

After a great deal of deliberation I have made a very difficult decision to settle the defamation case brought against me by my ex-husband in Virginia.

It's important for me to say that I never chose this. I defended my truth and in doing so my life as I knew it was destroyed. The vilification I have faced on social media is an amplified version of the ways in which women are re-victimised when they come forward. Now I finally have an opportunity to emancipate myself from something I attempted to leave over six years ago and on terms I can agree to. I have made no admission. This is not an act of concession. There are no restrictions or gags with respect to my voice moving forward.

I make this decision having lost faith in the American legal system, where my unprotected testimony served as entertainment and social media fodder.

When I stood before a judge in the UK, I was vindicated by a robust, impartial and fair system, where I was protected from having to give the worst moments of my testimony in front of the world's media, and where the court found that I was subjected to domestic and sexual violence. In the US, however, I exhausted almost all my resources in advance of and during a trial in which I was subjected to a courtroom in which abundant, direct evidence that corroborated my testimony was excluded and in which popularity and power mattered more than reason and due process. In the interim I was exposed to a type of humiliation that I simply cannot re-live. Even if my US appeal is successful, the best outcome would be a re-trial where a new jury would have to consider the evidence again. I simply cannot go through that for a third time.

Time is precious and I want to spend my time productively and purposefully. For too many years I have been caged in an arduous and expensive legal process, which has shown itself unable to protect me and my right to free speech. I cannot afford to risk an impossible bill – one that is not just financial, but also psychological, physical and emotional. Women shouldn't have to face abuse or bankruptcy for speaking her truth, but unfortunately it is not uncommon.

In settling this case I am also choosing the freedom to dedicate my time to the work that helped me heal after my divorce; work that exists in realms in which I feel seen, heard and believed, and in which I know I can effect change.

I will not be threatened, disheartened or dissuaded by what happened from speaking the truth. No one can and no one will take that from me. My voice forever remains the most valuable asset I have.

I'd like to thank my outstanding appellate and original trial teams for their relentless hard work. I want to thank everyone who has supported me and I turn my attention to the growing support that I've felt and seen publicly in the months since trial, and the efforts that have been made to show solidarity with my story. Any survivor knows that the ability to tell their story often feels like the only relief, and I cannot find enough words to tell you the hope your belief in me inspires, not just for me, but for all of you.

Thank you. See you soon.