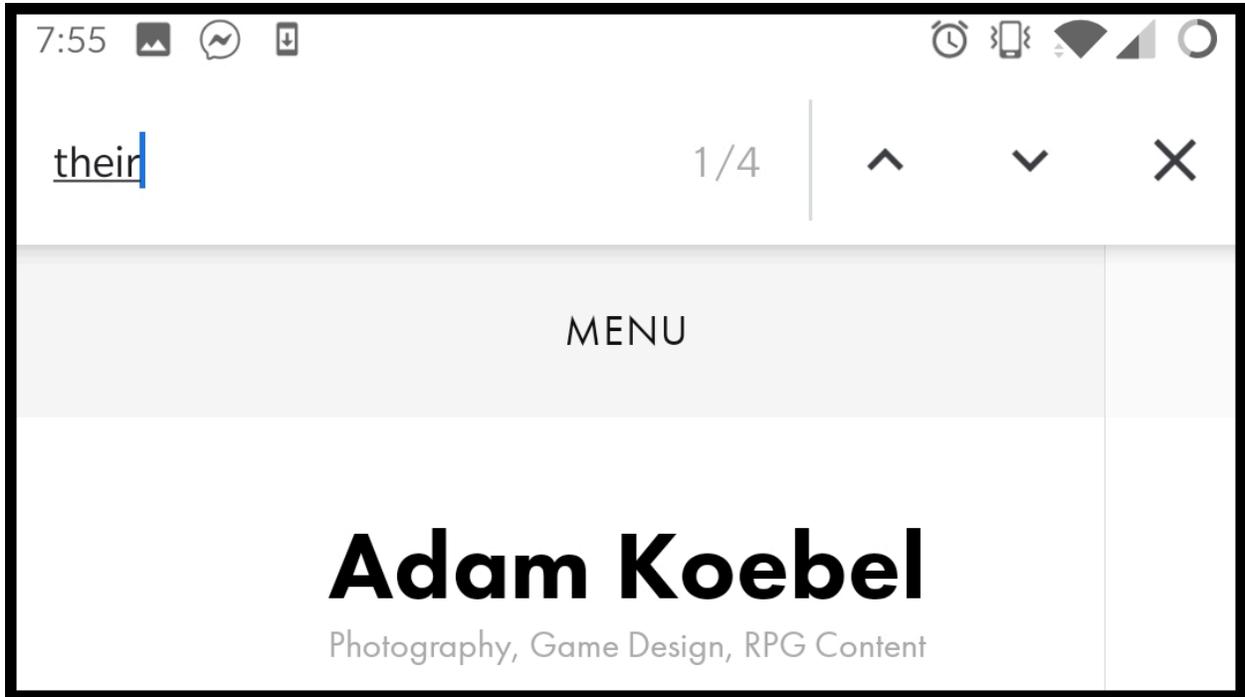






—instead of his victims.





This is also indicated by Adam's constant engagement of replies which **favor** him, but avoiding any which criticize him or make an attempt to center anyone other than him. And it's a self-fulfilling cycle when Adam makes every effort to let people believe that he didn't do anything wrong **by not correcting them.**

To close out, I'll share another pair of search terms on Adam's blog post, and I think they speak volumes. For transparency's sake, these were first brought to my attention by another Twitter user, but I think they absolutely have a place in this document.

8:15  

sorry 0/0 ^ v X

MENU

Adam Koebel

Photography, Game Design, RPG Content

8:15  

apologize 0/0 ^ v X

MENU

Adam Koebel

Photography, Game Design, RPG Content