

# Episode THREE.ONE -- MUSIC, NO MASTER, NO CREDIT

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:00

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 than snow



00:25

you were 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



00:45

and I'm for anyone though, the hospitality industry workers advocate



00:49

and this is super punk corporate meltdown. This is episode three, part one. Yeah, it's annoying, but there's a point to it. This one's called control.



01:25

In our last episode, Kate pause the discussion with BrewDog after it was revealed that while she was directly negotiating with the company on what to do with historical cases of workplace abuse, Representative sought information from the platform using a personal write mechanism and GDPR data. Then, it all got turbulent. The chairman of the board writes a letter to Kate and hand on heart. In this letter, the chairman accuses Kate of blackmail and extortion as well as accusing her of requesting a fee of 100,000 pounds. Within hours. Pay issues a rebuttal to the false claims of the chairman and as contacted by journalist BrewDog sent the letter out to every BrewDog employee and published it on their EFP shareholder forums. Kate provides the

journalist access to the publisher bottles with evidence however, a full three quarter page print article goes out, repeating the chairman's false claims, resulting in a wave of abuse directed at Kate and the platform, including abuse regarding her autism and accusing her of using her femininity to make a name for herself. The article also included an anonymous source who was quoted as saying Bailey has presented herself as a woke warrior, but seeking financial gain from this feels hypocritical.

 02:37

Charlotte, you were the person who actually ended up being able to purchase the physical copy of the spread about me slash the platform slash daddy executive offices, little life filled letter. And you were the one person that made me laugh that weekend because you said it well, at least they gave you the big picture. As a platform participant, what did you observe or experience when the article began to make the rounds

 03:04

to me it was just a continuation of a poor culture and a poor culture blaming other people for things that go wrong. I saw it as an attack on a woman, you were accused of extortion. And I find that utterly reprehensible and you're called a walk warrior. There was just buzz words it was in the Daily Mail and nobody even reads the Daily Mail apart from racist Nana's. I just found it such an odd choice of media outlet and such an odd choice of wording because yes, you're a feminist, you're not gonna pretend not to be a feminist. I'm a feminist fan is a feminist. Hopefully most of the people listening to this podcast are also feminists and to try and call your walk warrior. It was just a box ticking exercise trying to diminish you trying to make it seem like this is just another silly girl trying to get her word and and I thought that was a really repulsive, disgusting response from them. Scared men not knowing how to deal with women who aren't scared of them, and immediately jumping to the lowest common denominator insult because it is an insult that are even engaging with you. They're just insulting you. And that's really not very becoming of a chairman of a board of a company that's supposedly valued at \$2 billion. That's kind of what your drunk uncle Tony says down the pub on a Friday night when he's sick of the women at work.

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I think it was very disrespectful to the platform participants who I represented. The chairman published this letter two days after I had paused discussions to say that they were not going to engage anything that we were doing or representing DOL, we paused it two days ago. These people may their stand, you've just gone and run with a megaphone of calling someone a woke warrior, to disempower those people that said, No, we're stopping this discussion. We're not going to be engaged in this and they did it anyway.

 04:59

And then they accuse As US of abusing a position and other people's history to discredit them,



05:05

the article itself has become the point of interest for a bunch of different reasons. But just to quickly address the content of the article that we're talking about here. Now, the D O issued a life filled letter to me. And evidently the publication that just basically republished his letter, this letter was filled with so many lies, it would make Donald Trump hire the DEA, oh, one small example of a lie like this. And I just want to highlight how willing this company is to lie, they reference a 100,000 pound fee that I quote, requested. That was what they were underpinning the accusations of extortion and blackmail. Now I have substantial documentation. And I mean, substantial. Can you imagine do you think, does everyone listening to this think I document things, I have substantial documentation, which clearly states why I gave them that ballpark fee. And it was purely to indicate the cost of legal and investigators for the purposes of fulfilling the request of a reconciliation concept proposal that they requested from me in writing. And in the meetings that we were having, I stated that it would take me at least one week of work for a project of this magnitude, to even be able to provide a quote, it's in writing, it happened in the meetings. And I think that this is very indicative of exactly how this company operates. And anyone who thought that the D O, was going to be a moral compass for the CEO had moment for pause after this. If you look at, quote, gait, and what's happening to me, there are two seemingly unconnected issues. However, this is the MO, they find a tiny lie that I requested 100,000 pound, because that would underpin the accusation of blackmail and extortion that they wanted to put on me, the same way that they wanted to insert and insinuate very subtly, and with a very small quote, that the people coming forward with their stories of workplace abuse, were just bad faith actors with a personal vendetta against the brand and the company to provide such substantial evidence, and to still have those sorts of accusations circulated. Just prove to me, it was a white woman of substantial privilege in terms of being an established business owner, and you know, many other things that the media is an apparatus of corporations that they can use as retaliation. In this situation, BrewDog were pissed that I didn't stay quiet, about the actions behind the scenes and allow them to bully the platform participants via me with underhanded tactics, because they were attempting to violate the rights of platform participants behind the scenes, while publicly playing the role of there's nothing wrong with the culture. They're all liars. So from my perspective, it was just really an egregious move. And again, it just highlighted the lack of corporate governance ethics that are being employed by this company, if any, I'm sure you have your own thoughts about this topic?



08:33

Absolutely. It's one that you and I have discussed in the past, even with the previous podcasts you've produced. So not entirely dissimilar. I was engaged with a company founder for a little while, and I felt I operated in good faith. And when they felt i slighted them in the public eye, the the potential we had to meet. When they felt slighted by something I had said in public, the potential meeting we had been planning completely fell through. And it wasn't more than a few weeks later, before. This person then had incredible access to media and labeled myself and numerous people as sexism activists. So not only was that a misrepresentation of what we were actually doing entirely, I've talked about a lot that's a label I either need to reclaim or I don't know, but a bit sexism.



09:41

It's a matter right there because sexism activist work, and it doesn't continue at all. It's very...

Like you're right there because sexism activist, yeah, and it doesn't capture at all, like you say, the scope of the work that you were doing, it's much more appropriate to call your workers rights advocate. It just, you know, and that the use of that term feels political right the same way work warrior feels political when it's used against people who are raising concerns, yeah,

 10:04

I mean, definitely there are, this was also stuff that was getting published within a quite conservative media. So these sorts of words are definitely used to trigger a response from their readership,

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I would agree. And it's quite a difficult thing to prove. But anecdotally, it is a pattern, right? It is, it is highlighting the ways that access to a big media platform with a very specific type of audience, which just happens to generally be conservative, and I'm sure it happens on the other side as well. But that pattern, and that ecosystem, is a really strong resource for a company in turmoil for a leader in turmoil to kind of have access to a megaphone. If certain words are used, if certain descriptors are used for the situation, they know that the audience is going to have a favorable reaction to the company, or to Yeah, to that it's kind of like the anti work culture thing. Right?

 11:09

Yeah. I mean, for sure. And especially within that situation, it was much more relevant to mention that I was a peer within the industry,

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because you've done actually a lot of very public political work leading up to that it was completely unrelated. So

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yeah, completely. And that was also kind of I think that was what made it so significant to that I was an active member of the industry doing this completely.

 11:36

Yeah. But I guess it's much easier to explain to an audience that you're a sexism activist, wanting to bring down a company. And look, it's effective, right, because the abuse that I got, like over that weekend was just insane. And I know that you've had situations like that so many people have had situations like that within the, quote activist circles. So yeah, it just goes to show that it does have a level of effectiveness. We now like to share an interview with Chris, we

came across Chris last year, as he was interacting on social media, sharing information and taking action as a consumer following the stories pouring out in the craft beer industry. And Chris himself had always been an enthusiast of craft beer. What we eventually learned through the types of informations and insights that Chris was providing, was that while he was definitely not industry, and definitely not media, he had experience with technology, and the internet. We had spoken to Chris before about Mikela. And as this BrewDog story began to gain momentum, we noticed Chris was publishing interesting observations about the company's use of media and social media, had an hot decided to approach Chris about these observations, and asked if he was willing to share what he had found through his curiosities with his skill set. Here's our interview. Chris, can you tell us a bit about your interest in BrewDog?



13:06

Yes. So I used to be a BrewDog fan, loved their bars and enjoyed a lot of their beers over the years when I started reading people's experiences of the company that changed, but I guess because they're so familiar to me, and so much has been written about them. I took an interest. And I hope you'll do the right thing one day,



13:23

Chris, one thing you raised when we were discussing BrewDog, was some of the interests that you had taken in their marketing and your interest in marketing in general, could you elaborate a little on that?



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So I'm interested in marketing, and BrewDog have a knack for getting media coverage. And I've followed some of their marketing stunts over the years, the classic ones you hear about, like the tanks and the taxidermy, whatever you think about them follow a pattern. So BrewDog do something sensational and newsworthy enough that journalists will want to report it, and then they let the media machine do its work, and they get some free publicity out of it.



13:59

Basically, the inference here is that by having these newsworthy stories and promoting them, they're avoiding the fees of, you know, marketing agencies, billboards, all that sort of stuff is that's the inference from what you've just said.



14:13

Yes. And I think the CEO himself has said, I think, I think BrewDog had been celebrated in the past for their approach of not spending money on advertising, but going about it in a more guerilla way.



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So Chris, what have you been noticing lately?



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So these days, I'm seeing less of that traditional BrewDog marketing, and maybe it's a sign of changing times, but they're still getting media coverage. They just have different approaches. And it's really interesting to me.



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Anything notable,



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yeah. So on the fifth of May 2022, an article was published in The Guardian about the CEO bringing a prosecution against a woman. This is the court case he'd been talking about for months, saying that he couldn't comment on it went on it because it's an honor Going legal matter, and implying that he was suing someone from punks with purpose or some ex staff. And it turns out that that's not the case. This woman he's suing had nothing to do with it as far as I'm aware. And this article makes him look dishonest, you might say, and it's all over Twitter. But if you search Twitter for BrewDog, what came up the CEO has made a surprise announcement evening before the Guardian article, and is giving away a lot of BrewDog shares to staff and BrewDog are launching a profit share scheme. Great. And the day the article dropped. BrewDog is launching a new beer made out of sweets made by Jamie off of Made in Chelsea, great, all of this is hitting the media at the same time as the Guardian article. So if you search for BrewDog, or the CEO, you would see loads of hype about the shares and the profit share scheme. And the Guardian article was somewhat buried. Now I'm not saying the shares and profit share aren't good. They're great, but the timing of the announcement was suspicious. And it feels like they're using this same old tactic to get media attention. But you have to wonder whether they're just trying to get free publicity like before with the tanks and the taxidermy, or whether they're trying to bury bad publicity. Yeah, another thing they do is running things on social media to generate a lot of user engagement through tweets mentioning them, for example. So this flood search results for BrewDog. And it can have a similar effect to an announcement. But the content is generated by users. So they might run a competition, reply to this BrewDog tweet, and follow the CEO on Twitter, and you might win a trip to Vegas, great CEO gets an increase in followers. And nobody sees anything else about BrewDog on Twitter that day, or post a picture of your favorite beer glass. People love engaging with that stuff. And it's a legitimate way to generate social media engagement. I'm not criticizing it as an approach. But when you do at a time, when bad things are being written about you, one has to wonder whether the timing is deliberate. So again, I'm not drawing any conclusions here. But I would encourage people to make up their own minds. Sometimes they don't just flood search results for BrewDog. But they target certain keywords or so it appears some people call this Boris bussing Boris Johnson, the right wing UK Prime Minister was facing a lot of criticism a few years back, including for a live from the Brexit campaign, which was written on the side of a bus and for failures relating to the New London buses. And out of

nowhere came a new story that he likes to paint model buses on old wine boxes, flooding search results for Boris buss. I mean, people even call it Boris busing when they see this kind of thing. And so the interesting thing about Boris busing is it's impossible to prove that that's why Boris suddenly decided to announce that he likes painting model buses. And that's why it's a useful tactic. But I would encourage people to look into things like this and think about who benefits and why now. So imagine someone's bringing out a documentary about Blue Dog, which is expected to be critical of them. As soon as it's announced, people will start talking about it on social media, and anyone searching for BrewDog documentary, we'll see those discussions. If you wanted to suppress people finding this negative coverage, you could do some social washing, or Boris bussing. So you just put out a new story with similar keywords to try and swap the results with your own content and control the narrative. So you have to make that story something which people will want to share. Ideally, something even your critics will want to share. So make it really outlandish, like the CEO is making a documentary about sharks. And there's this really weird video, which seems like it was cobbled together from his own holiday footage with the CEOs face painted like a shark, that would be so bad, everyone would share it. And when you search for BrewDog, documentary, or the CEOs name and documentary, it's all over Twitter. Well, the CEO did that. And I'm not saying it was deliberate social washing Boris bussing because it's impossible to prove. But it did very much coincide with the BBCs announcement of their documentary on Blue Dog. So make your own mind up. And I just like to add, I really want to see this documentary. So the CEOs listening, can we have a release date, please?



19:27

We want the shark doc. You know, I mean, a big there was a big Harar on social media about it. You know, the the people want what they were promised. And I think people love sharks. People love sharks. I mean, that was a really, you know, I mean, is he weaponizing sharks, where we're at. People love sharks aren't going to make a shark document. Anyway, we could go on for hours about what the motivations are. But I think in this discussion, it's very important for me to point out that much Much like you have yourself Chris multiple times that were presenting patterns that are noticeable that you can find online that anyone can find. And we're representing those in this podcast because we find it interesting, we think that there's a substantial amount of online evidence to exist to at least create a question or create awareness around activity like this. And that is also because BrewDog are not the only company to do that. And these mechanisms that companies use to flood social media to do various different things, I don't have a problem with it, like you said it, it really becomes problematic when it becomes a mechanism to drown out the voices of people who are trying to speak up or trying to have a different sort of conversation about the company. So I just want to be really clear about that. Now, I guess, to now that I've made that caveat, Chris, are there other things that you think are notable in this conversation?



21:00

Yeah, another thing which BrewDog do on their corporate account, is making big announcements generating a lot of social media activity, and maybe generating new stories. And again, hard to prove. But it does look like there's a correlation with when something bad has been published about them. And I feel like, it's interesting, because a lot of the announcements are not really that newsworthy, in my view, things like the loss forests, we all

know about that. And the loss forest, which BrewDog had already announced multiple times. And we're expected to start planting trees soon, as soon as they got planning permission. And there was a big announcement, we've got planning permission, as we expect it to. And so there's no change to our plans. And we're still expecting to start planting the forest, when we said we would that was a big announcement. And it feels a bit felt a bit underwhelming to me. And another one was, you know how, during the pandemic, to save the business BrewDog halved the discount for BrewDog investors, and it was only ever a temporary change. So they had it. But they were always going to put it back to 100% BrewDog made a big announcement to say, Guess what the temporary change that we made to your investor discount was temporary, we're returning it back to what it was, before we have it. It just seems like this isn't news. This is like announcing, you know, breaking news. Today, the 25th of December is Christmas Day, as planned, and as trailed for the whole year. And it just seems like when something like this, that's really not news comes up. And there are so many examples. It just seems like it could be timed to try and social wash to try and flip the narrative. Again, hard to prove. But you know,

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well, it's not out of the realm of belief, because companies do do it and admit to doing it. I mean, there are other companies that provide those services. So I mean, it's a thing, I guess the main thing that you're pointing out here is the type of story versus the timing of the story, right? That's kind of the thing that we can take away and say, maybe that's something

 23:07

Yeah. And it can be either or, I mean, these ones, where they're announcing a scheduled return to the investor discount just seem like they've been pulled out of thin air, the one about the profit share, and the CEO donating a lot of shares to staff. I mean, that is a big deal. And it rightly generated a lot of publicity. But I do wonder about the timing of it. It was announced at very short notice, I believe. So while it is a big gesture, maybe it had been planned for a while I do wonder if it was dropped at a particular time for a particular reason.

 23:44

The proof is in the pudding, I guess because that article did generate a lot of press coverage. And there was a lot of flooding and social media information flowing back and forth over these two different things. So to some extent, it was effective, regardless of whether it was a conscious decision by the company or not

 24:03

something interesting to me as well from a technological perspective is when they're doing a similar tactic to the social media stuff through newspaper websites. So sometimes they do something fairly unremarkable and still generate a lot of press coverage. So recently, I think punk IPA turned 17 No, 15 years old, and BrewDog grew the stronger version to celebrate. Nothing wrong with that. But I noticed lots of tweets, reading BrewDog to sell stronger punk IPA



beer to celebrate its 15th anniversary how to buy and there was an image of punk IPA always the same image. That tweet was always that exact text. And there was a link to an article with the same title is a tweet text each time from different accounts, all local newspapers like the Basingstoke Gazette, and the Hampshire Chronicle, exact same tweet otherwise. Anyway, I looked on Google News and I saw 61 different local newspapers had published the same story, almost all of them at the exact same time. So when you look in the article, to be fair, it's made clear that BrewDog are paying them by our affiliate links. And if you look into the publications, they're all owned by the same news company. So BrewDog presumably strike a deal with this company, and the company pushes it out to all their local news papers, and the people of Basingstoke, find out that you can, as a resident of Basingstoke obtain BrewDog beers from brew dogs website. And so to the people of Hampshire, and so on, I think this is a lot less creative than some of their previous marketing stunt. I don't agree with all of their stunts. But undeniably, they used to do something genuinely newsworthy. And the journalists lapped it up. This, on the other hand, is BrewDog, making a deal with a news company to pump out the same article in 61 places and it's money. It's not as creative. And there are some parallels with another weird thing I noticed involving 50 Too much shady looking news sites than the Basingstoke Gazette, which are all seemingly connected. Their ownership is obscured by a company in Reykjavik. And it involves a timed article about you.



26:15

I do remember this, and we spoke about it earlier in the podcast. Now, what did you find?



26:21

So back in April, there was this article in the Times where daddy executive officer from BrewDog lashed out at you for giving him an estimate of external fees for a reconciliation program after he asked you for an estimate of external fees for a reconciliation program. Scandalous stuff, this article was entitled BrewDog in route with HR advisor. So I was reading about BrewDog on Twitter, and I noticed there were a lot of results for this article, more than I would expect for something in the times. Some of the links had the same headline, but we're on different sites, just like the advertorials in the Basingstoke Gazette. So I googled it. And I saw there were loads of websites with an identical version, same headline, same articles, same image, I did some searching and I found over 80 different news websites publishing this exact article. Now this is pretty weird. It looks like most of these websites don't write their own articles. They just republish stuff from elsewhere. It doesn't obviously mention that BrewDog are paying them to publish it, unlike the Basingstoke because it but it's really interesting. So I got the idea that at least some of them might be part of an automated news farm where one article is published on dozens of websites with very little human involvement, a shady version, if you like of the local news sites, but why would they do this? Well, a news farm could be there simply to attract clicks by using others content for whatever reason, advertising, selling data, malware, whatever. Or it could be there to falsely amplify certain stories to make it look like they're more significant than they are. What if you wanted to inflate a news story, which had only been published in one or two places to make it look like everyone is talking about it, you could pay a shady company to publish it on loads of different websites, all seemingly independent, to manipulate the search results. Such A Deal would not leave any evidence. So of course, I'm not saying and I can't say whether this is what happened. I'm just speculating.

But even if these sites have no connection to anyone involved here, their effect can't be denied. They plastered Google and social media with this article, which spoke negatively about you.



28:25

And again, to reiterate, were taking Chris's analysis of the data that he has found for what it is, which is it exists, this thing happened. This is a little bit weird. Were just pointing it up. Chris, were you able to find anything further out from a technological perspective or from any other perspective about what was going on?



28:48

So I'd found over 80 different sites hosting this article. And I had a theory that there was some sort of automation involved. So I dug a bit deeper and looked at the site. And I found that many of them run on WordPress, nothing unusual. It's a popular platform. So I looked at the code. And I found a lot of similarities, which made it look like many of them had been made by the same person. One simple example is that about us page for many of these sites, 52 of them, in fact, they had the exact same text on their About Us page word for word the same, but with the name of the site changed in each case. So I figured these sites are all run by one company, but they're trying to look like they're not. They have names like Elon is vision, guns and money and secrets of Rich Dad's all have a financial theme. But they have different logos. And there's no information about who owns them. So I checked the IP addresses where the website name redirects to on the internet, and 34 of them have the same IP address. I checked the domain registration details, and all of them have used the same company in Iceland to obscure their ownership. I also noticed that 29 of them were registered on the same day 13th of February 2020. What are the chances that these websites are unrelated pretty low. I think my theory is that someone runs these websites as a news farm, which republish his news, either to get clicks to amplify news, or both. Now, again, I'm not pointing the finger at anyone, but it's pretty interesting. And I'd love to know the truth.



30:16

Chris, are you confirming here for me that I've been published on Elans vision and secrets of Rich Dad's?



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That's correct. Wow.



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Secrets of Rich Dad's. I mean, it's very specific demographic that they seem to be going for here. And it? Obviously there's two scenarios, wherein if it was that these websites were doing this as part of providing a service, right, so there's an exchange of money, does it come from

the publication? Does it come from the company? Those things, you know, like you said, we're just never going to know, probably more likely than not in this case, it could be the publication. I guess the question is why?

 31:03

Yeah, I wondered why they'd all chosen this story to publish. So do these sites search for certain keywords maybe to do with finance, or Rich Dad's maybe. So I checked some finance and investing stories in the Times as to whether they were also republished and came up with nothing. Maybe they just republish anything mentioning BrewDog, they're a popular brand, they're always in the news, they get a lot of attention online. So if you're just going for clickbait, it might be a good strategy. And clearly, they're able to republish stories from the times because they republish the one criticizing you. So I went through time stories about BrewDog. Over the last year or so I look for stories, which were negative about BrewDog. In some way, there are many and checked for copy paste versions on Google, like with the article about you. So remember, the article which criticizes you had search results on 82 sites, at least 52 of which seem to be operated by one company. Well, I looked at 17 other times articles, which were critical of BrewDog. Guess how many of them were mirrored all over the internet? The top hit was one article had three results, including the times. So the times and two other news outlets, three of the articles had two results. So the times and one other place, and the other 13 stories had only one result in the Times article not mirrored anywhere else. So why is it that the article which criticize you has so many more results, over 80 results than these 17 other articles, which criticize BrewDog? Which mostly have one result? I can't say, but it's very interesting.

 32:36

My question from what you've just shared, would be, and I'm a Luddite, so I don't really know. But it could it be something to do with keywords something in the articles, which makes it worse indicating to a particular audience for a certain reason?

 32:53

Absolutely, it could. And that's what I tried to get to the bottom of by looking for keywords such as BrewDog, looking for articles on the same publication The Times and looking for tags or categories, such as finance or investment articles published on the times now, it's impossible to know what keywords this news farm was looking for if it was looking for keywords, so it's hard to prove why it published it. All we know is the story criticizing you had over 80 search results on seemingly different news publications. And the other articles on the Times about BrewDog had mostly one, sometimes two, in one, case three, so we can't really know what keywords they're targeting. But it would be interesting to see if anyone can come up with any examples of other articles about BrewDog, which are syndicated as much as the one about you. Why is

 33:47

their story about them? Breaching Charlotte Cook's anonymity, there were dozens of articles regarding the 100 000 that BrewDog had raised with their beer for the Ukraine

regarding the 100,000 that BrewDog had raised with their beer for the Ukraine.

 33:57

Yeah, that's I've forgotten about that. But that is another one. That was

 34:01

late May, I believe.

 34:04

But that one, I mean, that was positive about BrewDog, wasn't it? So I feel like that. I feel like that fits into one of the previous things I've described, which is, you know, legitimate marketing tactics. Do something newsworthy, like brewing a Ukraine beer, and people will report on it, or possibly report on it yourself, or possibly incentivize sites to report on it? I'd be really interesting to see an article which was negative about BrewDog, or their CEO, which has been plastered all over the internet as much as the article about Kate, or as much as articles about BrewDog releasing a new beer.

 34:46

I guess this leads me to really the speculation and conjecture part of the conversation because I have a theory out well, no, I don't have a theory. I have a hypothesis. And this goes back to something that I would ask both of you to speak on, because I actually didn't get that involved. But what I do know is Daddy executive officer, the chairman of the board used to be on the board for Sky News. We know that which means that there's a connection to Murdoch, what we also know is that the majority of what we also know is the majority of positive articles and news media that has gone out over about BrewDog over the last six to seven months, has come from Murdoch owned publications. Now, the woke warrior thing, right, that was really interesting to me. And that was the one thing that I just did a quick, you know, 10 to 15, Google Search combinations just to see what was coming up. The one thing that I found interesting from that was the in 2018, Rupert Murdoch gave a speech, foreboding foreshadowing the coming tide of work culture that prompted me to look into, okay, so this is something that this individual has said, we understand from other networks that this individual does try and have some influence over the way stories are reported. And what I found really interesting was that when I went onto a bunch of different Murdoch owned publications, was that they had tags and story categories for work culture. And I couldn't find that on other publications or new sites.

 36:34

I did my fair share of looking into daddy executive when he sort of started making his appearance. Back in March, I believe, what I found to be interesting, was looking through one of his published books, which was called on leadership, that's where he interviewed about 60

different business professionals, one of them being Rupert Murdoch. So it does seem that they have some sort of business relationship, at the very least, and a mutual respect for each other. But



37:08

Rupert Murdoch would never try and help out a pal in business when he



37:12

I don't think so. Why would he do that?



37:14

Why would he do that, not repeat it, not the original daddy executive.



37:19

One thing that is interesting to me in this area is I've noticed a few articles, which criticize BrewDog CEO have been deleted from the internet, one of them is back to them, still gone. And there have been a lot of articles on the CEO of BrewDog in the times, and none of them have been deleted. Now, many of them are, to an extent critical of him. But I found it interesting that the the article by Josh Clancy was the first of a kind, I think, kind of tattle interview with a CEO who notoriously doesn't do that kind of thing. And it's interesting that that was published in The Times,



38:19

I noticed that you had a Twitter thread about articles that were taken down by publications that had written I guess, critical, or questioning articles about BrewDog, or the CEO. Could you elaborate a little on that? Yeah.



38:34

So in following the BrewDog developments on social media, I noticed when new articles are published, and I tend to read them as soon as I see them. So there was this article published in May in good beer hunting, which was critical of the CEO, it was taken offline within hours of being published. And interestingly, the article rather than giving an error page, they've replaced it with a little note saying that they'd been threatened by lawyers representing the CEO, and that they were taking legal advice in order to get it back online. And I think it took a few weeks, but by the end of the month, they'd republished it. So I find that interesting. Clearly, they felt safe to republish it. But there are other articles which have been taken offline and do have to wonder many publications, either might not have access to specialist lawyers to get advice on whether their article can be published, or they just might not care that much. So

good beer hunting is a beer publication. And I think they cared enough to hire some extra lawyers to check this article over. And to get confirmation that yes, you can publish this. It's not contempt of court. But I noticed a couple of other articles which had been taken offline and remain offline. So there's one in the drinks business, which was from the sixth of July about BrewDog. Boss slammed for Saying unconfirmed autism diagnosis may be behind bullying. And that was offline within hours, they put a link to it in my tweet thread, you can see for yourself that the page no longer exists. Another one. The next day, I think, in the metro reporting on the same story, it was gone within hours, and no notice. Just gone. All of these articles make the CEO look bad. Now, I'm not saying that the CEOs lawyers threaten the metro or the drinks business. I'm not saying they didn't, I can't know that. But good beer hunting confirmed on their own website. The CEOs, lawyers did threaten them. And they were ultimately unsuccessful because the articles back online. So it's great that good beer hunting had the resources and motivation to fight lawyers with lawyers. But what about publications who don't have the resources or don't particularly have the motivation?



40:57

Speaking of deletion, funny, while you've been producing this podcast, you came across something very interesting recently in relation to deletion? Can you tell us about that?



41:08

So I've been tracing, quote, gate, a bit for this podcast, and I had been looking for the original wording of the press release. And when looking back at the archives, I haven't been able to find it.



41:22

Interesting. So basically, long story short, you go to look for a press release that was on initially on the BrewDog site. And now it's just not there. And then seemingly, the archive links that you have tried to access have also been updated to reflect the missing or omitted words.



41:42

Yeah, and I guess just so we all can be clear on it. So this implies that the quote was born out of the review done by third party consultancy wiser,



41:53

Chris, any insights on this? Yeah.



41:58

I've got a copy of the original press release. But I do find it interesting that BrewDog, unlike the

Metro publishing a story, which was critical of their CEO, and maybe they sent a legal threat to get the metro to unpublish that another story when they publish something on their own website. And it's funny points out, decided to amend it at some stage to change the wording. And then more recently, as funny noticed, decided to delete it entirely. What does it say about your press releases that you're deleting them yourself? Well, that's very interesting, because I found an archived version of it, which you can still view now on a site called the Internet Archive. So if you go to [web.archive.org](http://web.archive.org), you can search for any link on the internet. And there may or may not be an archived copy of it there. But the nice thing you can do on this site is you can view copies from different dates and different times. So I looked up the BBC complaint of common complaint, press release, and you can still see it, it is archived on the Internet Archive, and you can actually compare the changes. So the first version they published, had a paragraph which reads an independent report by workplace consultancy, concluded last year that BrewDog was the target of the most extreme case, we've seen of a small group of former employees on a mission to cause damage to a brand Rudock has some 5000 ex employees and current staff of 2400, which is set to grow by up to an additional 800 employees by the end of 2022. Following a string of new bar and hotel openings. That whole paragraph I've just read out was subsequently deleted from their own press release. The press release seems to have a typo or a mis edit in it because it says and I'll quote it verbatim, an independent report by workplace consultancy concluded last year that BrewDog was, and so on. So it seems like it's missing the name of the consultancy, which I think I've seen the wording by workplace consultancy, and then no name. I think I've seen that in an article as well.



44:26

So were there any other specific changes in the archived version that you have access to Chris?



44:33

No, it was just that paragraph was removed. And then the following paragraph, had the word also in it which was removed, just to preserve the flow of the press release, as if it had never had that paragraph with the quote, great quote in it. And then as funny says, since then, it's deleted. So you can visit it on BrewDog site, and it says Page not found.



44:57

So we've covered a lot of ground when it comes to deletion. And I kind of think we're filtering down to a landing point, which is all of these things, if you go from the social washing on social media, the article, which was published about me that, you know, decades of marketing stunts, various things like that. And then we get into the territory of critical articles being deleted, but also problematic pieces that the company is clearly aware of problematic being taken down. And, as we've said many times, a lot of this is speculation. But I think, regardless of whether this is all intentional, and I guess that some implication of that, at least for my side, is that it is effective to a certain degree in terms of this, quote, unquote, war that BrewDog seems to think that they're fighting against people who are speaking up against them against criticism against any kind of dissent. One thing I wanted to actually discuss regarding that very quickly, if you

could just very quickly explain to us funny, what has happened on the BrewDog forum in the last month in relation to this topic as well. No, in relation to the censorship on the forum, can you just be like, Can you just be like, I've noticed that they've been censoring the forum.

 46:26

So on the topic of dissent, that is a word frequently used within the shareholders forum, often when one of these controversies sort of arise like the quote, like the breach and the Wiser review. So within the forum, I've observed the moderators borderline censoring shareholders, and they would do it in multiple ways. I mean, posts will get flagged and later removed. very politely phrased questions will be accused of being spam. Because there may be repetitive but the issue would usually be that questions haven't actually been answered. And then Worst of all, I've seen shareholders be banned from the forum for up to a year, maybe even more.

 47:10

I think, again, this is just another example, that of a sanitization campaign, we can't prove the ability to control the narrative as much as possible, or at least interject your agenda further into that narrative. Chris, do you have any insights or thoughts on these sorts of activities in general, or any final takeaways from what we've discussed today?

 47:35

Yeah, what I would say is, I've never seen another beer company engage in the kind of tactics to any level, I'd love to see examples, because it really does fascinate me, I have seen right wing political parties, in government engage in these tactics. But I've never seen a beer company do it. And that's what is really interesting, together with, you know, my history with BrewDog, the fact that they're a familiar brand to me, so whatever they're doing good or bad, I'm kind of interested in it. And I'm kind of hoping that things will go the right way eventually. But I'd love to see an example of a beer company engaging in these sorts of tactics or seeming to be engaging in these sorts of tactics. Again, unprovable?

 48:24

I agree. And, again, I think you raise a really relevant point, which is that we don't see this in the beer industry as much, but where we do see it is in corporate culture, we do see it in politics, and we do see it in conversations where there is a division to be made, there is an opportunity for someone to be the winner and for someone to be the loser. And that I think is the most relevant takeaway because you can kind of apply almost an algebra to these situations if you use the example of okay a big companies doing it a right wing companies doing it. But maybe the reason politically, or for image reasons, is the same spot on. Murdoch bought farms, forests busing, who knew the twists and turns just can't get enough. We are going to conclude this episode here. And the reason why is because we keep talking about the media. And evidently, the Meteor is kind of a big part of the super punk corporate meltdown machine. Those episodes should already be with you. So do enjoy the next installment of super punk corporate meltdown. Going on So,



 1:59:13

what also happened after that suddenly was on, I believe, April 6, Weiser came out with a statement and they actually claimed one version of the quote in what we now call it quote gate. What did you think about that, Charlotte?

 1:59:29

I was in a supermarket in Estonia when I read that, and I was just an absolute and utter disbelief that anybody could ever be that unprofessional was my first thought. Just looking at it. You said something that didn't meet your professional standards, and it wasn't meant to be in public. If it doesn't meet your professional standards. Why did you say it in the first place, doesn't meet your professional standards, keep your track shot. That's how most people operate. And I also looked at it and I felt like it was wiser taking the blame for something that shouldn't have ever been out in the public. Even if it was, you know, something that why is it said to BrewDog on the back of it, even if this was something that was I said to BrewDog. And it was just an offhand comment, it was run with that was used, it was weaponized. It was used to target people. And the explanation that Weiser gave it was poor, none of it made any sense. Nobody that I know who operates in any professional capacity would ever see that as an explanation or an apology. And it just felt like something hastily. Give them something shut them up. It's done. But all it did was create more questions.

 2:00:52

What just for fun? I mean, what do you think happened with that, quote?

 2:00:56

If I was to say a hypothetical situation, I would say that either somebody at wiser overstepped their professional boundaries spectacularly, and did something that they should never have done as a professional and something we should never have done as a human being. And the CEO ran with it, or the CEO just made it up. Hypothetically speaking, of course, course, rigidly,

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allegedly, maybe, maybe

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possibly, we're not sure.

 2:01:27

I'm not sure about any CEOs, or companies or directors who promise anonymity. But if I was to create one in my mind palace, that would be my explanation.

 2:01:41


At one point, Charlotte, you had an experience with a journalist. And technically it was punks with purpose, having an experience with a journalist because all of this was being filtered as a collective response. And you are aware of the communications between the group and the journalist. Initially, everything started off fine. You were approached, but then there were some red flags. Can you elaborate on the interactions a collective had with this journalist? Yeah,

 2:02:09


so this journalist approached punks with purpose via the Twitter platform for a piece that they were writing for a large UK Sunday supplement in a newspaper. They just asked us some questions. In general, there was nothing particularly accurate theory or anything, no response to any questions that have been made. But then a few days later, we got an email that came through asking for some clarification about punks with purpose for co founder, Charlotte cook. And again, just to clarify, I am not a founder of punks with purpose, no matter what you may have heard, and so that was my first indication that Alright, this is how this is gonna go strap in boys, it's gonna be a wild ride. So answered the questions made it clear that I was not a founder of punks with purpose. And then I think the next day, another email came through, and I was actually ill in Spain with norovirus. So feeling not particularly cheerful, or particularly interested in being nice to anybody. And we got an email through that asked a question stating that the journalist had seen an email that was sent by a former member of punks with purpose to the CEO, allegedly extorting them ask him for blackmail. I have never seen any copy of this document. I don't even know if this document exists. I've got no proof that it was real, I've got no proof it was sent, I've got no proof of who sent it. So I was asked to comment on it, despite the fact that never seen the document, don't even know if it's real, and had nothing to do with the conversation between that individual and the CEO whatsoever. So the only thing that I could do to respond is to say, These things are not connected. This is a false narrative. This has nothing to do with punks with purpose. This has nothing to do with our mission. This has nothing to do with anything that anybody else is doing out there in the world to try and put the situation right. And I find it pretty bizarre to be asked to comment on something that I've never seen proof of even existing. I just supposed to take their word for it. I don't think that's how journalism works.

 2:04:28

Yeah. And I think that it's also notable that this information was clearly so clearly supplied by the other source in the story, which is the other side, obviously. And it felt as though you know, did you respond strongly to this journalist in terms of making it clear, where punks was purpose stood in regards to this allegation?

 2:05:00

as strongly as I could, nobody amongst the purpose had any prior knowledge of any communication between this individual and the CEO, had no knowledge of any accusations of blackmail. It was the first thing that we heard. And the first thing that we heard was an email from a journalist who's seen, allegedly, the proof. We've never seen it. We've never been involved with it. And we would utterly condemn it as well, if it was true. And yeah, I was just very taken aback that I was being asked to comment on something that didn't involve me, and that I couldn't see any evidence of being true.

 2:05:40

When the article was finally published, did you feel that the rebuttal that you had provided to this allegation was represented in the reporting, or that it said was

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a representative from Ponsor purpose claims to have no knowledge of this interaction? Which I guess, you know, that's a that's a handy short way of presenting it. But, again, I was never presented with any proof that this happened. And yeah,

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and April, Weiser published the statement, take responsibility for one version of the quote ticularly, Sunday Times publishes an exclusive interview with blue.co. And which invites further context as accusations over the previous month,

 2:06:27

he's tested. Yeah, has anybody got any proof that this was actually sent by the person it's alleged to have been sent by? I think that sounds like a slightly shaky ground to stand on.

 2:06:42

Yeah, and I think it was, at a time when so many former workers were being persecuted as being part of this criminal conspiracy. That if that was this clear allegation of criminal activity, and then there was also evidence provided by punks was purpose that very, very clearly shows what this individuals involvement in the organization was, which was a matter of days, in the summer of last year. It just feels as though that criminal element could be could have been addressed. You know, because it was a core part of the accusations that the CEO had come to the article with,

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it most certainly could have been addressed. And it was basically within the same breath, that accusations of criminality were made. And accusations of court case. Again, I have not been contacted by police or lawyers in relation to this or any other matters. And it just felt like true

contacted by police or lawyers in relation to this or any other matters. And it just felt like two disconnected things were being put together to convey a false narrative. And I thought that that was unacceptable.

 2:07:53

Yeah. And funny, you also took issue with this article when it was eventually reported. Can you describe the interaction that you had?

 2:08:03

Yeah, so I was also someone who was interviewed by this journalist, my quotes did not appear in the article, they said that they felt it echoed the responses from the other people they had spoken to. So that was completely fine. I didn't feel like I needed to lend my voice. As my perspective wasn't what was important. I did however, take issue with a number of things in the article, one of them being that a person's workplace was mentioned my name, and I thought this was a gross violation of this person's privacy. I think anyone involved in this debate has made a huge effort to compartmentalize their activism or advocacy with their workplace. And what this article was doing was definitely putting them at risk to harassment, it was compromising their right to retain employment. And we I would say, this is like the the only time I've really interfered and had anything negative to say to a journalist after publishing, and I mean, wait, because what did I say last time? We talked about we talked about also how like James didn't like it.

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Yeah, the journalists also the journalists responded to me, and he let me know that both myself and this person that I was advocating for and as well the CEO of BrewDog apparently don't understand how journalism works. And, to that I say, I completely disagree. And I just don't understand how their journalism works, because I found it to be a common courtesy from other journalists that I had spoken with. When I asked for my privacy to be respected, and for my workplace not to be mentioned, they were happy to oblige. So this oversight is when the CEO is discussing some ongoing legal cases that they have going on. And this is where I found it to be quite forthcoming. They were pursuing someone who they had exchange money with and who the CEO felt he had been defrauded by. And what it seemed like was that the CEO had paid someone to get in touch with anyone he believed to be part of this criminal conspiracy, so to speak. And what I then found interesting was that it then went on to say that Charlotte had been in contact with this person. And it was twisted in a way where it seemed as though she should have felt guilty or that this was a fact that in some way incriminated Charlotte or punks with purpose by extension. And I thought that would be quite odd. Because right above that it had been a minute that the CEO himself wanted this person to instigate contact with people.

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And I would have very happily put the journalist straight had been made aware of the allegation that a member of punks has purpose had communication with the individual who is subject to legal action. That was a very limited interaction. At no point. Did anybody from punks of

purpose, collude in any criminal activity, or condone it or say that we want it to be part of it? And the journalist just took the fact that the CEO said, I've seen communication between this individual involved in legal cases and punks with purpose, and didn't even question what that communication said that communication could have been this individual contacting somebody with punks with purpose, and then saying, never contact me again. And I just found that to be a little bit wanting, allowing the CEO to paint a narrative that was untrue, and not questioning it.

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Having spoken to this person, this journalist myself, it was quite interesting. And I remember expressing my discomfort with my exchange with them, only because they weren't very forthcoming with any information that they might already have. And they asked, very, kind of specific, but very broad questions definitely asked me an open ended. Do you think there's a criminal conspiracy?

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And I think a lot of the issue that comes with this is that actually journalists don't fully know the situation. And they don't know the questions to ask to get the full explanation of what's been going on for well over a year and a half at this point nearly, and people are very happy to let them know, but they just go in there with snippets. And this is such a difficult, complex situation, that only going with snippets means that you're never going to get to the bottom of what's actually happening. You're not doing justice to people on either side. And you can't just write an article when you don't know who all the key players are, what's going on the web of complexity that's going on behind the scenes, and then present it for public consumption. I don't think that's right.

 2:13:56

Recently, the CEO of the company went on a popular podcast to be vulnerable, allegedly, and discuss the alleged truth about their management style, which was raised in the article, and then mistakes which allegedly did not happen because it's actually a criminal conspiracy and personal vendetta against him. But anyway, he went on this podcast, very popular one to talk about this. Charlotte, you have since engaged with the publisher of this podcast, regarding a right to replay Can you break this down for us?

 2:14:27

Absolutely. So I was mentioned not by name on the podcast, but in reference to a story that I told on the BBC podcast. I asked for a right of reply, which is my legal right. And I wanted to put the story straight because in this, it's gotten where am I going? My brain is starting to slow he says like, he he, again tries to link the court cases right? It pretty much. All right. In this podcast, the CEO discusses both punks with purpose and the court cases that are currently going through and again, fails to clarify that neither punks with purpose nor any former worker that we know of, is involved in any of these cases. And I thought that this was a bit of a lapse in judgment of the producer of the podcast, because this is a perfect opportunity for everyone to

get their story straight. For everyone to know that what happened in America is different to what happened in the UK, what happened with people in private life is different to what happened in the workspace. And I asked for a right to reply, I emailed the publisher, the producer, the PR, and the presenter. And apart from a very brief acknowledgement of the receipt of my request, I've heard nothing. And to me, this just feels like children playing a journalism, you don't get to have somebody on to make accusations to have the reputation that the CEO has of making sweeping statements, and then not offer anybody else the opportunity to put their side of the story forward. It's a basic tenant of responsible journalism, that you give somebody the right to reply. And I know for a fact that in this podcast, anybody who's mentioned will be given the opportunity to give a right of reply, because that's fair. That's how it works. And this podcast hasn't done it. And this podcast is big, lots of people read it. This podcast is big, lots of people listen to it. And a lot of people who don't have any understanding of the complexities again, of the situation, we'll hear and only hear one side. And I think that's fundamentally, deeply unfair. And I don't think that people who can't respect the basic principles of responsible journalism should be putting media out there.



2:17:04

I think this, again, just drives home the fact that the media can be used as an apparatus for an individual or company in turmoil to kind of launch these rehabilitative campaigns where, as you know, we hear one side of the story, and particularly what's notable about this is that all of this is still ongoing. You have the CEO whenever outside us for clarity, saying, well, we can't clarify anything about ongoing court cases. Okay. But then that same individual representing that same company will go on to a massive broadcast and mass communicate, a very carefully crafted, I guess, collage of the truth. And these media institutions, essentially, if they're not doing the journalism, they are a megaphone, right? If you don't do the journalism to say, Well, is it true? Or what is the truth of that? How should we discuss that? Should someone else be contacted to verify that if you don't do that, you're just a microphone for misinformation? It's reprehensible.



2:18:20

Absolutely. I also think it's really notable that the interviewer himself states that they listen to the entire BBC podcast, and yet what was cherry picked to address was still historical issues, when so much about the last few months has been about what's going on now. And how are people being retaliated against now in present day, since coming out with all these allegations, and a massive oversight in the interview is not addressing the things that are going on after the airing of the documentary.



2:18:54

I completely agree. It's just giving an abrasive leader an opportunity to drive home their agenda, and to continue to embrace that power dynamic, of having access to media who's willing to not check their allegations and just let it happen and not have their finger on the pulse enough to be able to say, actually, the historical stuff is bad. But what is happening today is maybe even worse, because it's part cover up part Shakedown and part you know, bulldoze until our agenda is the only thing that exists.



2:19:40

Absolutely. And the fact that one of the explanations for why this whole situation has occurred, was because people in the UK are jealous. I can't believe anyone even published that. Apparently in America. They celebrate success but in the UK, we just want to batter everybody down. Why didn't the present And to ask the CEO, why in the BBC documentary, so many of the allegations and more modern allegations, and some of the historical UK allegations came from America, or those people not supposed to be the ones cheering for him. It was just, again, a megaphone. And when the people who reasonably asked for their right to reply are ignored, that's not media, that's a megaphone.



2:20:27

What are your intentions around your right to reply in regards to this podcast?



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To say what actually happened to say that nobody is involved in the criminal cases or the civil cases to say that, I don't feel that I've been apologized to, to say the punks of purpose aren't jealous, we, you know, I do not have any modicum of jealousy towards the CEO, that is not a life that I would like to have, and I'm very happy with my life I've worked hard towards and achieved a lot in Is he really diminishing my achievement, so much to say that I'm simply jealous, I don't think that's a particularly mature response or thought process. And just make sure that other people can put their side stock forward. We always wanted to represent both sides, and give people the opportunity to, but that has to work both ways. We don't have the platform, we don't have the media access, we don't have the advisors, we don't have the people who can create an image for us that then we just have to spout off the sound bites, we just want to be able to say the truth.



2:21:39

Yeah. And speaking of one other little nugget, that I think, is a little bit of a microcosm of everything that you've just alluded to, and discuss there, Charlotte. And that is, you know, you talk about this like spouting off sort of stuff. But one thing that came up in this podcast that I think might be worthwhile mentioning, and I can do it because I'm an autistic person. But in addition to the CEO, having blamed their bad management style on three things, so far, being on a fishing boat, having a bad relationship with their mother, and also experiencing acne, as a teen even went on this podcast, to state that it could be something to do with like autism, I



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don't think that you can use a disability to explain bad behavior. It's insulting to people with disabilities. And it diminishes what people have done to other people. Again, it's just a I'm sorry, but sorry, you feel that way. But it's a big old bot. And the response whenever anyone has actually criticized us in the media is to send threatening letters and have the articles taken

down. And that doesn't help to open up the conversation around disability and difficulty. That just proves again, that the narrative wants to be controlled by one side and one side only. And that's unacceptable.



2:23:11

Yeah, that was really notable that those articles, which came from individuals who had heard this comment on the podcast, and some of them were autistic, and some of them had connections with autistic people. And they went on to write about their feelings around this because what I think, as an autistic person, the one thing I'll say, is that these workers that came forward to speak up about this person did not experience his autism. They didn't experience that they experienced, perhaps potentially someone with yet to be diagnosed autism behaving badly. There's a very clear distinction there. So it was very notable that these articles were taken down, written by people who are on the spectrum or who have close connections with people on the spectrum. Because the CEO wanted to be able to use that as a Get Out of Jail Free card. How disgusting.



2:24:13

Absolutely. And I think it's also odd, because it wasn't, it's not a fact that's been established yet. It's still something the CEO is waiting to hear back about. And so on that note, I'm not optimistic about it. But I would hope that we then get updated, because I don't think it's fair to throw that out before. It's something that's even confirmed, let alone at all.



2:24:38

There's also a lot of people on the spectrum who don't have access to the resources to be diagnosed and it's quite insulting to sort of immediately go out and be like, Oh, well, like I'm working on this way to get out of the situation that I'm in when for other people. It's a very difficult and real experience.



2:24:55

I agree. And I also find it really very jarring the see Do ask for these articles to be taken down saying that they misrepresented what he'd actually said about autism. If the response and the scrutiny that you receive after you talk about something isn't what you want, maybe you just don't talk about it in the first place. Maybe you just should have kept them about the autism if you didn't want people to then comment on it, because it's such a ridiculous thing to say such a preposterous way to try and explain your behavior, and so insulting to millions of people, that maybe you should just reflect a little bit and stay quiet.



2:25:33

I'd also love to recommend to the CEO that they brush up a little bit about the appropriate language to use when discussing these sort of things, because it was only demonstrative that even though this might be something he will now need to figure out for himself, he is still



even though this might be something he will now need to figure out for himself, he is still ignorant to the subject