

Entitled White males are not heroic role models

By Paul Begley

9 January 2023



The models of male entitlement and self-pity, Donald Trump, Scott Morrison and David Warner (Screenshots via YouTube)

In an age of entitlement, the self-glorification of men like Donald Trump, Scott Morrison and David Warner is a growing problem, writes Paul Begley.

OVER RECENT YEARS, the “White man as victim” has become an article of faith in some quarters. Former U.S. President [Donald Trump](#) made an art form of the practice. He was a victim of the COVID pandemic which caused him misery as he watched the greatest economy ever created by the greatest president fall apart despite his denials of a “[hoax virus](#)” that has infected more than a hundred million and killed more than a million of his fellow Americans.

He was victimised further as part of a “[witch hunt](#)” by special prosecutor [Robert Mueller](#) over complicity with Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) during the 2016 Election. He was also wrongfully investigated and impeached by Congress over his

[shakedown](#) of the Ukrainian President to give [Joe Biden](#) grief over his son, [Hunter](#). In addition, he swatted off a [second impeachment](#) over his incitement of MAGA supporters who staged an understandable riot at the Capitol to prevent certification of the “stolen” 2020 Election.

Trump is not the only national leader to try the victim gambit. Our own former Prime Minister, [Scott Morrison](#), characterised his prime ministership as one under siege, likening himself to an unappreciated ship’s captain in the midst of a [COVID tempest](#) while his whinging critics stood around as leisurely observers on a shore made safe by his heroic efforts.

Media personalities like [Steve Price](#) and [Andrew Bolt](#) have long joined the chorus of victimised men with grievances about being silenced and cancelled, sentiments to which they return in their national newspaper columns, radio spots and television appearances. Bolt suffered a humiliating loss that “silenced” him in a celebrated [2011 court case](#) centred on his defaming of nine white-skinned Aborigines and Price just recently had his [2GB show axed](#) following a fall in ratings, rebuffing a lesser offer from the station.

The common theme among these victims is their maleness, their whiteness and their entitlement to protection from censure of any sort. A logical extension of that expectation is immunity from the negative judgement of courts, tribunals and employers.

Switching to sport, the summer men’s Test series between Australia and South Africa was preceded by a demand from the opening batter that his

employer, [Cricket Australia](#), reassess his punishment for conduct unbecoming and bringing the game into disrepute during the 2018 tour of South Africa in Durban.

The flashpoint incident was the [use of sandpaper](#) to tamper illicitly with the ball. The incident was led by vice-captain [David Warner](#) who instructed a fielder, [Cameron Bancroft](#), on what to do with the ball before passing it to the bowler. Captain [Steve Smith](#) knew what Warner was doing but did not intervene to stop him.

For their sins, all three players were handed penalties that banned them from playing cricket for two years. In addition, Warner was handed a lifetime ban from holding a leadership position in the game. The integrity panel that heard the case may also have taken into account Warner's involvement in a [staircase brawl](#) with South African wicketkeeper [Quinton de Kock](#) during the same match, in addition to his leadership role in an excessively triumphant celebration when [AB de Villiers](#) was run out. These incidents led to a widespread view that the game was being played in a spirit that fell short of appropriate.

Four years later, despite winning the support of some obliging mainstream sports journalists, past players and, understandably, his team colleagues, Warner fought a [losing battle](#) with Cricket Australia over the process of hearing his appeal against the ban. He objected to the appeal being heard by the same integrity panel that imposed the original sentence and refused to participate in it.

Populated by experienced lawyers, the panel would have given legitimacy to a successful appeal. However, it also contained a risk that the appeal might fail if the panel looked at the adequacy of his subsequent behaviour for evidence that he has been seeking redemption through exercising qualities such as remorse, contrition or humility.

Warner's conduct following his [century](#) in the recent Melbourne Boxing Day Test might have confirmed the view that he had learned precious little from his 2018 experience as a flawed leader. On hitting the

100 milestone, he performed his trademark exuberant leap into the air, kissed once again his hapless helmet, punched upward with his fist and all but stuck his middle finger in the air as he finally planted himself indignantly on his knees in an appeal to the applauding crowd.

Like political leaders who want to be declared the winner of elections they've lost, Warner had been pushing hard for an appeal process that would guarantee success, and Cricket Australia denied him. And there he was, scoring a century for Australia and sticking it up his employer and the same South African team that had been the occasion of his career downfall in 2018. Let them all suffer!

Within a day, his wicketkeeper colleague, [Alex Carey](#), had also scored a [century](#), after which Carey showed he knew the meaning of the word gracious by mixing a degree of modesty with justified pride in his achievement. Ten days later, [Usman Khawaja](#) and Steve Smith had both scored centuries in Sydney against the same South African team, with Warner hitting a mere ten runs. Scoring Test centuries are impressive achievements of skill and might justify a modicum of self-congratulation, but they are part of a team effort and are not in themselves a path to redemption.

Australians born and raised in Australia as part of a generation living under the quietly-spoken shadow of America's war hero President [Dwight Eisenhower](#) were also sustained on a cinematic diet of the taciturn western hero immortalised by [Fred Zinneman's Gary Cooper](#) in [High Noon](#) and later reminders of the same character-type by [Clint Eastwood](#) in [Sergio Leone's spaghetti westerns](#).

Against a cultural backdrop that once lionised men of few words, self-glorifying individual show-offs like Trump, Morrison and Warner have increasingly emerged as the prevailing model of heroic men who never shut up. They guarantee the opposite of the Gary Cooper ideal, one which appreciates the charm of understatement, collegiality and grace in victory as well as defeat.

A double century for David Warner!

But his [#OhWhatAFeeling](#) jump comes at a cost! [? | @Toyota_Aus](#)
pic.twitter.com/RqJLcQpWHa

— cricket.com.au (@cricketcomau)
[December 27, 2022](#)

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