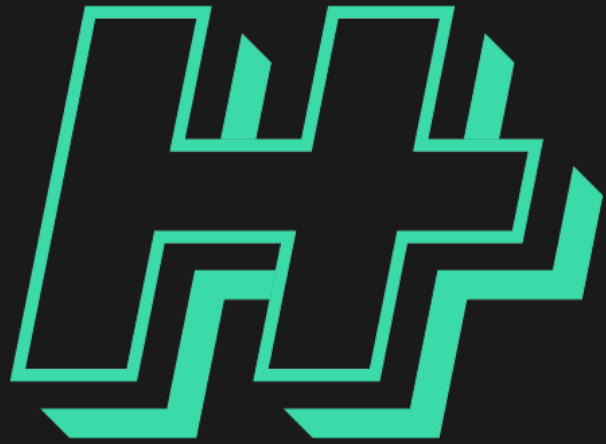




 **HAND & HEART**

2. THE CRAFT BEER INDUSTRY AND BREWDOG



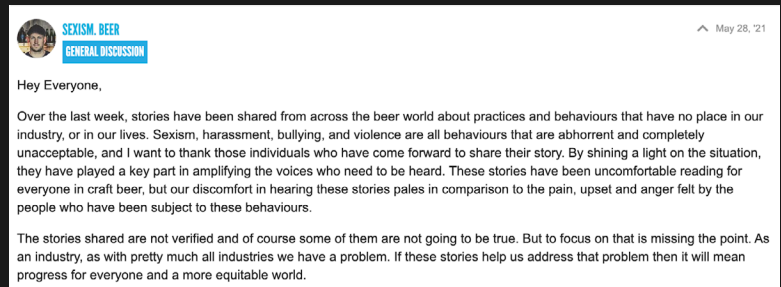
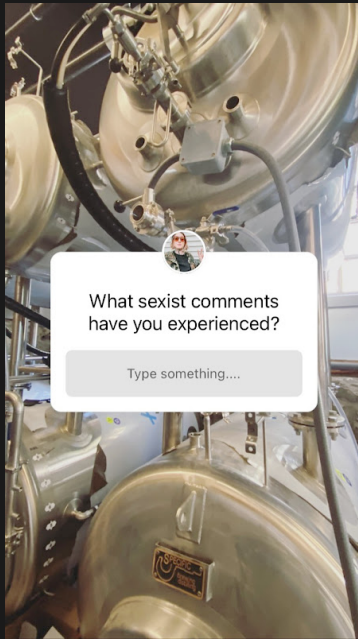
Background

In May 2021, the craft beer industry was confronted with countless stories of harassment and discrimination on the social media platform Instagram, predominantly in the United States and United Kingdom. On 9 June 2021, this led a group of former employees called Punks with Purpose to publish an open letter about the work culture at BrewDog and advocate for positive change within the company. The open letter received national and international attention.

The BBC went on to release a documentary called Disclosure: The Truth About BrewDog on 24 January 2022 and further published the podcast Good Ship BrewDog the following June. Since the release of the documentary, former staff were approached by private investigators, BrewDog have filed a complaint against BBC with the communications regulator Ofcom, and BrewDog's CEO has been in an ongoing legal dispute with a romantic partner he had paid to approach former workers. The following timeline details the genesis of BrewDog allegations, BrewDog's response, and outcomes until June 2022.

Timeline of BrewDog's Response

First reports mentioning BrewDog



May 2021

Brienne Allen shared the first of many reports mentioning BrewDog. By the end of May 2021, at least 28 published Instagram stories of sexism and abuse in craft beer had mentioned BrewDog or its CEO.

16th May 2021

James Watt responds on the investor forum (Equity for Punks forum)

An Open Letter to BrewDog

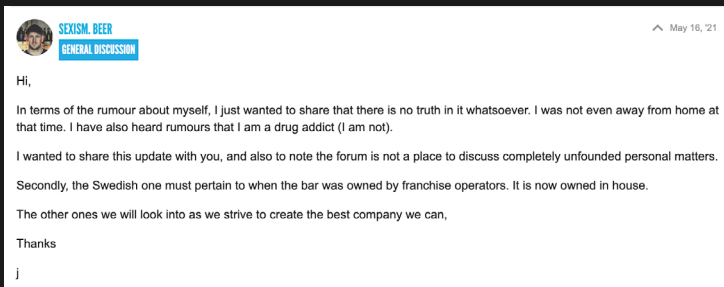
9th June 2021 (Published on behalf of former BrewDog staff)

Dear BrewDog,

In the last few weeks, we have witnessed what will hopefully be the start of major change in the beer industry. This has been largely down to the brave acts of many people coming forward to tell their stories, as well as others who have not only shouldered the responsibility for amplifying these stories, but also the enormous burden of the inevitable backlash unleashed upon them for daring to raise their heads above the parapet.

BrewDog have been flagged in a significant number of these allegations. We are not writing this to level further accusations, nor to dispel existing ones; it is down to each and every one of us to decide whether we believe women, or not. Rather, the purpose of this letter is to make known the feelings of former staff regarding the atmosphere fostered at BrewDog, since its inception, in the hope that it might explain why so many allegations have come to light.

BrewDog was, and is, built on a cult of personality. Since day one, you have sought to exploit publicity, both good and bad (and usually with the faces of James and Martin front and centre) to further your own business goals. Your mission might genuinely be to make other people as passionate about craft beer as you are (and in a sense you have succeeded – your fanbase certainly has some true zealots in its ranks), but the ambitions you impressed on your team have always seemed business-led. Growth, at all costs, has always been perceived as the number one focus for the company, and the fuel you have used to achieve it is controversy.



28th May 2021

Excerpts from James Watt statements

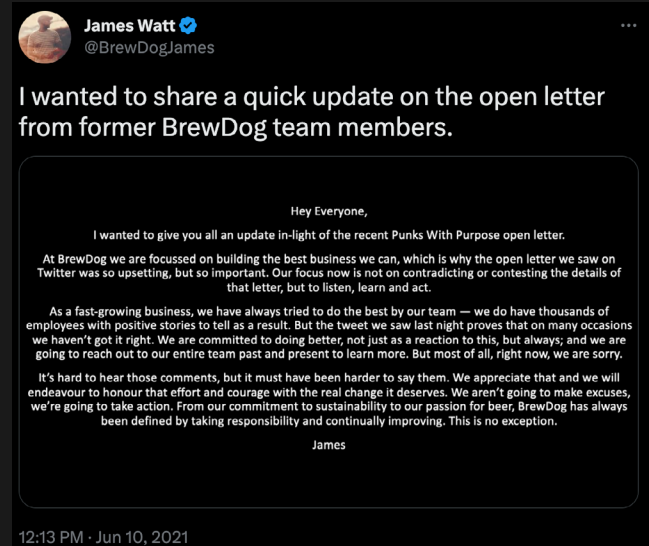
9th June 2021

[Punks with Purpose \(PwP\) published an Open Letter ^{\(a\)} to BrewDog on Twitter ^{\(b\)}](#) describing “the single biggest shared experience of former staff [as] a residual feeling of fear.” The letter was signed at the time by 119 former BrewDog staff, and by the end of the month had received signatures from 327 former (and 39 current) staff.

Internal: James Watt calls the work culture “not for everyone”



External: James Watt accepts the letter



9th June 2021

James Watt posted on the private Equity for Punks forum saying “we have always had a high performance culture... [which] is definitely not for everyone... We will share a full update soon”.

10th June 2021

James Watt shared [“a quick update” on Twitter](#) in which he stated “[our] focus now is not on contradicting or contesting the details of that letter, but to listen, learn and act” and “[we] aren’t going to make excuses, we’re going to take action”.

Internal: BrewDog contest the letter

Punks With Purpose
@PunksWPurpose

We're expecting to see a response from BrewDog imminently. We currently understand this will be an open letter, which staff are being strongly urged to make a quick decision on signing. Some are already refusing. The current draft is here; sorry we only have images at present.

We wouldn't normally draw attention to a post like this, but we think it's important to talk about this one for a few reasons:

1. You might know some of the former crewmates who've signed this open letter, as teammates or friends.
2. This open letter is, in part, directed at you, so it's only right that you should get the opportunity to read it.
3. Some of the concerns raised in the open letter might resonate with you, and if they do, we really want you to come and talk to us about them so we can help resolve them.
4. We're going to respond, in part on your behalf, because we know from your feedback in the Times Top 100 survey is current employees in the main have a different viewpoint from that expressed.

with purpose, please do talk to us about it. Speak to your line manager, contact the People team, reach out to any member of Mission Control - we absolutely need you to be radically honest about this, and we will listen and do everything we can to make things right.

We hope you'll read this response and feel proud to be part of the current BrewDog team. Everything we are doing collectively is genuinely making a positive difference to the world around us, and we simply can't allow social media post to go by without putting our own heads in the sand. We know that some of you parted on bad terms, and sometimes that was because of something BrewDog did, and sometimes it was the other way around. It's a universal truth that there are two sides to every story, and the truth probably lies somewhere in the middle, and never more is that true than in the relationship between BrewDog and some of its former

11:28 AM · Jun 10, 2021

In the news: BrewDog has not contested the letter

Brewdog boss sorry for staff 'pain' as pledges review

© 17 June 2021



Brewdog boss James Watt has promised an independent review of the beer firm after fierce criticism from ex-staff.

10th June 2021

[An email to BrewDog staff^{\[1\]}](#) thought to be co-written by Watt, refers to the letter, calling it “a threat to all of our livelihoods”, stating that “[we’re] going to respond, in part on your behalf, because we know ... current employees have a different viewpoint from that expressed” and encouraging staff to sign an opposing letter (never published by BrewDog).

10th June 2021

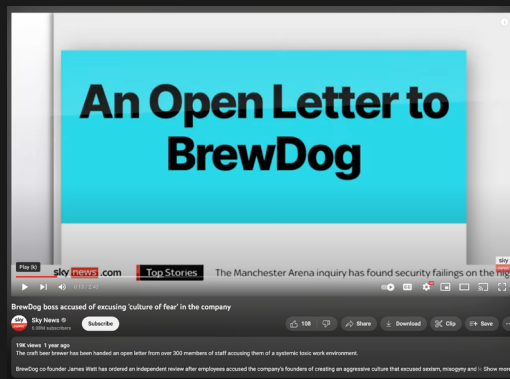
The PwP open letter is reported on television in the UK (BBC ONE/BBC Scotland). BBC Scotland reports that “BrewDog has not contested the letter,” and James Watt states on camera: “We’re sorry that these people didn’t have a great experience in our company; we’re sorry we let them down. We’ve got over 2000 employees, many of those with fantastic experiences, but it’s very clear we haven’t always got things right”

The story is also reported by media outlets including [The Guardian^{\[2\]}](#), [BBC News^{\[3\]}](#), The Times and The Telegraph.

Sky News interviews ex-staff



Reports continue to mention BrewDog



11th June 2021

Tony's Chocolonely announces that they will reevaluate their partnership with BrewDog.

18th June 2021

[Sky News reports the story on TV, mentioning](#) ^[14] "stinging personal criticism [of James Watt], much of it from women", including an interview with an anonymous ex-employee, who says "it was horrific" and describes "60-hour weeks and being berated by the boss ... there was no such thing as a small, forgivable mistake. It's a cult of personality". Asked whether he considers himself a misogynist, James Watt responded "never for a single second have I considered that."

June 2021

At least 16 further Instagram stories about sexism/abuse in craft beer shared in June mention BrewDog

BrewDog Update 13th July

UPDATES FROM JAMES



BrewDogJames

Jul '21

Hi Everyone,

Last month we set out a plan to review the culture of BrewDog. We have been making steady progress and I wanted to share an update.

Independent Review

We have appointed Wisser to conduct a full, unbiased review of culture within BrewDog. Wisser are one of the leading culture consultancies globally. They have a wealth of experience working on employee research projects for Nike, ASOS, the BBC, Pret, and many more, where their experienced team immerse themselves in a company to listen and learn about the things that matter. To give you an indication of the timelines involved, we intend to share the high-level findings internally and externally before the end of the year. As part of this culture review, we will reach out to former employees as well as our current team to get the fullest picture we can.

Anonymous Staff Survey

We sent the anonymous staff survey to our teams on 29th June. This survey is one of the key steps on our way to making BrewDog a place to work that we can be truly proud of, and our team's input will shape BrewDog going forward. The survey is being conducted by Opinyin, and the findings will be fed into the Independent Review process and communicated as part of it.



13th July 2021

James Watt announces that BrewDog hired Wisser

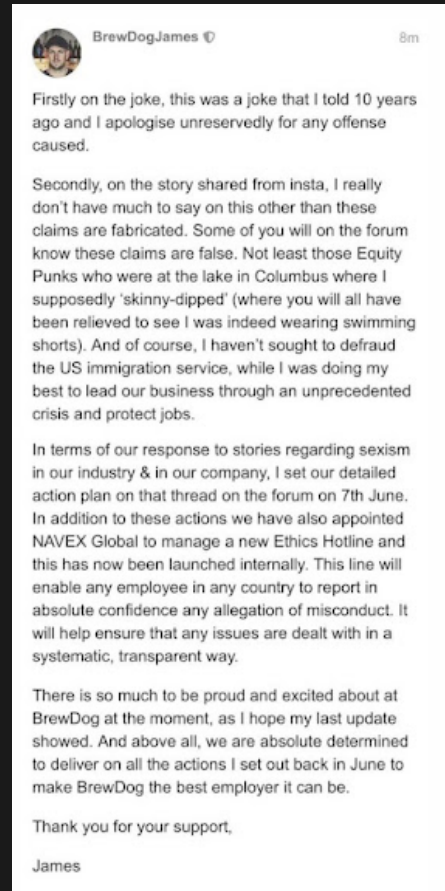
9th August 2021

[A video of James Watt telling a homophobic, misogynist joke ^{\(15\)}](#) filmed in August 2010, is shared on social media

*James Watt addresses
one of the claims*



*Further reports are published
mentioning BrewDog
and James Watt*



10th August 2021

As of 10 August, a further 16 Instagram stories mentioning BrewDog have been shared since June. Many of these focus on James Watt himself, not for the first time. Many serious allegations are made - and a comparably minor one that Watt went skinny-dipping in front of the brewery in the US. By this point, at least 62 reports have been shared on Instagram which mention BrewDog, many recently mentioning James Watt.

11th August 2021

At least 62 reports have been shared on Instagram which mention BrewDog, many recently mentioning James Watt. He posts on the private Equity for Punks forum to apologise for the homophobic joke, and to state that all recent claims made against him are fabricated. He clarifies that the skinny-dipping allegation is inaccurate as he was wearing swimming trunks. He does not address any of the other allegations.

Punks With Purpose
@PunksWPurpose

- We've made contact with Wiser, and will be discussing our experiences with them imminently.
- We've penned our first article, soon to be published in [@ethos_mag](#).
- We still plan to run an AMA, but have not found a suitable date yet, so this remains TBC. 2/3

3:54 pm · 14 Sep 2021

14th September 2021

Wiser contacts Punks with Purpose ⁽¹⁶⁾

B Corp Certification - Disclosure Questionnaire Documentation

PROVIDED BY: BrewDog UPDATED AS OF: 09/29/2021

DISCLOSURE QUESTIONNAIRE CATEGORY	Other
TOPIC	Open Letter from a Group of Former Employees and Subsequent Allegations About Company Work Environment, Marketing, & Ownership
SUMMARY OF ISSUE	In June of 2021, a group of former employees accused BrewDog of having a toxic work environment that included negative impacts on mental health of their workers, workplace safety issues, inaccurate marketing, promotion of sexism and misogyny, and a "sell of personality" and "growth at all costs mindset." Reports indicated that BrewDog initially planned to produce a public response signed by existing employees, which after being leaked, the company chose not to continue. Co-founder James Watt then issued a public apology on LinkedIn (see below), and the company instigated a series of actions designed to address the issues (see below). Subsequent reports following these accusations have included further criticisms about the company's ownership and investment model, with publicly available reports shared below.
SIZE/SCOPE OF ISSUE (e.g., # financial institutions, # of individuals affected)	61 former employees initially signed the open letter, which grew to c. 300. BrewDog currently has c. 1500 employees, with c. 6,000 former employees (predominantly bar staff); company reports indicate that they have hundreds of thousands of individual investors
IMPACT ON STAKEHOLDERS	Accusations in the reports include potential safety concerns, mental health impacts, and impact on career opportunities for employees, potential tax avoidance from investors (there has been no allegation of tax avoidance on the part of BrewDog), and concerns about the structure of investment offerings to crowdfunded investors (along with unfulfilled promises of perks provided to investors).
IMPLEMENTED MIT PRACTICES	The issues raised publicly against BrewDog fall within the parameters of B Lab's complaints procedure and a formal investigation will be conducted. Based on that information and information shared by BrewDog regarding their own actions in response to these allegations, including an independent review that is being conducted by the end of the year, B Lab's investigation will include a required site review that will include further verification of the company's practices outlined in the B Impact Assessment as well as investigation of the specific issues regarding the public concerns raised against BrewDog, as well as the actions that BrewDog has already taken towards remediation. The results of this site review will be presented to B Lab's independent Standards Advisory Council to determine if any further action against the company's B Corp Certification is required, including the potential outcomes of B Lab's complaints procedure such as additional required disclosure, remediation, or revocation of the certification.

8th October 2021

BrewDog's certification with B Corp is under review ⁽¹⁷⁾

“Look, we should have been clearer about the high performance culture. The problem we’ve had is a lot of people joined, and they wanted the excitement and the dynamism, the opportunities that come with a high growth company, but at the same time they wanted the steady state, perks and benefits that come from a mature company. You don’t get both.”
“The mismatch of expectations led to the challenges we faced with former staff.”

17th October 2021

James Watt speaks to The Telegraph

“Some of those people left for disciplinary reasons.” ⁽¹⁸⁾ Watt says.



wiser

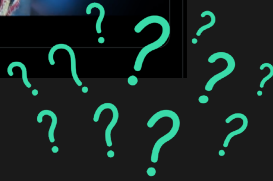
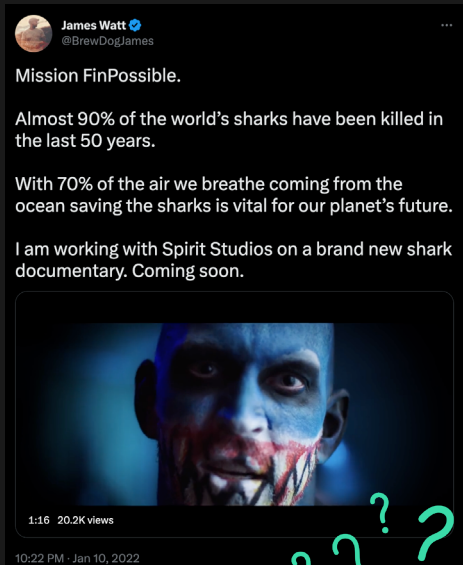
**CULTURE
& INCLUSION
REVIEW
HIGH-LEVEL
FINDINGS**



20th December 2021

BrewDog publishes the results from the culture review conducted by Wiser ⁽¹⁹⁾

James Watt is now making a documentary about sharks!



10th January 2022

James Watt announces his passion for sharks,⁽²⁰⁾ and that he will be making a shark documentary, which floods social media search results for “james watt documentary” and “brewdog documentary”

#iamwhole campaign and SAD AF beer



13th January 2022

BrewDog announce a new partnership with #iamwhole⁽²¹⁾ to raise awareness about men's mental health by launching a beer called 'SAD AF'. The film is produced by the same company as James' shark documentary.

The Truth about BrewDog Series 4

Just how 'punk' is BrewDog? Reporter Mark Daly investigates the truth behind the company's marketing and financial hype. He hears disturbing claims about BrewDog's corporate culture.


The Ellon-based beer company fast became an international success story by setting themselves up as the bad boys of brewing, ripping up the rule book and ridiculing Big Beer at every opportunity. They've faced claims of a toxic and misogynistic work culture from former staff, problems BrewDog says are now behind them. The company says it has learned from past mistakes and most current staff enjoy working there. Disclosure hears from former employees who say they found it a miserable and uncomfortable experience. Some loyal customers now say they regret investing their savings in BrewDog.

Show less

24 January 2022

🕒 59 minutes

On TV

 Mon 24 Jan 2022
19:00
BBC ONE SCOTLAND HD & SCOTLAND ONLY

The Eras of BrewDog



James Watt
@BrewDogJames

The Eras Of @BrewDog

I wrote a piece outlining the key insights & learnings from the various stages of our high growth journey so far.

Hopefully you can find something in these learnings that helps in your current role or business.

bit.ly/3twBc8g

14th January 2022

BBC announces documentary.

17th January 2022

James Watt publishes a [LinkedIn post](#) ⁽²²⁾ where he paints a picture of BrewDog as having made some unspecified mistakes in the early days due to being extremely high-growth and successful, but that all of this is in the past and they are a very different company now

Culture Review Update

That all said, I wanted to share some details that do raise serious questions about the intentions of the individuals behind the open letter which may not be quite so honourable as they would claim. For example:

1. The 6 founders of PwP who wrote the open letter left our business, on average, 5 years ago. We are a very different business today to the business these people left and a huge amount has changed in the interim period, as is shown in the Wisser review. Does that mean we are perfect now? Of course not, but its clearly not a fair reflection of the business we are today.
2. I worked very closely with the original founder of PwP during time at our business. At no point did ever raise a single concern with me about BrewDog as an employer. After left the business continued to stay in touch, not least through friendly private twitter messages about our shared love of Star Wars.

My Biggest Mistakes - Growing Pains Edition



18th January 2022

James Watt, perhaps worried about the forthcoming BBC documentary, publishes an EfP forum post which, while titled “Culture Review Update”, mostly comprises Watt “reluctantly” sharing potentially defamatory information about the founders of Punks with Purpose, saying that they “may not be quite so honourable as they would claim”

19th January 2022

James Watt publishes a [LinkedIn post](#)⁽²³⁾ of his biggest “mistakes”, in which he admits that he “took some shortcuts” with the paperwork for importing beer to the US, arguably attempting to paint this as a minor oversight (nonetheless one of his top six biggest mistakes) of little consequence.

BBC: BrewDog flouted US laws over beer imports

Brewdog flouted US laws over beer imports

© 19 January 2022



GETTY IMAGES

James Watt (right) and co-founder Martin Dickie at the BrewDog brewery in Ellon in May 2020



19th January 2022

The BBC report that⁽²⁴⁾ “Brewdog sent multiple shipments of beer to the US, in contravention of US federal laws”, quoting a former employee as saying “It was clear to us this was coming from the top - from James [Watt].” A news segment on the topic was also broadcast that evening by BBC Reporting Scotland.

21st January 2022

James Watt is accused of intimidating staff in the days leading up to the BBC documentary.

*The Truth About BrewDog
broadcast on BBC*

*CloudWater and Ascension Cider
end relationships with BrewDog*



24th January 2022

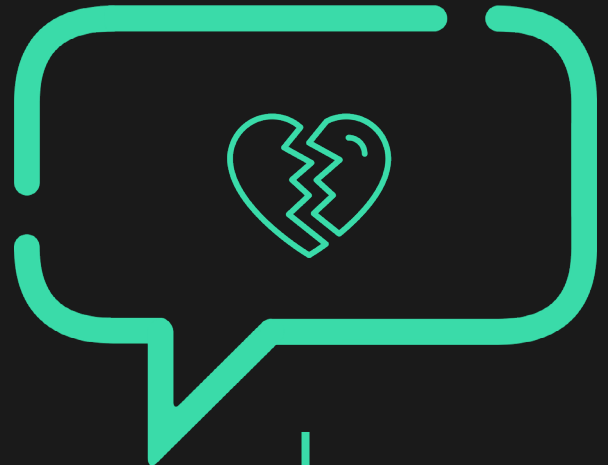
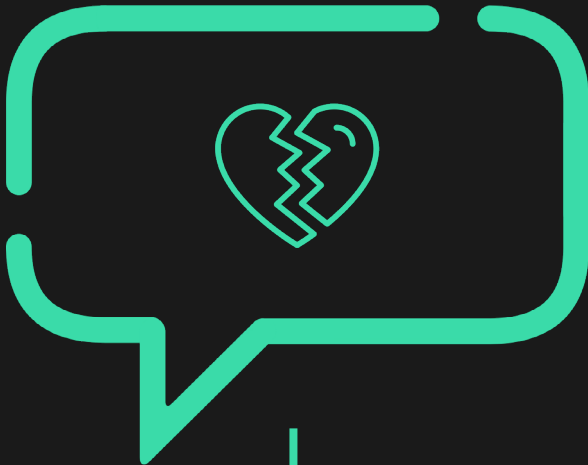
[Ascension Cider](#) ^[25] (whose product has been sold in BrewDog venues) and [CloudWater Brew Co](#) ^[26] (whose products have formerly been contract brewed by BrewDog) both made statements.

24th January 2022

The BrewDog documentary is broadcast on BBC ONE in Scotland. Around 450,000 people watch it in the first 48 hours.

Queer Brewing and Four-Ale Taproom end relationships with BrewDog

EKO Brewery and Good Karma Beer Co end relationships with BrewDog



25th January 2022

[The Four-Ale Taproom](#)^[27] (a former stockist of BrewDog beers) and [The Queer Brewing Project](#)^[28] (whose beer BrewDog formerly contract brewed) both made statements on social media.

25th January 2022

[EKO Brewery](#)^[29] and [Good Karma Beer](#)^[30] Co (breweries whose beer was formerly contract brewed by BrewDog) both made statements on social media.

*New reports are published
mentioning BrewDog*

40

January 2022

The night before the BBC documentary, new reports come in, and continue to do so for the next week. At least 40 stories mentioning BrewDog are published in January.



7th February 2022

[BrewDog's CEO James Watt defends himself against claims of staring at staff.](#) ⁽³¹⁾



7th February 2022

Former BrewDog employee gave an interview stating [she had been fired shortly after informing the company of her fathers terminal illness.](#)⁽³²⁾



2nd March 2022

[BrewDog publishes a summary of their report to Ofcom regarding BBC's 'The Truth About BrewDog'.](#)⁽³³⁾



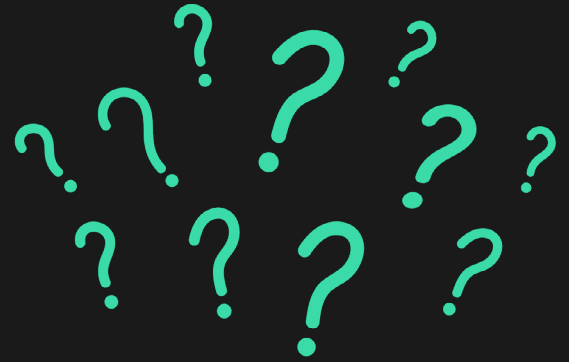
14th March 2022

The Guardian reports that BrewDog's CEO James Watt [had hired private investigators^{\(34\)}](#) to contact former staff and an unnamed woman.



30th March 2022

[BrewDog representative uses legal move in attempt to identify participants^{\(35\)}](#) of Hand & Heart's Affected Workers Platform

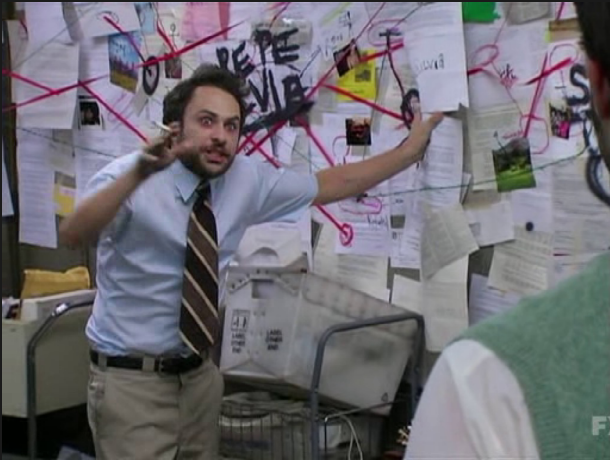


1st April 2022

BrewDog chair distributes correspondence⁽³⁶⁾ between himself and H&H to BrewDog staff, the EfP forum and media.

6th April 2022

Wiser puts out a statement claiming responsibility for a quote provided to BrewDog's complaint to Ofcom⁽³⁷⁾ The quote directly contradicts findings from Wiser's recent culture review.



10th April 2022

BrewDog's CEO James Watt gives an [interview to The Sunday Times](#).^[38] In it, he admits to a previous romantic with a subordinate, and alludes to a criminal conspiracy against him.

3rd May 2022

BrewDog's CEO announces the [BrewDog Blueprint](#)^[39] - he will give away £100 million worth of his shares to salaried employees, and bar staff will be eligible for BrewDog's new 50/50 profit sharing scheme.



5th & 6th May 2022

Media reports that BrewDog's [CEO has taken legal action^{\(40\)}](#) against a former romantic partner, [whom he paid in Bitcoin to gather information^{\(41\)}](#) on those he believed to be conspiring against him.

23rd May 2022

Media reports that during Wisser's culture review for BrewDog, [a person's anonymity had been breached.^{\(42\)}](#)



20th June 2022

The podcast 'Good Ship
BrewDog' is published on BBC
Sounds