



Erin Overbey @erinoverbey Mon Jul 25 12:02:58 +0000 2022

So the @New Yorker has fired me, effective immediately. I'm speaking with the union about potentially filing a grievance on the termination. But here are some things that I will say....

The @NewYorker has never contested the facts as I have stated them: 1) that I was put under a performance review shortly after sending an email raising concerns about gender inequality & inclusion at the magazine; 2) that several errors that were cited in an email reprimanding me while I was under the performance review were not mine; and 3) that these were errors that David Remnick added to the copy.

The magazine has also not disputed the fact that, after raising my concerns, I was subjected to a performance review that entailed absurdly subjective interpretations of "factual inaccuracies," bizarre charges of "disrespect," and so on & so forth.

The @NewYorker has also never disputed the magazine's diversity data that I presented in a thread last year nor has it disputed the accuracy of my salary information which I highlighted in a thread on pay transparency & gender inequality back in March.

Additionally, the @NewYorker has never disputed that my two weekly archive newsletters have consistently been the top-performing newsletters at the magazine, with unique open rates of ~72% and ~54%, respectively. Nor that the subscriber base is avid & comes in at around ~270K.

Whenever you raise concerns, criticisms, or alarms about one of the most powerful institutions in media, they will use every tool at their disposal to oppose you. That is their prerogative.

But I will defend myself in the strongest of terms.

The email I sent reiterating my concerns about gender inequality in the workplace was sent on June 14th. I was put under a performance review on Friday, June 17th.

The email I sent on June 14th was by no means the first email I'd sent about my concerns about diversity & inclusion at the @NewYorker. I'd been speaking out in-house (& subsequently publicly) for some time now.

Here are the facts. I first started tracking @NewYorker diversity data in 2019, as I've previously stated in several interviews. Here's a screen shot with the exact dates showing that this is the case. <https://t.co/3UI6sAwFMn>

● **Erin Overbey** 3/10/19 >

Stats

TNY The Art World 0 African-Americans (Zadie Smith - Onward & Upward w/the Arts) 4 Women...

Erin Overbey 1/23/

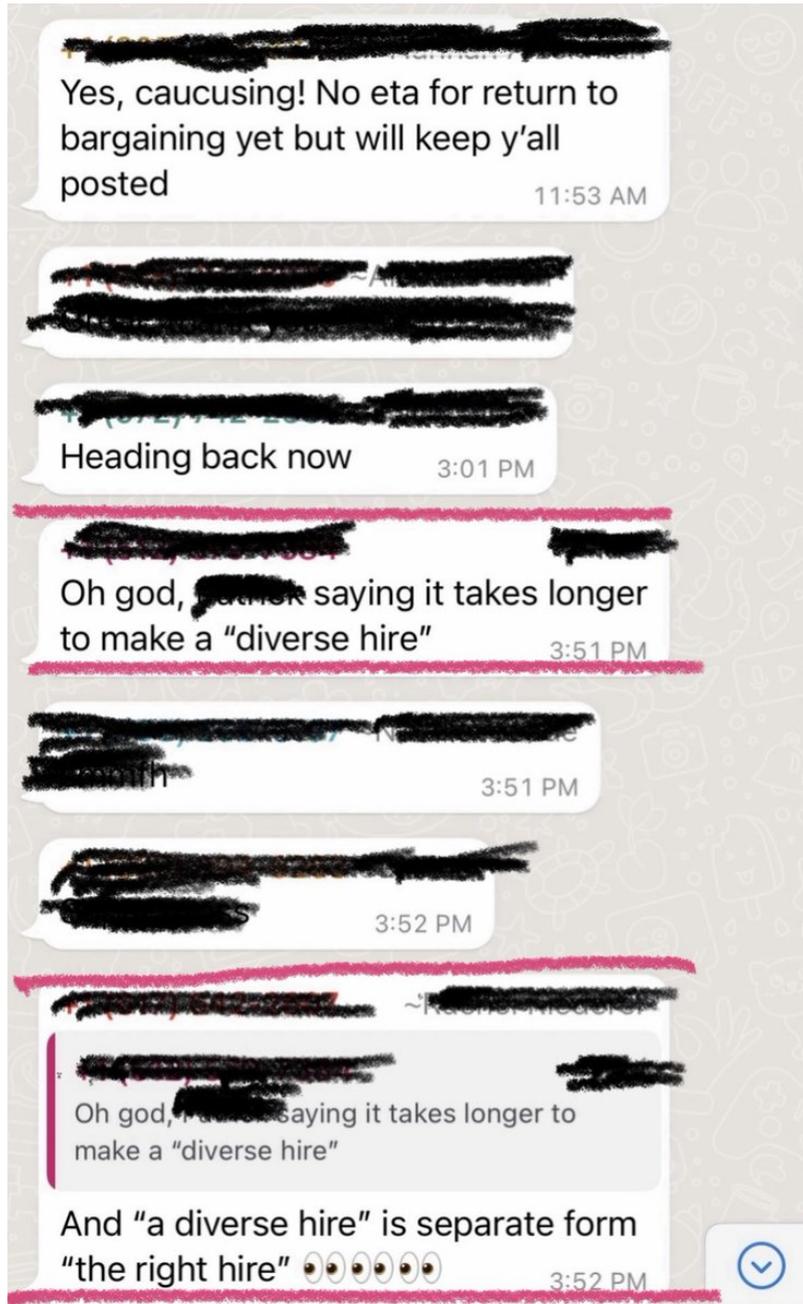
Re: Inclusion Committee Meeting Tomorrow



At the time, I was growing increasingly concerned that 1) no Black editors for feature pieces existed then at the @NewYorker; and 2) this meant that almost none of the longform feature pieces—those sent up for Pulitzers, etc.—had been edited by a Black editor in nearly 15 years.

This seemed to me to be a major issue of concern. If less than 10 longform feature pieces (ie, excluding Fiction, Talk, Poetry) are edited by a senior Black editor within a 14-year span (w/~ 230 feature pieces pub'd a yr) at a magazine w/such a huge influence, something is wrong.

In May of 2021, I grew even more concerned. I learned that, during a union bargaining session w/the company, “diverse hires” were referred to by an outside proxy as “taking longer” & that it was asserted that “a diverse hire” is separate from “the right hire.” <https://t.co/5cPDBWtOjE>



I also wrote myself a note about this incident (intending to send it to management), but since the @NewYorker had taken to referring to my concerns about equality & inclusivity as “baseless accusations,” I sent it to myself instead (time-stamped).

In July of 2021, I began conceiving my diversity thread.

That summer, I also sent a note to management pointing out that I’d discovered the male Archive Editor who held the position before me (& was paid 20% more than I was making in the job) hadn’t possessed the minimum archive qualifications required in the job listing when posted. <https://t.co/e89zXy2xwH>

Requirements:

Applicants should have a strong knowledge of indexing, abstracting, taxonomies, and the magazine's editorial history. He or she should be familiar with FileMaker Pro, HTML, XML, SEO, data architecture and format standards, and new developments in information technologies.

In addition to strong writing and digital skills, the ideal candidate would generate ideas to make the magazine's history accessible to a wide readership, primarily through the digital archive, and would oversee the process of bringing some of these ideas to life. This is a position with lots of potential, as the archive and the projects that grow out of it will continue to expand.

Minimum 5 years in a library and/or archive environment.
MLS/MLIS a plus but not required.



In fact, he possessed no prior background in archival work before he was hired to run the Archive Dept at the [@NewYorker](#). We both applied for the job at the same time & I had ~ 17 yrs worth of archive experience. (I detailed a part of this in my salary thread this past March.)

The magazine didn't inform me about his lack of archive qualifications when he was hired & I only found out about it later. This seemed to me to be highly problematic vis a vis gender equality & the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, and I spoke up about this.

This appeared to anger them intensely; but I kept pressing the issue. Subsequently, in August of last year, I sent an email to management asking to work with a different editor due to editorial style & the sense that another editor who understood Classics would be a better fit.

The editor I asked to have removed—and who was then informed of my request—is the same editor who has included all of the so-called “factual inaccuracies,” allegations of “disrespect,” etc., in my recent performance review. A review then used, in part, to justify my termination.

A few days after I requested a new editor, the magazine then hit me with an allegation of an instance of self-plagiarism. Again, it's their prerogative to do so.

In 2020, I wrote a Classics archive newsletter about Burkhard Bilger's terrific piece “Egg Men,” on Las Vegas short-order cooks. This piece, while fantastic, really has, in my opinion, one perfect quote & I used it in this newsletter.

A year later, in 2021, I wrote ~5 lines in a Sunday reading post about a collection of magazine food pieces that referenced this piece, used the same quote, and also used similar lines that had appeared in the Classics newsletter a year prior.

Classics newsletters are never published on the site; they are sent in newsletter format only. But fair enough; the point is taken, and it has never been repeated in any of my archive newsletters ever again.

But it did give them a weapon to use against me, and I think, for a time, they thought that would shut me up. And I understand that thinking.

I also understand if, after hearing this, you decide that you'd prefer to no longer follow me. That's your choice & I completely respect it.

I'm sure the accusations from the magazine and its allies will come & will be swift. As I've said, it's their prerogative. I'll try to respond to any & all that come.

What can't be disputed, however, are the facts as I have presented them—since I have the documentation, screen shots & emails to back everything up.

The **@NewYorker** is, in many ways, a wonderful institution. But it's also ground zero for a kind of regressive literary gatekeeping, class exclusivity & old-school cultural thinking that simply no longer have any relation to, or frankly relevance in, the modern world as we know it.

Legacy media in 2022 has proven that it's incapable of accurately reflecting the world that it covers when its own industry is comprised primarily of white employees from privileged backgrounds. Period.

I may be an imperfect messenger, but I know enough to comprehend that there is never a "suitable" time for change. Change comes about because people refuse to wait for the suitable time. The now is always right now.

So throw the gates wide open. The only bubbles that you'll be bursting are your own—and they're insular, privileged & white af. You're not protecting a long-standing prestigious "journalistic legacy" You're teaching a new generation exactly how to become dinosaurs.

That's all for now. I'm happy to answer any questions. And thanks for listening.

This should be "So the **@NewYorker** has fired me," not "**@New** Yorker." Obviously. <https://t.co/nAN0j3rdGk>



Erin Overbey ✓
@erinoverbey



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