

# EPISODE FOUR - NO MASTER, NO CREDIT, W MUSIC

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

ceo, shares, people, weiser, charlotte, legal proceedings, breach, article, company, happening, workplace, individual, employee, former employee, podcast, person, year, received, sources, hunting

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This is a sequential podcast. Make sure you listen to all episodes in order as we have to follow a strict timeline to be able to tell this story. Thank you



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you are listening to super punk corporate meltdown, a podcast about workers rights, institutional betrayal and corporate retaliation. In the podcast we analyze a recent case study straight out of the news, a vicious and unnecessary war imposed by an embattled beer company. I'm Kate Bailey. I'm a workplace consultant and workplace investigator



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and I'm anyone though the hospitality industry workers advocate



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and this is super punk corporate meltdown. This is episode four, cover up and cry wolf.



01:23

In April Charlotte cook and other participants of the BrewDog affected workers platform received a response to the data subject access requests. After reviewing the documents, it's discovered that a breach of Charlotte's anonymity has occurred between BrewDog and Weiser hand and heart as his platform participants filing a group complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office.



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So we are at a rather huge milestone in the timeline of the last six to seven months. Charlotte, you received your SARS back from Weiser, BrewDog and Integritas. The results were disturbing what happened.

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So the first one I got back was from Weiser. So just to remind everybody, I'd engaged with Weiser as part of their review, to find out the cultural problems with BrewDog in good faith, on the assurance that my data would be kept anonymous, nothing that I fed back would be fed back to the company, I found out that this wasn't the case, I was referred to in two emails sent to BrewDog. One saying that I had a selective memory and failed to mention why I'd actually left the company. And the other saying that I was going to help them to get more people. So you know, thrown onto the bus. And then also used in the exact same sentence essentially, I also saw that Weiser had shared internally on their Slack channel, a podcast that I done with their good beer hunting, and that this was going to be some interesting listening for them, despite the fact that everything was supposed to be despite the fact that everything within the review was supposed to come directly from sources and be provided to them. They said he used external sources. And I think that's unacceptable. And I think it's immoral.

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They will also clearly discussing you in that case, even amongst themselves without the anonymity that you were promised.

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Absolutely. I mean, I'm a scientist, I know fine. Well, that if you want to avoid bias, you give your sample a code number, you attribute just three random digits, maybe a couple of letters. And then you treat it as something that lets us a nice philosophical position, or Rawlsian position of coming through the curtain where you don't know anything. So you just take it as you see it, and you treat it as it is. This clearly didn't happen with this professional company, who didn't anonymize their data, despite that being one of the most fundamentally basic things that you can do, and discussed amongst themselves, and also discussed with BrewDog and fed back, something that happened in my interview with them. It also seems that BrewDog told Weiser that I was going to be fired. This isn't the case. And with my BrewDog saw, I managed to get back my resignation letter and the invitation to a disciplinary that said the worst would happen would be a warning. So I accidentally got something wet at work in a brewery and was facing a disciplinary I'm not gonna pretend that that didn't happen. So yeah, it seems that wiser and BrewDog were talking to each other. They weren't keeping things anonymous. And I actually got out of the gym and was on the bus home from the gym. When I got it. I was just essentially ready to march down to the Weiser head office and demand to speak to the CEO immediately. To explain why such a breach could possibly occur,

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indeed, and I guess, if you're receiving this information that reveals this breach, and you're thinking back to your participation in September, was it did it point anything out to you in

thinking back to your participation in September, was it did it point, anything out to you in regards to how you had eventually gone on to be targeted by BrewDog?

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It seems that because they were discussing things and because of something that was untrue, that was told to Weiser to BrewDog, they definitely paint me in a negative light. And that's completely unacceptable. They're not there to make moral judgments. You know, they're not there to know who people are or what they've done, they're there to listen. And to feed it back. You simply don't make decisions based upon people from small amounts of data that have no context. And they did this. And it's a total breach of professional standards yet again,

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I think as well, from your side, it also kind of just put another gauntlet ahead of you in terms of resolving all of these issues in your life. And then I can imagine that must have been frustrating and having an impact on you.

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It said to me that they didn't have any intention of actually resolving any of it. And that this wasn't a good faith, genuine exercise, Charlotte,

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I'm also curious, because the way that you had previously described your interactions with Weiser, the fact that you were trying your very best to encourage participation from other people. And also that you yourself had provided positive feedback to the community and said, You know what, I had a good interaction with this company, and I encourage you to talk with them, I can imagine it must have been very jarring to find out that, that representative that was getting you to do that outreach, and then also the person that you shared, probably very personal things with, had been talking about you with the company. It was

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an absolute, an utter breach of trust. I don't think I've ever had my trust broken in such an egregious and unpleasant way before, that was very jarring because this person had presented one side. And you know, it was very sympathetic, made promises of anonymity and then basically immediately just turned around and did the absolute opposite. And it just makes me question their motives.

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After hearing no reply from wiser, it was finally time to group together the concerns and trigger an Ico complaint. This was also then reported via ood bear hunting. and an article from the

journalist Kate Brown, not titled into the breach, supposedly anonymous workplace culture review provided information to BrewDog. Charlotte, can you recall for us what was happening for you, and what was going into the decisions that you were making at that time.

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So I was in a fairly stressful place trying to decide whether or not to make this public. Again, I was really scared of retaliation, because this, in my opinion, the Wisser review wasn't fully anonymous. And so I don't think that it deserves to be held up on this pedestal as the bastion of fairness and a true representation of the culture because it simply wasn't fully anonymous. And they made decisions based on things that came from outside of their direct interviews with current and former workers. And that's not what we were told would be happening. So I was dead about saying this, I'd be facing retaliation. As we've already seen, I've been contacted by what we believe to be private investigators, and I've had fairly unpleasant things happened to me. And eventually, it just got to the point where it had to go out because there were so many things riding on it. People were desperate to get it out there and to hear and, you know, to be able to show that something wasn't right is always a good feeling at that, at

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that time, obviously, you know, you you kind of had to make a decision about what to do because you hadn't heard back from Weiser at all. And from my side, because you are a platform participant, and we do this for participants who are not not contributing to this podcast is just that Charlotte has been willing to. But what we did was sort of analyze what was next. And we also recognized a number of other concerns that people had raised to us when they received their replies from Weiser and obviously, it was at that point where it was publicly revealed that yes, something had gone wrong, that people were able to come together and via the platform, we were able to organize a group To be able to trigger an ICAO complaint, because you hadn't heard back from Weiser at all. Now, that's the regulatory body, the Information Commissioner's Office, again, does that just extend the gauntlet for you, in terms of resolution,

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it's another thing that we've got to wait to be resolved. And I shouldn't have had to do it. Because my day I shouldn't have been breached in the first place. But it's a regulatory body. And that's the process that we have to follow. To be honest, I just want an apology and an explanation from wisser about why they did it. And I also want to know why the person who did it hasn't been fired?

 10:40

Yeah. It's very telling that there's just been nothing. There's just no response. They've completely ignored it. They didn't contribute to the article that went out about it. I mean, it's, it's quite disrespectful. And it's data is, you know, it deserves protection, because it requires protection exactly for reasons like this.



11:04

Yep, absolutely. They didn't anonymize my data. They talked about my health and health data has extra layers of protection as well. And it just seems like this is a group of people who don't understand what they're doing, and managed to breach it through a lack of understanding. And I just want an apology and explanation and proof that it's not going to happen to anybody else, and they're going to train their staff in GDPR.



11:33

In early May BrewDog announces the introduction of the BrewDog blueprint, a profit share scheme, in which the CEO is expected to give away 20% of his shares of the company to salaried employees, while the BrewDog bars will split 50% of profits with their staff. Two days later, good beer hunting published a story conspiracy weary Rudock CEO filed a lawsuit against woman he paid for information, which details elements of the legal battle between the CEO and a former romantic partner. Within hours article was taken down after good beer hunting received a cease and desist letter from produksi.



12:07

Fanny, Jesus, fuck, we got a lot to unpack here. You want to



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kick it off? Absolutely. Yeah. So maybe we should start with just kind of going over what the BrewDog blueprint actually is. The general idea is that salaried staff, which BrewDog says is about 750 people, they'll be getting their equal share of about 3.7 million shares that the CEO is gifting and 3.7 million shares, according to the company's current valuation would be worth about 100 million pounds. And these shares account for nearly 20% of the CEO stake in BrewDog. They've dubbed this the hops dock, and they categorize it as an employee ownership program. Then you also of course, have all the bar staff who are paid an hourly wage, and they need to get something as well. So BrewDog announces that they plan to split 50% of bar profits with staff, which will be paid out about every six months. And this was a big announcement. And we saw it get syndicated quite a bit. We talked about that in a previous episode BrewDog made multiple statements as the CEO, he expressed an interest to have his team members act as business owners and incentivize them as if they were business owners, for the employees that were eligible for help stock BrewDog also highlighted that the value in shares is directly linked to company valuation. So the more valuable that a company is, the more valuable the shares are, of course, so let's say BrewDog, doubles in value from this announcement to when they go for an IPO, then the shares for anyone eligible for the hop stock will double in value.



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Hmm. This is very interesting, because if you just take it as a face value, financial transaction, and while I think that employee ownership programs can be very valuable. What you have here

and while I think that employee ownership programs can be very valuable what you have here is an individual offloading stocks, which have a value linked to the company on to staff. So if something goes wrong in the future, or if you know, there's a recession, or there's high inflation or various things that impact the market, the employee that then takes on those shares is also taking on the liability. That's just my first thought do go on funny.



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Yeah, I mean, I had quite a few thoughts about this. You know, I think on paper, it's something that sounds really appealing to a lot of people everyone has maybe fantasized about what it would be like to be in a workplace where everyone has an equal say, and an equal vested interest in the company. That being said, it just doesn't really seem possible. I think at the end of the day, it doesn't really undo the power dynamic that's at play here. There's still a massive gap between the power of the CEO and even your average salaried employee.



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So do you have any you know, thoughts or insights? Or have you done any digging into profit share programs and typically, you know, who would benefit from them like an employer or an employee?



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Yeah, so I had a few people write me and refer me to some reading material. And some of those sources outlines that offering a financial incentive in the form of shares could naturally enforce an employee's interest in the value of the company itself. And because whistleblowing tends to have a negative effect on a company's value, employees would then stand to lose money whenever someone decides to come forward with a claim. So given that this company has spent the last year under a magnifying glass, the choice to use a financial incentive is definitely something that's given me pause. So this is confirmed when you look at the appendix of the BrewDog blueprints. This is where it states that the first grant of the share awards will be distributed in June 22. So that was last month. And then in and around May, in the years thereafter, each award will have a 12 month vest period and vested awards will be exercisable when an IPO or a change of control happens. So if you leave before this, you will then surrender your awards. And all surrendered awards will then be returned to their Employee Benefit Trust to then be redistributed amongst the salary team members that have stayed with the company. And given the rate of turnover that BrewDog is seeing right now. It could take several years for all these shares to be distributed.



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That's really interesting. I guess it Do you know, or have you confirmed because it's my understanding that, for example, in a profit share program, if an employee leaves their employment before they've finished, if the employee leaves the program, before the company's IPO, for example, that's the initial public offering they forfeit their shares is, am I correct in thinking that?



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That's correct. But just to highlight that this is only applicable to salaried staff members, the bar teams who take share in the 50% profit split, they get paid out about every six months. So two days later, after they announced this profit share model, good beer hunting published an article which related to these legal proceedings that the CEO has mentioned on a few occasions. This provides more insight from the perspective of the woman the CEO has allegedly paid to get in touch with some of his critics. One thing that's clear, though, is that she's not a former employee. She's not a documentary source. And she's not a platform participant court documents provided to good beer hunting and statements given by the woman detail the following things that I found pretty important. So according to this woman, she and the CEO have known each other since November 2020. And this was described as sometimes romantic up until August 2021, so almost a year ago, and I don't know if it's relevant or not, but this seems to be the same month where Charlotte and I speak to her. Allegedly, this woman was also asked to provide names of punks with purpose members, maybe some screenshots, and one of the more scary accusations that I saw was that the CEO has allegedly asked for voice recordings. This woman has also allegedly been paid in a fair amount of Bitcoins for these favors that she's performed for the CEO. This was an article we were waiting for, for a little while, about three hours later, this article was removed after good beer hunting had received a letter from the CEO's lawyers, which cited contempt of court, good beer hunting obliged, and they brought on a legal team in the UK in order to review the entire article. And they eventually republished



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this article has a few interesting points for me. So the first is, and we've reiterated this, no one is interested in the CEO's private life, and I for 1am Certainly not interested in the individual, the woman who has come up in this reporting, purely because I feel it's none of my business. It's not anyone's business, people's private lives are private. However, this article is so important because of the claims that were being made by the CEO and the company. And those claims being that the court action that was ongoing, and this is the only court action that we've been able to locate or find was related to former employees. This article coming out was so poignant, because it proved it wasn't former employees. Funny. Do you want to talk a little bit about this theme that we've had with the claims that have been made by the CEO?



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Yeah. One of the recurring themes since March has been the repeated assertions by BrewDog CEO that this alleged criminal conspiracy against him has spanned over the course of the last two years. This is really interesting because most of us have only been involved for about one year. We've reviewed published media and statements from the company and its CEO. Here's what we found. On March 14 of this year in reporting done by the Guardian, a representative from BrewDog first made this statement. This was a piece that was written on the CEO hiring private investigators to look into some of the sources from the BBC documentary. Then again on March 14, in response to the Guardian reporting, the CEO also repeated the statement that he had been subjected to a two year criminal campaign on the form with his shareholders. Then on April 10, in an interview with The Sunday Times, the CEO, again, illustrated a little bit and gave some details to his court cases, that was the most we had had at that time. This is also

where it's heavily implied that Charlotte is related to this court case in some way. Then we have on July 4, with the recent podcast interviews as the CEO has done, he still in Furs to these court cases, and he has still left it quite unclear whether or not it's a former employee, or if it's someone from his private life. I've turned to the search bar at this point. And I've looked up the terms criminal conspiracy and two year campaign and I found a statement from BrewDog CEO saying the following. We are also taking advice on some other activity against us, which is believed to be criminal in nature. Unfortunately, I cannot share too many details on this at this moment. Now, given that the argument against good beer hunting was contempt of court, I became really fascinated in figuring out all the statements the CEO had made, where he had alluded to details from these legal proceedings. Looking back again, and seeing that specific date, June 7, I reverted to the good beer hunting article, and the good beer hunting article alleges that one of these payments this woman took was on that very same day, which I found pretty curious,

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huh, that is very curious, do we have any information from the public reporting that might indicate anything about these payments, these alleged Bitcoin payments?

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Well, taking from the good beer hunting article, there is this bit that I find quite interesting. We're not going to say this woman's name. So for the purpose of this podcast, we're gonna call her Jane on June 7 2021, after Jane alerted a person who appears to be BrewDog CEO via text that she set up an account with Coinbase a cryptocurrency exchange platform, she received a response I need your wallet number or the email address your account is set up with. Over the next six hours tech show Jane being asked for information about former BrewDog employee with administrative access to a Facebook group made up of former employees. Jane responded she was on it and asked for the other person's email address. 35 minutes later, attacks from the other account responded. None of those names sound familiar. A quart questionnaire sent to Jane which she says came from the CEOs lawyers and the existence of which was confirmed by her own lawyers at London spark and CO shows that BrewDog CEO allegedly paid Jane roughly three point to Bitcoin over the course of their correspondence. Some of these payments occurred in June 2021. Additional messages Jane alleges were sent between her and the BrewDog CEO suggesting that she was offered more Bitcoin, if she would record phone calls or in person conversations, as well as shared text messages. She says one person she was asked to seek out information was a former romantic partner of BrewDog CEO.

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Now, we can't talk too much about this, because obviously we don't want to put across her on our backs. However, I think the reporting that has come out that has gone through these fat checks that was taken down, it went to a legal team, it's come back, I think it stands to reason. And I also think that and this comes up a little later on. But when we did go to court to seek out further information about this, the judge himself said in response to the seniors, lawyers who were complaining about the media coverage that the judge believed all reporting that will come out would be appropriate was the word used. So I think we can leave this here, because we



don't want to go down this rabbit hole. The only thing that I think is really important for people to take away from this is that it's not a former employee. It's not punks with purpose members, and it's got nothing to do with the countless workplace allegations that exist on our platform. When it came to these topics we wanted to check in with Charlotte Cooke BrewDog is engaged in a plethora of marketing activities, particularly around that culture. They announced this blueprint thing, and they still, however, continue that campaign or refusing to acknowledge that accusation. Those are malicious falsehoods. And really just try and push this rehabilitated image of the company. How was that for you at that time?

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I mean, seeing this and knowing what I knew was going on behind the scenes, and I hope that it was only me who was, who had their anonymity breached, it makes me think that none of it was done with true intentions, and that they were just gonna say whatever they were gonna say regardless, and that it was, again, not genuine contrition. It was just an media rehabilitation, charm offensive,

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speaking of media, and maybe offensive media to some going back to the article that we talked about earlier, the one that came out in which it was first alluded, that there was the CEO had paid an individual essentially to get information from people involved in the craft beer stories. So on May 6, a good bear hunting article comes out. And that article actually highlights that the court proceedings that the CEO had been applying were involved. Were involving former staff actually involved an individual who was not a former employee. Was that vindicating fear? Was it intimidating? How was that when that article came out? Given what you've spoken about?

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Before? It was vindicating because it's been talked about so many times about campaign of criminality? You know, offenses that have been carried out, can't talk about it, because it's an ongoing court case. I'd like to point out, I've never been contacted by a lawyer or the police regarding anything to do with BrewDog. And just seeing it and realizing Yes, now people can actually find out what's going on, that this isn't anything to do with punks with purpose. We've never met this individual. And you can't just keep pretending that it's connected when it's in the public domain now, and in court records, that this is a issue that you've got with another individual, and has nothing to do with workplace allegations.

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And you mentioned earlier on the podcast, Charlotte, that you'd had an interaction with that individual. But first, I want to talk to Fannie about your interactions with this individual, the one who was implicated in the good bear hunting article, and who actually went on the record to speak about the case. Can you share what your experience with this individual was funny,

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I only had about a week or two back in August, where I was sharing stuff regarding BrewDog. And it was during this week that I had a lot of people right me. One of them was this individual. They had just been commenting on on some of my stories. And they were extremely forthcoming and enthusiastic and they wanted to talk. We had about an hour long conversation over the phone that week, where I explained who I was, I explained what I was up to with McKellar at the time. And just to explain, you know, how on earth I got involved, I was helping connect sources with the BBC, and was wanting to know if they were interested in speaking with them. And they gave me a bit of backstory to what their involvement was and what their experiences have been. We decided that we were going to talk again later that week. But before we got a chance to do that this person had been contacting other people and offering to mediate between the company CEO and other people. And so this was a massive red flag for me. I went pretty ballistic, not on this person. And I just went around warning people not to connect with them. I alerted the journalists that I had been speaking with. And that was honestly that for many months, I just it got too dark for me personally at that point. And that was a certain point where I took pause and I took a step back. I quietly talked to some people from the company in Ohio, and then just sat back and waited for the culture review and for the documentary to be released.

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And I'd like to just also bring up a very a memory that I have of that time because I remember we were on the phone. I was driving from Germany to Denmark, working on Mikela staff. And I was stopped at the side of the road and we were talking about your interactions with this individual and you kept saying to me, Kate, like something's up something's weird. I don't understand. Like, it doesn't make me feel good. And I'm just gonna warn Every one and you kind of were telling me, you know, as it was happening, that you wanted to be able to warn everyone because you were just feeling so weird about that interaction. Now, this article comes out, May 6, good bad hunting. And it has this sort of vindicating information, which is it's actually not a former employee, and actually was someone that this year, you know, had paid. And then it's also worth noting that this article was almost immediately removed, and anyone who had tweeted the article also received a legal threat, to remove their tweet and links to the pieces. With that notable fact aside, and keeping in line with the interactions with this individual, Charlotte, you had an interaction that you described earlier in the podcast. And essentially, just to clarify, you two got the same feeling from this individual. And you eventually, from my understanding, blocked this individual as well,

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yeah, I blocked them and reported them to the police, because there was just something so far wrong with what was going on. It just gave me a feeling in the pit of my stomach that there was something really dark happening. And I didn't want to have any part of it. I have absolutely utterly no interest in the CEOs, private life, he can do whatever he wants. I'm interested in workplace reconciliation, I'm interested in preventing retaliation against workers who speak out, this person wasn't connected to either of those things. And it just felt like it was an intrusion, and incorrect to be involved in any way. And again, there was just something really dark and something really wrong happening

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when it comes to the legal proceedings that are discussed in the good bear hunting article, the one that you noted, Charlotte, you've heard nothing of funny. Can I also confirm that you've not been contacted by any lawyers? You're not involved in any legal proceedings at all?

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I have never heard from a lawyer. I'm not involved in anything legal. I've never heard from the company.

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Okay. So what's poignant to me is that we have a sense from this article, and from the previous article, that both of you somehow implicated in this whole thing without having any idea of what's going on. I'm also aware of documents that have come from a legal proceeding, where both of you were named. And what's poignant to me is that you all both named in these legal documents, right? You're implicated. But what is in there, that you refuse to engage with this person, that everyone was sticking to their public word to the agenda of the groups that they were engaged with? And just really trying to seek accountability by the book? Is that what's in there? And why are you in there? How do you both respond to that?

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The only thing that could possibly be in there will be my incredibly informal tone that I had with her. But beyond that, no. And I won't make apologies for that. It was part of me being informal was a big reason why people felt comfortable talking to me.

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And that's the thing, we've talked about it before, you can't control who comes into the DMS, it can be sources, it can be people who want to abuse you, it can be people who are scared, it can be people sent from the other side of it happens on a daily basis. So, you know, you just kind of have to weigh these things out. And I think that was also back in a time when things were very unknown, and very catastrophic. Almost behind the scenes. That was a very turbulent time.

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My interaction with her included saying that pants has purpose. We're a workplace organization committed to positive change that we weren't interested in in James's private life, but that we sympathized with the difficulty that she was facing, but couldn't do anything. I also put her in touch with journalists, because in my opinion, it's much better to go through a journalist who can fact check and has legal protection than to just verbatim repeat a story on social media.

And, again, all along we've wanted this off social media. So I thought at the time that I was being told a lie in order to repeat it on social media and thus make myself a target for litigation. And I'm never shared stories on social media. That's not part of my part of my purview whatsoever. So yeah, everything about it just felt really, really wrong. And I was publicly out there as a member of Congress with purpose. I don't understand. You know, why anybody would want to try and prove that.

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I guess there's two things happening here. There's two realities, the reality where there's just people, you know, funny, you're engaging with the community, Charlotte, you're engaging with a company in an organization that's democratically Oh, recognized with a positive agenda. And then the other side has this reality of well, we're going to catch them, we're going to catch the Oh, red hand, and we're gonna get them in this big conspiracy, all the feminists and the sexism activists. And it's like, no, that that's really as far from the truth is what it could be. But now, we're all subjected to this reality where both Charlotte and Fannie yourselves are named in these legal proceedings about someone that you ultimately cut off contact with, and just had nothing to say about because it's actually got really nothing to do with the workplace. None of these things add up at all,

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entirely, and the legal proceedings that are taking place, the timeframe for which the alleged offences took place is actually before this individual made contact with either Fannie or myself. So we're not involved in it in any way.

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One thing that is really frustrated me throughout all this is that I think there has been an active effort not to include anything about the CEOs private life. And what I keep feeling with their output from the company is that it continuously gets brought up. You know, we sat on some very dark information since August, just hoping that it will go, you know, not hoping that it will go away, but we just we were willing to ignore it. And I think for a long time, I was quite confident that it would never be brought up. And it was really, really interesting. When, you know, what was it then seven months later, then there we were faced with this problem, and I felt that we could all breathe a sigh of relief, because I know everyone made the right decision to cut off communication as soon as possible.

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Yeah. Again, the only time that anyone has brought up the private life of the CEO has been the CEO using it as a technique to humanize himself. And I fundamentally agree that his family and private life is entirely private, he's entitled to that. And I would never, ever want to intervene in

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it. I think the community has been really consistent about that. And it's actually one of the nice elements, I think, because I think it is, you know, generally not the purview. Both of you note that now. We, the people, I mean, I just have the the BrewDog affected workers platform, but kind of all of the stakeholders involved in this now have to be concerned with it because as you know, it's been brought up by the CEO. Not a former employee, not Charlotte Cook, not a member of punks with purpose, but a claim that is still bolstering the CEO and the company's argument against the claims coming out about their workplace for now. That's why we're gonna leave you for episode four of super punk corporate meltdown.