



**Online Shaming and the Right to Privacy**  
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The goal with this paper is to explore the privacy implications of online shaming, in particular the issues raised concerning persecution by internet mobs. In the situations explored in this paper “the shamed” are mocked, bullied or otherwise harassed by other internet users sharing thousands of messages, posting photos or otherwise commenting directly to or about the shamed. The harm is often more from the pile-on of thousands of individuals simultaneously humiliating and degrading the worth of the individual attacked, rather than any one single post. The law in western countries tends to address the harm, if a legal basis can be found, through assessment of the legality of individual comments and behaviour rather than examining the impact on the shamed of the mob persecution as a whole. In this paper, I suggest the need to examine the narrative of an episode of online shaming. Doing so tests the limits of the free speech model and illuminates aspects of three debates concerning privacy: privacy’s link with dignity, the right to privacy in public places and the social dimension of privacy. This paper makes the case that privacy, whether through law or otherwise, needs to better account for public humiliation.