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Civil War At Gawker Media: Nick Denton Has 'No Chance' Of Winning Back Trust

By Brendan James (/reporters/brendan-james)

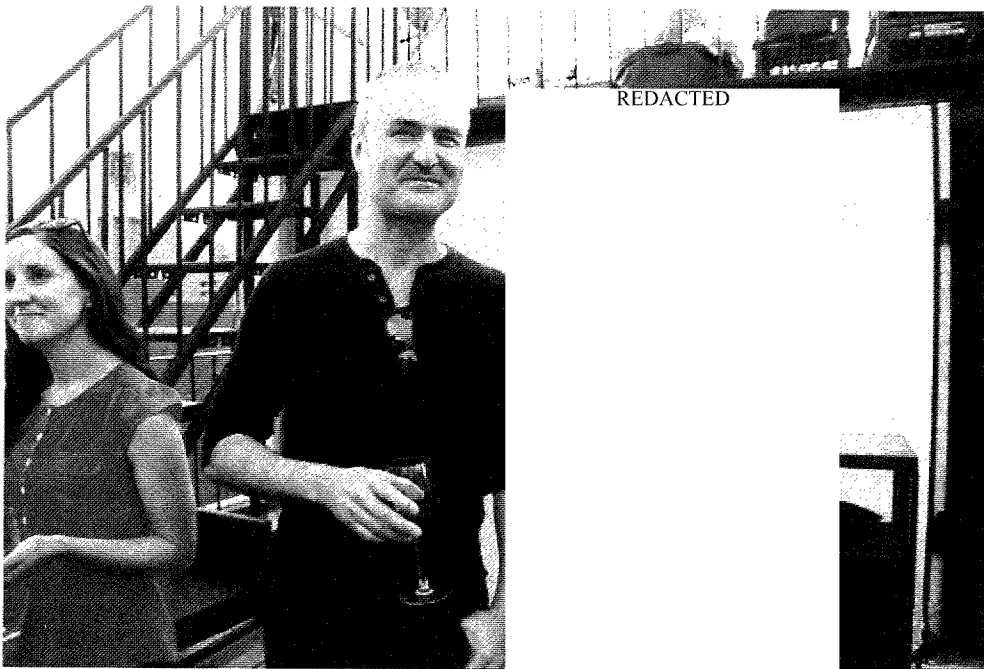
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on July 20 2015 5:26 PM EDT

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Nick Denton (center) the founder of Gawker Media, wants to change the tone of the flagship site's content. Financial Times

Gawker founder and CEO Nick Denton told International Business Times on Monday that the decision to take down a widely-criticized post on Friday was “extraordinary” and readers should not view the move as anything other than a last resort.

“The piece was extraordinary. I don't think one should read in too much of a precedent,” Denton told IBT in an email.

The piece, published Thursday, was an anonymously-sourced report (<http://www.ibtimes.com/gawker-gay-outing-controversy-raises-legal-questions-hulk-hogan-sex-tape-trial-2014134>) alleging that the CFO of ^{REDACTED} had unsuccessfully solicited a gay escort. On Friday, after massive blowback over the article from readers, fellow journalists, and the company's business side, Gawker's management partnership voted 4-2 to take the post down, with only Executive Editor Tommy Craggs and President Heather Dietrick dissenting.

But anyone who read Gawker would know that the story wouldn't end there. The site has a long history of taking its feuds public, comments sections and all.

Shortly after the post went down, Gawker staff released a statement condemning the removal as a breach of the firewall between editorial and business. By Monday, Craggs and Editor-in-Chief Max Read had resigned (<http://www.ibtimes.com/top-gawker-editors-max-read-tommy-craggs-bolt-after-takedown-disputed-article-2016221#.VaOrWHg-ULE.twitter>).

"It was, by definition, setting a precedent," Gawker editor Alex Pareene told IBT.

At a meeting held Monday, staffers wailed on Denton for taking down the article. Alongside several other writers, Pareene himself told Denton that "journalists don't disappear things when they make mistakes."

One Jezebel staffer told IBT that Denton "kept losing his train of thought in the meeting, rambling incoherently."

Several Gawker staffers said Denton was "rewriting history" in justifying the vote to remove the post.

"People immediately started questioning why ad sales was exerting editorial control," one writer said. "So Nick decided the vote was actually just a fun approval vote and that he was the sole decider."

"Why take the vote if Nick was acting unilaterally?" the writer said, calling the explanation "ridiculous."

The complaints echoed Read's and Cragg's letters of resignation (<http://gawker.com/tommy-craggs-and-max-read-are-resigning-from-gawker-1719002144>), which on Monday aimed particular vitriol at President of Advertising Andrew Gorenstein.

Pareene came away thinking the same thing.

"He wanted to shield himself from responsibility but also didn't want people blaming Gorenstein," he said.

As for how to prevent anything like this from happening again, Pareene says all hope lies in Gawker's recently stamped union cards, which the editorial side won in another very public showdown back in June.

"Nick has no chance of winning back the trust of senior editorial staff," he told IBT. "Best case is the union wins the right to exempt editorial decisions (not hiring and firing but publication and unpublication) from being voted on by business and tech."

Amid the showdown between Denton and his staff, Read's deputy Leah Beckmann has taken over the duties of editor-in-chief. When asked about how Gawker will permanently fill the positions left behind by Read and Craggs, Denton demurred.

"We'll talk about that tomorrow," he said. "First we need to recognize we just lost two talented people."

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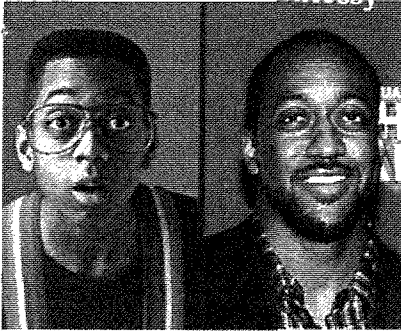


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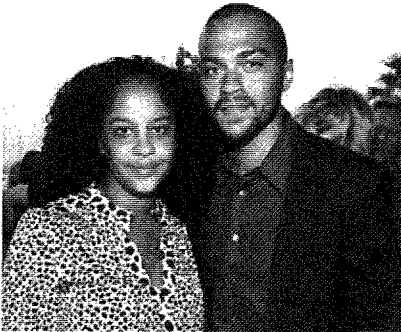
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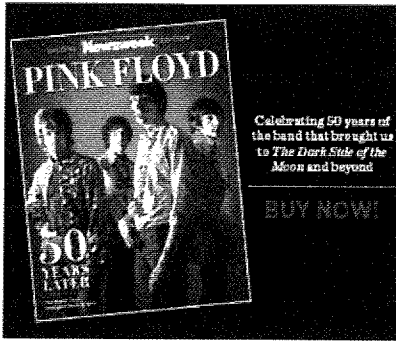
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Gawker's latest privacy scandal poses dilemma in \$100m Hulk Hogan lawsuit

Nick Denton, who is named in a suit over a sex tape of Hogan posted by Gawker, will have a harder time under questioning after taking down a post last week

Sam Thielman in New York

Wednesday 22 July 2015 12.35 EDT

The latest scandal to hit Gawker Media has presented the company with another dilemma as it prepares to enter the ring with professional wrestler Hulk Hogan in a \$100m personal injury case, experts say.

The group's CEO, Nick Denton, has been named by Terry Bollea - the Hulkster's civilian name - in a lawsuit over a sex tape of Bollea and Heather Clem posted by Gawker in an article by AJ Daulerio, also a defendant. Clem, then the wife of Bollea's friend Bubba "The Love Sponge" Clem, was named in a parallel suit. Denton and Gawker's reporters have vigorously defended their right to publish the video. (The video has been removed from the story citing "pending litigation".)

The next date in the Gawker v Hogan lawsuit is 1 October, when a case management conference is scheduled.

Now that Gawker has posted (and taken down) its story about a publishing executive, married to a woman and a father of three, who exchanged texts with a male escort, Columbia Law School professor John Coffee says Denton will have a harder time under questioning.

In a heated staff meeting on Tuesday reported by Capital New York, Denton told his editorial team that he saw the escort story as "threatening [Gawker's] ability to actually fight its way through the Hogan trial and threatening its business". But its removal may cause just as many problems.

"Someone's going to say to him, 'You took this off of your website, even though you had violent opposition from two leading staffers who resigned,'" Coffee predicted. "You must have thought it was wrong!' And he'll have to say yes. If [the escort story] is an invasion of privacy, why isn't it an invasion of privacy when you have a video of what happened? Gawker didn't have a video of the potential gay relationship here."

"In light of Gawker's past rhetoric about our fearlessness and independence, this can be seen as a capitulation," Denton wrote in an introspective post on Friday. "And perhaps, to

some extent, it is.”

Gawker Media's newly formed union excoriated company management for removing the escort story in a terse post on Friday; the company's executive editor Tommy Craggs and the editor-in-chief of the flagship site (Gawker), Max Read, resigned in protest on Monday.

The question now is whether the company can weather litigation from Bollea - the retired wrestler has asked the court for \$100m - and what will happen to it if it loses. Coffee said that much may depend on the venue, and Bollea, a Tampa native, may benefit considerably from the home field advantage.

Coffee said that Bollea's suit against Clem - for allegedly violating copyright and since dropped - would help keep the trial on his the wrestler's home turf. “I don't think he [expected] any damages from her, but he has a case for keeping the venue in Florida [because both he and Clem live there].”

“Being able to choose a Florida jury probably gives them greater advantages than would a series of supreme court decisions,” Coffee said. “Having the ability to choose the fact-finder is a far greater advantage than having the case law. You're going to get the community judgment of St Petersburg, Florida.”

The Bollea case, said Coffee, depends on invasion of privacy. Hulk Hogan's status as a public figure, even one who holds forth often and at length about his sex life, may have kept him from getting the kind of sympathy that the subject of the escort story immediately received, but there's no evidence Bollea intended for anyone to see the tape. Indeed, he's denied he knew it was being made.

“If he'd shown the video to others, that might have waived his right to privacy,” Coffee said. “He hasn't sought to be taped. He's just having sex, and that would probably entitle him to his right to privacy. If he'd sought to do it in Times Square, it might be a different issue.

“I can imagine him doing that, actually.”

Denton said he felt he could stand behind the Hogan story and not the escort story for exactly that reason. “Hogan is a hugely public figure, who was public too about his sex life,” he wrote in an email exchange with the Guardian. “[The other story's subject] wasn't.”

“The closest legal case to the Hogan case is one involving one of the Pamela Anderson sex tapes,” said Lior Strahilevitz, a professor of law at the University of Chicago Law School, who agreed with Denton that “Hogan obviously speaks about his sex life in a way that most of us wouldn't” but said it wasn't that simple. “[In the Anderson case], what the court said is that being a sex symbol in movies and TV shows doesn't mean you've waived the right to privacy that you have with your lover when you're not performing in public.”

Strahilevitz said that publishing a sex tape put Gawker over a line that merely recounting

facts would not. "The distinction that really matters where privacy law is concerned is a visual depiction of a sex act versus a written story about a possible extramarital affair with an escort," he said. "The law regards the publication of a sex tape as much more troubling." Indeed, the new "revenge porn" law may come to bear on the case, he said.

And again, Gawker will be tried initially by the community of St Petersburg. Jon Mills, dean emeritus of the University of Florida Fredric G Levin College of Law, has a knowledgeable perspective on privacy law and said that, sleazy appearances on Howard Stern aside, Hogan has a strong case.

"Hogan isn't totally a sympathetic figure, but people or public figures do have some private life," he said. "If you divorce yourself from thinking about who it is and just say, 'Somebody had tape of sexual intercourse that they'd intended to be private, which somebody else published,' that would of course be offensive."

Mills defended the family of Dale Earnhardt from a lawsuit by several news organizations seeking the release of Earnhardt's autopsy photos after the famed stock car driver died in a fiery final-lap collision with Ken Schrader during the 2001 Daytona 500. The jury found in the family's favor and enacted a new law requiring consent from next of kin before autopsy photos could be released as public records.

Ultimately, no one involved is going to have an easy time looking like a hero, said Mills. "I had the New York Times on one side and Dale Earnhardt on the other side, and nobody was a bad guy," he said.

"Now you have Hulk Hogan and Gawker."

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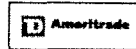
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Gawker's Future: A Conversation With Nick Denton

Ravi Somaiya
12 Hours Ago



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COMMENTS Start the Discussion

On July 16, the news and gossip website Gawker, a digital-media pioneer partly responsible for the tone and sensibility of web journalism, published an article that accused a married male media executive of seeking, via text message, to pay for sex with a gay escort. It was swiftly condemned as an unseemly invasion of privacy, and Gawker's founder and chief executive, Nick Denton, decided to remove the article from the site. Two of his editors resigned, accusing Mr. Denton of violating editorial independence.

He has since vowed, in a series of publicly released memos, to change the site, to make it "nicer" and less tabloid in its sensibilities, and perhaps even change its name, as a reflection of a changed media environment and to safeguard the rest of his portfolio — including the sports site Deadspin and the gadget site Gizmodo.

"This is an opportunity to be seized, our best shot as an independent media company supporting the freest journalists on the web," he wrote in a memo to staff members on Sunday. "We will face up to celebrities and other public figures who use the courts and other pressure to suppress the truth; reinforce the existing church-state divide; establish a clearer standard of newsworthiness; inject some more humanity into Gawker.com; bring in more experienced executives, managers and editors; and refine our workplace culture; and continue. This is the next stage of our evolution."

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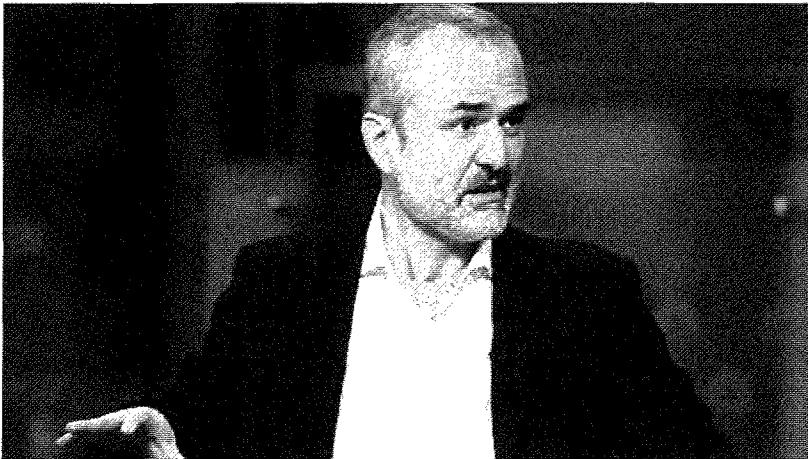
Q. Can you describe your thought process before the story about the media executive was published?

A. As I've said before, I couldn't see the point of the story, or why the subject's position was relevant. This was not a story about the conduct of his job, or the culture of the company he worked for.

Q. So what responsibility do you bear for its running? Both culturally and specifically?

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A. I bear responsibility for dodging a real debate about the purpose of Gawker. The truth is necessary to a story, but it's not sufficient. In my view, there has to be some meaning. It has to be interesting. And my ethos diverged from that of the editorial leadership. The one good thing to come out of this misbegotten story is that we are finally having that discussion about editorial standards.



Katie Kramer | CNBC

Nick Denton, founder and CEO of Gawker Media



media executive, what do you think your responsibility personally is?

A. I have been involved in the outing of several public figures. I am a gay man who lived in the closet myself. I believe people are happier when they live in truth. But this media executive had not invited our attention, there was no public hypocrisy to expose, and it was a private matter far from the open secrets that we usually disseminate. I was revolted by the article, and ashamed to have it anywhere near the Gawker name. I am deeply sorry that any editor hired by me would ever believe that was a piece worth standing behind. In hiring new newsroom leaders, this story will be a litmus test.

Q. Have you been in contact at all with the media executive at the heart of this? If not, what would you say to him, if given the opportunity?

A. I am in the middle of a note to the media executive at the center of the story, but I think my apology should be private unless he chooses to share it. We cannot un-ring this bell. But we can make sure its ugly sound is not heard again.

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Pearson is in talks to sell its stake in the Economist Group, to other shareholders in the group, according to people familiar with the situation. The FT reports.

Q. I am going to ask you to respond to, or expand on, some of your statements in recent days. In the statement you posted on taking down the article, you said that it might have worked as an article in a previous era, "but the media environment has changed, our readers have changed, and I have changed." Let's start with ways in which you have changed. Are you now an insider?

A. I am where I've been: with many friends among journalists and many fewer among the people we cover. I'm fine with that. Access is overrated in journalism. But something has changed. Personally, I'm much more sensitive to the children and families of those who get caught up in stories.

[Read More > Is Gawker's story removal setting a dangerous precedent?](#)

Q. Does that have anything to do with the fact that you yourself got married?

A. I did get married last year, to Derrence. And we are hoping to start a family. So I am less of a sexual outsider than I was. At this point, I probably socialize as much with married people as I do with single people. I'll leave others to psychoanalyze that.

Q. Do you think Derrence agrees with what you do?

A. We are a couple, and Derrence has a powerful effect on my thinking, but I'm not going to speak for him.

Q. Have you been more hands-off at Gawker in recent years? Have you left it a little rudderless, perhaps?

A. There was a rudder. It was just pointing in a direction that ultimately I didn't agree with. The company has more than 250 people. I have to be able to trust the heads of the major departments, editorial included.

Q. Now to Gawker itself. In what way have Gawker's readers changed?

A. Gawker's readers have changed along with the society they're part of. My sense is that glee at information that spills out on the Internet has given way to a greater concern for personal privacy. More and more people have public lives on social media. And nobody wants to live in a world in which it's so easy for your smartphone texts to spill onto the web — and so easy for media to justify spreading the embarrassment.

Q. You said in a recent memo to all of Gawker staff that "even the best of our stories fail to get credit, in part because of Gawker's reputation for tabloid trash." How do you define tabloid trash?

A. I define tabloid trash as a scandal without any point. Infidelity, drug use, illness: These may be sufficient justification for a tabloid news site. But Gawker is supposed to be an intelligent tabloid, that covers juicy stories that show how the world works. I'm proud of our coverage of Bill O'Reilly's temper, Hillary Clinton's secret kitchen cabinet, the privilege of Michael Lynton's daughter. In all those examples, there was a point, and a public interest in the truth getting wider circulation.

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Q. Is it fair to say that Gawker will become more like the publications it set out in opposition to?

A. Gawker will be at the very edge of the mainstream. It will look for real stories either in the compromises of mainstream media companies, or in the principled anarchy of free-for-all web communities such as Reddit. I don't think The New York Times should relax just yet.

Q. Are you at all worried about the rapid rise of competitors like BuzzFeed and Vice?

A. There are four big online media groups to emerge on the web: BuzzFeed, Vice, Vox and Gawker Media. Unlike the others, we have achieved scale and profitability without a dollar in external investment.

Q. But do they threaten Gawker Media? Are they at all behind your reaction to this, and the desire to be nicer?

A. BuzzFeed and Vice are taking a different path. There is plenty of room for all of us. If anybody should be worried, it is the established media company that has not been able to bring TV and print audiences online.

Q. Speaking of which: You outlined, in your latest memo, that Gawker should be about getting the real story — the story that journalists at more conservative publications tell in the bar after work. Do you think it is possible to do that without ending up with a post like the one you removed?

A. To publish the story behind the story, there has to be a story in the first place. In the instance of the media executive and the escort, there wasn't a story, not by any editorial standard that I'm aware of. We will continue to run stories that others deem too distasteful. Our standards will be looser than those of The Times and other established news organizations. But there will be clearer standards.

Q. You said recently that Ta-Nehisi Coates would be your dream Gawker executive editor. Why? What does he offer, or represent?

A. I'm not going to talk about individual candidates. But we are looking for a mixture of news judgment, intellectual framework and humanity. The ideal candidate was actually a colleague of yours, David Carr, now sadly no longer with us.

Q. Is humanity an important component of journalism?

A. Yes, David Carr was described as the most human of humans. Let the writers run a little wild, but they need to be saved from their own selves by editors with a conscience.

Q. So what would you like to see Gawker as in a year or two's time? And what changes will you be making, apart from the move, to ensure that?

A. I'd like Gawker to be the best version of itself, taking the best of

each era of the site. The scoops of John Cook. The investigations of Adrian Chen or J. K. Trotter. Pop culture from Rich Juzwiak. And some of Max Read's excellent vision for the site. All the ingredients are there, and the talent. And I'd like to see other properties — category leaders like Gizmodo, Lifehacker, Deadspin and Jezebel — come out from Gawker's shadow. "Gawker is your one-stop guide to media and pop culture. It is the place you come to learn the real story — the account you won't (or can't) find anywhere else." That's from Max's memo at the start of the year.

As for how we get there, most depends on bringing in experienced newsroom leaders and establishing an formal editorial code.

Q. How hands-on will you be?

A. I do not want to establish bad precedent through my intervention in the case of the media executive. Our main focus will be on the hiring of an executive editor who shares my editorial ethos, and a formalization of decision making in the event of disagreements over a story.

Q. Will there be hard limits in that code? Stuff you won't cover?

Gawker CEO: Organizing anarchists

Friday, 5 June 2015 | 11:33 EDT | 03:06

Nick Denton, Gawker Media founder and CEO, discusses his employees' decision to unionize.

A. Nobody wants a long document that no writer will internalize. A few paragraphs, openly debated with editors and writers, would be most effective. From my memo, "At Gawker Media, it is not enough for a story to be true; it has to be true and interesting. It should be interesting not only to an in-house editor, but to our reader communities. And the interest should be worth the hurt inflicted."

Q. You said the media environment has changed. How?

A. I think the gap between the reader and a public figure has narrowed. We have more of a feeling that celebrities and the subjects of stories are people just like us, with secrets that others don't have an automatic right to. And Gawker itself is larger. In the past, the site might have been seen as an ankle-biter, its wilder posts dismissed or ignored. Now, we're The Man. And a writer's fight against the system can come across as plain bullying of an individual who is as much a prisoner of the system as anybody else.

Everybody will be back to work this coming week. New office. New

execs. Gawker always bounces back. This is just the way that crises play out in open organizations. And I know I would say that, but it is also true. Just think about it: an all-hands meeting in which everybody is free to speak, and they're backchanneling on Slack [an instant messaging app] and live-blogging on Twitter. Total transparency. Most companies would be terrified!

Q. Will you be changing the name?

A. The name change is just a proposal. Nothing imminent (though I would like Gawker to be free of such responsibility for the whole company's reputation).

Q. Is it a serious proposal? One that has traction and might happen? Or more of a musing?

A. It might happen.

Q. What are the potential names?

A. It won't be anytime soon. We are considering it. It is more of a distraction. We are committed to making Gawker a brand the whole company can be proud of.

Q. You offered buyouts to any staff members who could not go along with these changes. How many have taken them?

A. I am not sure. I'm leaving it to Heather [Dietrick, the president and general counsel of Gawker Media]. I really don't want to get dragged into editorial personnel decisions, though obviously I have views about writers.

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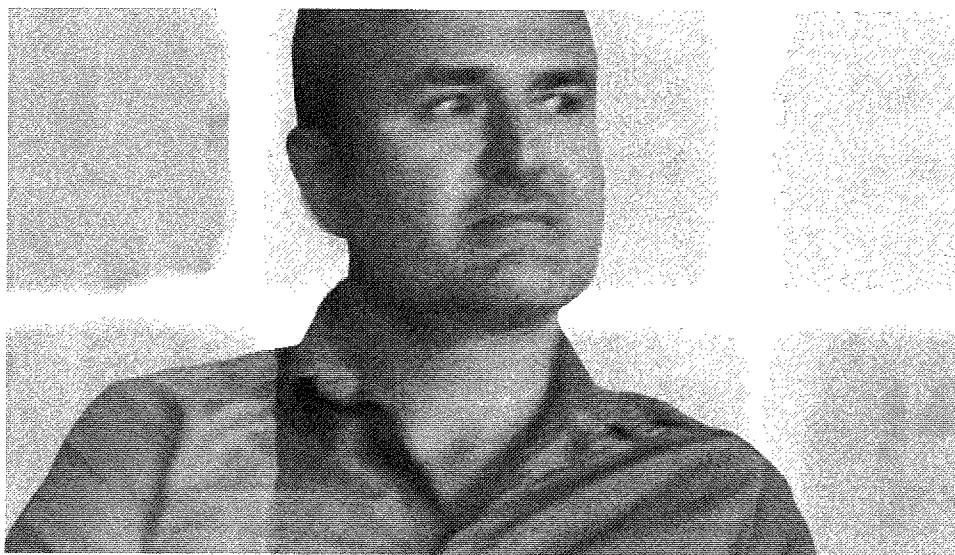
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Gawker's Denton: 'This is not the company I built'



Nick Denton. (Andrew Mager)

 By Peter Sterne 6:41 p.m. | Jul. 20, 2015 29

"This is the very, very worst version of the company," Gawker Media founder and C.E.O. Nick Denton told his editorial staff during a contentious all-hands meeting on Monday afternoon. "This is not the company I built."

Denton argued with Gawker's editors over their decision to publish a post on Thursday night about a married, male, publishing executive who allegedly tried to hire a male escort. It was irresponsible for the editors to publish the post without considering the harm that it could do to the executive, he said.

"I don't want some guy blowing his brains out and that being on our hands," he said.

Denton also criticized his editors for failing to consider the impact that the story would have on its author, 27-year-old staff writer Jordan Sargent. Sargent, Denton said, is now "shell-shocked" after receiving so much criticism and abuse online in response to the post.

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"It's the responsibility of the company and it's the responsibility of the editors to protect their writers from that shitstorm," Denton said.

Denton said that he is not necessarily opposed to reporting that famous media figures—Anderson Cooper or Apple C.E.O. Tim Cook—are gay, if

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their sexuality is an open secret in Manhattan media circles. But that's not what happened in the case of this post, he said.

"I can't think of a single instance of an outing that was as egregious and poorly handled as this one," he said.

At times, the meeting got heated. Gawker's editorial staff is upset with Denton and the company's six-person managing partnership for

removing the post on Friday, over the objections of Gawker's editorial leadership. Many see the removal as an example of the company's business side interfering in editorial decision-making, and both Gawker Media executive editor Tommy Craggs and Gawker editor in chief Max Read **resigned in protest** of the decision on Monday. Denton said that the managing partnership, which includes business-side employees, does not make editorial decisions. As founder and C.E.O., he does make editorial decisions, but only on rare occasions.

"This is an extreme, extreme case. I believe it was kind of a travesty of the editorial independence. It's not something I wanted to be associated with," he said.

There is only one other time when he has made a similar decision, he said. When Gawker was ordered by a Florida state court to take down its post about Hulk Hogan's sex video, it removed the video but left the text of the post up. The state court's order was later overturned on appeal, so Gawker could legally have republished the video, but it has not done so.

"I made the tactical decision that the Hulk Hogan story should remain up, but not the video, even though we could have the video up," Denton said.

Denton criticized the editorial staff for adopting what he called a "maximalist interpretation of editorial freedom."

"We let that idea gain roots, that freedom is the freedom to do whatever the fuck you want," he said. "Actually it's not."

Gawker writers have the freedom to write and report worthwhile stories, even those that other professional media outlets will not touch, he said. But they do not have the freedom to post whatever they want on Gawker.

"You'll be freer posting at Ratter.com. You'll be freer posting at Reddit," he said.

In a gchat with Capital, Denton expanded on his thoughts on editorial freedom: "What I can't accept is an unlimited and subjective version of editorial freedom. It is not whatever an editor thinks it is; it is not a license to write anything; it is a privilege, protected by the constitution, and carrying with it responsibilities."

Denton said during the meeting that Gawker must have an official editorial policy based on the standard that stories published must be both true and meaningful, not merely true. Gawker cannot publish gossip like Page Six does, he said.

"Gawker's supposed to be better than that. It's supposed to be good gossip, it's supposed

to be juicy gossip, it's supposed to be revealing gossip. ... I'm not saying we should never do these stories, but there has to be a point, and there really wasn't a point to justify Gawker running this," he said.

In the past, Denton denied that Gawker writers were journalists, preferring to refer to them as bloggers. But now he's embracing the label and some of its ethical considerations.

"We actually have to recognize that we are journalists. Some measure of newsworthiness is appropriate," he said.

This may be a major departure from the editorial philosophy that animated 2007-era Gawker, but Denton wants everyone to stop living in the past.

"I've been told that there's a lag, some of my ideas from seven years ago are still being treated as sacrosanct when I've actually moved on," he said.

But what about Denton's ideas from last year?

Jezebel editor-at-large Jessica Coen tweeted a screenshot of an email that Denton sent her on Jan. 20, 2014, in which he called himself a "truth absolutist." In that email, Denton was responding to a Jezebel post that stated that journalists should never out people who do not want to be outed.

Denton told Capital that he disagrees that people should never be outed.

"I don't believe that everybody has a right to privacy when it comes to sexual identity. For instance, I think we were right to refer to Anderson Cooper's homosexuality. It was gossiped about. And he was a public figure who made himself available for interviews, but had journalists guided away from questions about his personal life," he said.

The all-hands editorial meeting ended after about two hours, but will continue tomorrow after Gawker's remote editors fly in to New York. In the meantime, Gawker and Jezebel have "gone dark" with no posts for the rest of the day, and each of the other Gawker Media sites is voting whether or not to go dark.

Many Gawker editorial staffers remain convinced that Denton pulled the post to appease advertisers, with one telling *New York's* Gabriel Sherman that they fear Denton wants to turn the company into a slightly edgier version of Vox Media.

In a gchat with Capital, Denton said that he did not want to turn Gawker into Vox.

"Nah, Vox is already Vox. Gawker will be Gawker. Our explainers will be juicier. And stories bolder," he wrote.

In a memo to editorial staff this morning, Denton compared Gawker to both Vox and Ratter, the gossip blog network founded by former Gawker editor A.J. Daulerio.

"If you're wondering whether a more explicit editorial policy will turn us into some generic internet media company, I'd say no: I see Gawker Media occupying a space on the online media spectrum between a stolid Vox Media and a more anarchic Ratter; close to the edge, but not over it," he wrote.

But the real risk to Gawker may not be that Denton will turn the company into Vox, but that he will eventually leave.

"You don't know how long I'll want to run this show," he said toward the end of the all-hands meeting. "If you were wise, you'd ensure that the editorial policy or stand or ethos that you have among yourself is, at minimum, codified or maybe even included in the union contract."

This article has been updated to add quotes from Denton, and to correct Jordan Sargent's age: he is 27, not 26. Also, an earlier reference to Ryan Seacrest has been removed. In addition, identifying information about the publishing executive has been removed.

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allthedings · 7 days ago

As a long-time Gawker reader, what surprises me most is the almost complete obliviousness of the editorial staff regarding the post on Friday. They ignored or ridiculed every effort to warn them they had gone too far, and never -- and still haven't -- addressed in any meaningful way why the post was written, much less published, much less right before the staff left the office for the weekend. ...

the weekend. If they were a bit more aware, they'd see that Denton is their friend in this.

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Alias McCoy → [allthetings](#) • 5 days ago

This is the ridiculous PR being regurgitated by Condé Nast's trolls all over the web.

There was nothing immoral, extorting, or blackmailing about the reportage. It was the story of a well-connected media mogul willing to fuck a man in the ass but not help him with his housing issues. He was betraying his family and the American public with his duplicitous, inhuman nature.

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NoGround → [AnitaMacy](#) • 5 days ago

You're defending a blackmailer? An extortionist? And a website that helped a blackmailer?

First of all, he was a gay porn star that got kicked out of his rental because his landlord had a problem with his dog. Second, the blackmailer is a gay porn star, as in, he shouldn't have any problems with money due to the business.

Third. Where the hell did you get the idea that this guy is a "media mogul?" He's the brother of some politician and has no public face.

Get that through your head for a second. You're DEFENDING a blackmailer. Good luck.

10 | [1](#) | [2](#) | [3](#) | [Reply](#) | [Share](#)

SteveDin → [McGowan](#) • 5 days ago

The CFO of one of the largest print media companies--and certainly the largest "serious" print media company, insofar as its number of titles--is not someone with "no public face." He's a legitimate bigwig at a rival company, which is what made Gawker editors salivate when the story presented itself to them. Does that mean I think that piece should have run? NO! It was immoral and disgusting on every level. No editor with an ounce of integrity would assign it--let alone try to turn it into a free speech test case. I'm only pointing out that it wasn't some random nobody they went after.

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NoGround → [BryceLan](#) • 5 days ago

Thanks for that! I'll remember the info. =)

Actually proves that it was even worse because he was extorting a rival using a journal site.

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Seth Leonard → [kwan](#) • 5 days ago

"He wanted inhuman gay sex. He was betraying America. Blackmail is totes okay."

Oh, and we're the trolls. Right.

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TheSoy → [Newspaper](#) • 5 days ago

Top kek troll job, mate.

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Dan Mitchell → [Alias McCoy](#) • 5 days ago

You have the mind of a child.

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Sue Pachunk → [Sue Pachunk](#) • 5 days ago

Dan, I am a bit disappointed---I was hoping that when you said the exact same thing to me (after your little name-calling tantrum) it was at least an original comment. I see that's actually your go-to argument, and what a great one it is! #Douchebag

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Dan Mitchell → [Sue Pachunk](#) • 5 days ago

Not my best work, but more original than hashtag-douchebag. Or hashtag-anything. But especially hashtag-douchebag.

You're just seething here. Running through all these comments because I called you what you were. I guess you don't realize that you're just confirming everything I said, and that every time you post, you confirm it that much more. But keep going! Eventually, I'll slap myself on the forehead and say, "That Sue Pachunk Internet commenter is right with his or her Internet comments! I should pay more attention to the Internet commenter's Internet comments -- for who among us is wiser?"

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loder74 [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

You are a broken person. Likely hopelessly so.

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dayumson [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

This is karma, pure and simple. They've supported pedophilia, published the names and addresses of registered gun owners in NYC (some of whom were victims of stalkers), published stolen nude photos of celebrities (dispite condemning hackers for doing the same thing to Jennifer Lawrence), and knowingly aided in the extortion in the Conde Nast CFO. No amount of playing the good guy will help Denton.

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YRULookingAtTheTeabagsOnMyHead [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

just curious, how have they supported pedophilia?

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Sand Ripper [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

They're "journalists" when they want to be taken seriously, but "bloggers" when they get criticized for doing something stupid or show a lack of ethics and/or professionalism. This is a theme that runs through nearly every Gawker-owned site.

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John Van Stry [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

The owners and the board of a company have an OBLIGATION to oversee the editors.

They are in charge of the company, NOT the editors.

So the editors need to shut up or quit.

The board needs to stop dodging their responsibility.

And Gawker needs to learn some ethics.

Course I don't expect to see any of this happen, their whole business model is built on causing and prolonging train wrecks.

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Steve Weinstein [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

These people need to watch "All the President's Men" to see how Ben Bradlee had to beg Publisher Kay Graham to publish a story.

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whatever [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

It's not the company you built!

It's EXACTLY AND PRECISELY the company you built.

And now you are being judged by the company you kept.

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Sick Dr Joe [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

Piece of shit resigns: claims *other* piece of shit undermined the authority of his eye-watering stench.

Stink lines at eleven.

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Aaron [11/21/15 10:47 AM](#) [6 days ago](#)

So on reporting about a place outing a guy -- which is still unconfirmed -- and doing a story on the backlash it's causing, you guys thought "Well, they already outed the guy, so I guess we can run his full name and title and also make sure to use the term 'male escort' just to really drive it home"?

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Steve Weinstein • 6 days ago

If the advertisers pull out, how do these editors think they and their staff are going to get paid? When a story has 100% condemnation from the public, media sites and advertisers, that should tell you something.

2 / 1 / 0 • Reply • Share

Red Black • 5 days ago

Gawker has editors?

2 / 1 / 0 • Reply • Share

texlovera • 3 days ago

Nick Denton and EVERYONE who has ever worked at Gawker are the largest collection of douchebags to ever pretend to be journalists. They can all eat a bag of donkey dicks as they go over the cliff.

2 / 1 / 0 • Reply • Share

nationman • 6 days ago

It is really telling that after weeks and weeks of berating reddit for allowing questionable or hateful content, these morons in the editorial board are supporting the very same type of behavior. While I think he's a rotten, human piece of garbage, the larger statement Nick is making is correct. You can't moralize or stand in judgement if you're involved in the exact same behaviors. Since we're talking about the old Nick Denton: "Hypocrisy is the last sin."

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

kginyc • 6 days ago

Crocodile tears. And so we learn that 27-years-old Jordan Sargent (aka, the "journalist" behind this story) is supposedly "shell-shocked" by the tsunami of outrage his gossiping brought on -- imagine what that little scumbucket did to Geithner's kids. No sympathy, whatsoever, for anyone associated with Gawker.

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

loder74 • 3 days ago

Here's a suggestion for ALL media: Stop hiring people with very little to NO experience because they're cheaper to employ. They'll end up costing you more in the lawsuits that their decisions create.

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

Buck Ofama • 6 days ago

a sleazeball like denton is surprised by the amount of sleaze he's inspired?

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

Moeskido • 7 days ago

"I didn't say 'Simon Says', damn it!"

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

metroid_fetish • 6 days ago

Kill yourself Nick. Oops, I should use SJW appropriate language in this case - Set yourself on fire.

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

Bitterbear • 6 days ago

You can tell which sides are siding with Gawker by the way they are keeping things silent. See for example Ars Technica (which is a property of Condé Nast) and how they kept it mum. Someone at Condé Nast should wonder at whom these peoples' loyalties are for.

1 / 0 / 0 • Reply • Share

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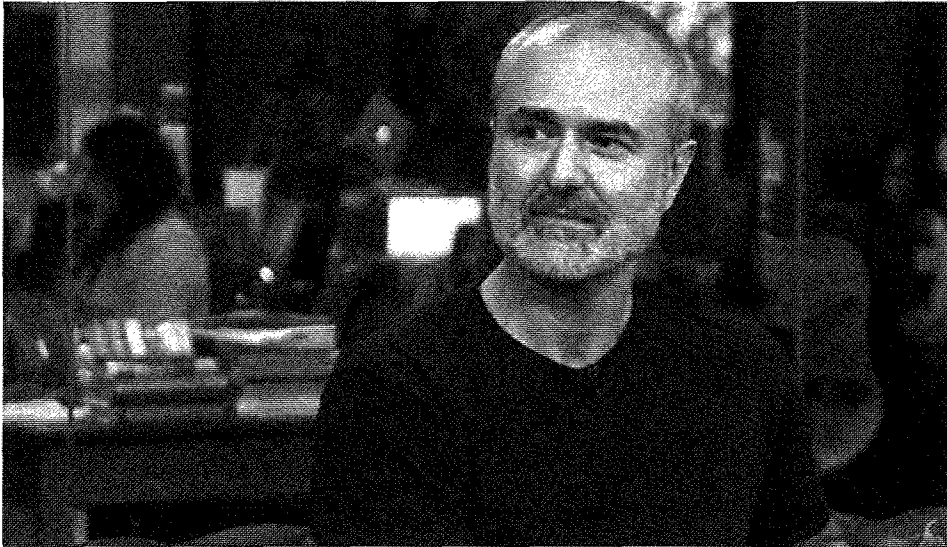
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The 'Gawker tax' is getting too high, Denton tells his staff



Nick Denton. (Huffington Post)



By Peter Sterne 9:49 a.m. | Jul. 22, 2015 37

Gawker Media is a business.

That's the message that C.E.O. Nick Denton had for his editorial employees yesterday, and it's a message that he repeated many times over the course of a meeting that stretched for nearly two hours.

"Yes, it's a business. At some point, people have got to recognize that it's a business that supports editorial freedom and the mission of the editorial business, but it is a business and it needs to exist and it needs to survive in order for it to support that," he said.

Gawker is willing to sacrifice a lot of potential ad revenue to protect its editorial freedom, Denton said, but there's a limit.

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"There's a thing called the Gawker tax which represents the cost of selling these brands that any moment can blow up, they can blow up because of internal dissension, they can blow up because of a story that goes wrong, and they call it the Gawker tax. My estimate of the Gawker tax is the gap between the revenues of Gawker Media and the revenues of Vox Media, the gap is around \$20 million a year and the gap is

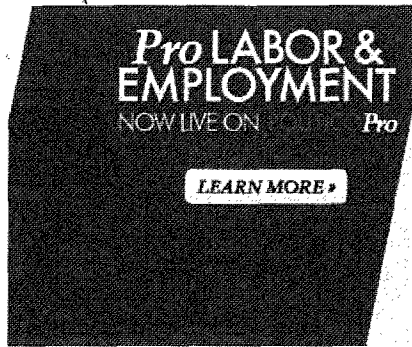
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increasing," he said.

The comparison to Vox is interesting because a number of Gawker staffers say that they fear Denton wants to "Vox-ify" the company, which Denton has denied.

"Now, I don't want to close that gap and I don't want to become Vox Media, but the fact of the matter is that it is really hard to sell Gawker,

Gawker.com in particular, because Gawker.com likes to pick fights with pretty much everybody. That's just the reality," he said.

Denton's point was that his editorial decisions must be informed by business and advertising concerns, in addition to his own editorial judgment.

On Friday, he decided to **remove a controversial Gawker post** about a married publishing executive who allegedly solicited a male escort, which Gawker had published on Thursday night. That decision, he said, was motivated both by editorial and business concerns.

Gawker's editorial staff have criticized the process by which the post was removed, arguing that it shows that the company's business and advertising executives are interfering with editorial decision-making.

On Friday, Denton discussed whether to remove the post with the company's managing partnership—which at the time included Denton, president and general counsel Heather Dietrick, C.O.O. Scott Kidder, advertising head Andrew Gorenstein, chief strategy officer Erin Pettigrew and executive editor Tommy Craggs. Four of the partners—Denton, Kidder, Gorenstein, and Pettigrew—voted to remove the post, while Craggs and Dietrick voted to keep it up.

Craggs and Gawker editor in chief Max Read **resigned in protest** of the vote. In his **resignation letter**, Craggs also said that Gorenstein, the head of advertising, had said in a previous meeting that Gawker senior writer Sam Biddle should be fired for writing posts, such as "**Brands are not your friend**," that cost the company advertisers.

The Tuesday meeting was a chance for editorial staffers, led by investigations editor John Cook, to get the message across that Gawker's business concerns were compromising its editorial mission and to grill the partners on their votes.

Cook asked the managing partners whether they believed they had the authority to make editorial decisions.

Gorenstein, Pettigrew and Kidder—who voted on Friday, with Denton, to take the post down—all said that they do not think they have that authority. Their votes on Friday, they said, were to support Denton.

"I think Nick has a unique vision, as founder of the company and as owner of the company and as editorial ethos of the company, to make editorial decisions. My vote was supporting Nick in making a very difficult editorial decision," Kidder said.

"This was not Robert's Rules of Order, OK, I'm entering a motion to take down a post. Who

in favor says aye? I actually don't really think I would ever make that motion to take down that post and I don't think Erin would and I don't think Andrew would either," he added.

Gorenstein said that the partners were not voting on whether to take down the post, but whether to support Denton.

"This was not a vote. This was support for a decision that Nick made that Nick has the absolutely right to do for the company, based on what he thought was in the best interests of the company, and I support that decision," Gorenstein said.

Cook then asked the obvious question: why even have the partners vote, if they were just going to rubber-stamp a decision that Denton had already made?

Denton said that he saw the vote as a kind of vote of confidence.

"If I had made a recommendation, a proposal, if I had made a decision, which I did, if I had made a decision that the partners did not by a majority support, I would have been forced to reconsider my position," he said. "I would have had to resign."

Denton said that the post threatened the site's very existence and asked his editors to consider what they would have done in the same situation.

"Let's say you are a member of the managing partnership. You are responsible not simply for your department, but you are responsible for the future of the company and here you have a story which is threatening to blow up the company, threatening its reputation, threatening its ability to actually fight its way through the Hogan trial and threatening its business," he said.

Denton kept returning to this theme that Gawker was a business and he had to do distasteful things—removing the post, for example—in order to protect all of the company's employees.

"I am the founder of the company and as someone who has helped build up the sites through editorial work, writing and editing, I have a view on the overall editorial ethos of the company, of the whole operation," he said later in the meeting. "I have above all a responsibility to the whole company to take into account all of the factors, whether it is the editorial principles at stake, the communication challenges, the legal challenges, the business challenges, and all the other challenges that we face."

Denton also defended Gorenstein's comment that maybe Biddle should be fired, saying that it was Gorenstein's job to let him know that Biddle's posts were costing the company a lot of ad revenue and it was his job to weigh that against the desire for editorial freedom and make a decision.

Cook objected to this calculus, asking whether *The New York Times* also weighed its reporters against its advertisers.

This sparked a shouting match between Denton and Gawker features editor Leah Finnegan, who previously worked as a staff editor at the Times.

"It doesn't! I know that for a fact. It does not and it never will," Finnegan said.

"I think at some level, yes they do. I know enough *New York Times* people to know that," Denton said.

"Nick, I worked there for two and a half years. They canceled ads in favor of journalism."

"Do you know how much money we lose all the time, because of cancellations in ads? I cannot, I cannot believe that you are actually saying this!"

"Make this into an advertising company then! Say what it really is! It's not a place for journalism!"

Cook told everyone to calm down and the conversation moved on.

But the question of the *Times*' policies came up again an hour or so later, after Denton said that no media company gives its journalists greater protections from advertiser pressure than Gawker does.

What about the *Times*, Cook asked.

"*The New York Times* moves people around from beat to beat in order—and you know this because you heard the story—in order to satisfy advertisers sometimes. They won't actually remove a journalist, they won't fire a journalist; they'll actually just put a weak journalist on the beat so that the coverage isn't quite as toothy as it would otherwise be," Denton said.

This was just how the media industry worked, Denton said, and if Gawker writers did not realize that, it was only because he had gone out of his way to insulate them from advertiser pressure.

"There are dirty deals being done all over the place," he said. "Your attitude, your naïveté when it comes to that and then outrage when you discover that actually that's how the world works, it's sort of natural and it's sort of a function of where we are as a company."

Update: The *Times* told our colleague Hadas Gold that Denton's statement about moving journalists to other beats was not true.

This story has been updated to correct a quote from Nick Denton. Denton said John Cook "heard the story," not "wrote the story," Cook wrote on Twitter.

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Author: Peter Sterne

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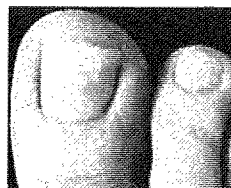
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Jake Martinez · 5 days ago

This is mostly solid reporting, but you're drawing the wrong conclusion as to why Gorenstien "wondered why Sam Biddle hadn't been fired". It's not from attacking brands on the website, it's from his social media antics like attacking Justine Sacco, making fun of kicking dogs and of course infamously attacking "nerds" and advocating for the "bringing back" of "bullying" - the last one having cost Gawker over 7 figures in advertising revenue after #GamerGate supporters organized an email petition campaign aimed at Gawkers advertisers.

Imagine it this way, you literally have tens of hundreds of thousands of people right now watching Sam Biddle and waiting for him to screw up just so that they run off to company email addresses and facebook pages and twitter addresses and scream bloody blue murder. His "biggest crime" is pretty much exactly what Denton is alluding too in his criticism of the Editorial - picking stupid (and indefensible) fights.

Personally I feel that this internal controversy is just blame shifting by the Editorial team. They don't want to admit editorial incompetence or that they essentially printed a story that was not only cruel, but unforgivably stupid - so of course they shift the narrative to be about the "evil suits" trying to control them to placate advertisers. It's an almost hysterically stereotypical reaction from what is essentially a group of narcissistic hipsters.

12 · Reply · Share

allthedings → Jake Martinez · 5 days ago

The bring back bullying thing you may be right about, although he did nothing wrong. That tweet was funny when he posted it, just like it's funny when Chris Rock says the exact same thing on an episode of Comedians In Cars Getting Coffee. But I don't think the Justine Sacco incident caused problems, except for Sam and only in hindsight. He's been very open about his regrets over doing that piece after meeting Sacco. His posts more recently have been sharp, but more measured. (also, fwiw, i wish to god he was still carving people up on valleywag -- uber in nyc could use a good, long knife in the ribcage over their tactics). But the bullying thing, twisted and misrepresented as it was, did cost them money and I'm sure the advertising sales team was unhappy about it. It's to Sam's credit that he apologized, and to Gawker's credit that he didn't face stiffer consequences over what was clearly a joke.

3 · Reply · Share

Jake Martinez → allthedings · 5 days ago

It's all a matter of perspective. For instance, I do not find Amy Schumers comedy to be racist although many people made a huge stink about that. However I think in Sam's case, it's not so much the content of what he says as in the way that he does it.

RELEASING MOVIE!!!

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

allthedings · Reply · Share

What a stupid comment. I feel like you're being intentionally dumb. Don't extrapolate out to some ridiculous conclusions just because you're incapable of maintaining a line of thought or addressing my point. What I was saying remains true: your writing is dull and lazy, your observations are facile and cock-eyed, and your trash talk is childish. It's really hard to think you're impressed with your own comment, but I'm perfectly happy with my position in humanity. If it's your contention that anyone who reads Gawker is a bad human, well, at least you're judgmental and I suppose you're happy about that. But it really means you're saying as many as 20 million people a month are somehow worse than you think you are. I don't want to burst your bubble, but that's simply false.

Like I said, you're probably not an awful human being. You're just a bad, inconsequential anonymous commenter (who can't manage his parentheses very well, but that's okay, doesn't mean you're suicidal or anything)

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

Ryan Arko · Reply · Share

You have yet to dismiss my arguments shy of "durr, yoo is dumm." Fuck off. You're done.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

allthedings · Reply · Share

I'm not done. I've told you why you're wrong. You just don't want to hear it. That's fine. Go blithely through life thinking you're smart. At least you can't say no one ever told you otherwise!

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

Ryan Arko · Reply · Share

Didn't bother reading past "I'm not done," cuz yeah, you are.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

allthedings · Reply · Share

No I'm not, don't be ridiculous. You read the entire comment. Stop pretending. You're making yourself look ridiculous.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

Kevin Fuller · Reply

Gawker is journalism like a fart is music.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

Ceefee · Reply

Not a single word in here that resembles the word "decency". Just a workroom pissing match. Not a "news"room. And any real journalism (left) doesn't get this kind of attention. Sad.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

chobi77 · Reply

Gawker is a toilet, reading an article is like reaching in to grab a turd.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

tz1 · Reply

I doubt the intention was to be a place for revenge porn and "Out Magazine" online.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

BeJebus · Reply

who gives a shit about gawker?

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

felttippen · Reply

i give a shit about it folding under. that would be great news.

4/11/15 · Reply · Share

Professor Maple · Reply

Gawker picks stupid, boring fights that any middle schooler could see through.

For example, their relentless attacks on Reddit. Nobody called the people who were posting rape porn to Gawker's comments section "part of the Gawker community." Literally every single criticism of Reddit leveled by Gawker could easily apply to Youtube, Facebook, and a million other sites.

There is such a wide disparity at Gawker, clever punching-up pieces and then total turds that make you regret ever going there. I am glad they took the recent post down, it was homophobic trash.

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

TomPaine • [4 days ago](#)

The Times does indeed cater to advertisers--at least in the sections where advertising is most vital to its survival--its "style" coverage, in particular, but also its arts coverage, reflects the agendas of major advertisers. It also self-censors to favor the powerful on its "soft news" beats. Leah Finnegan is either naive or blind. Which doesn't alter the fact that Nick Denton has behaved cravenly here. Transparently, but cravenly.

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

jammmick • [4 days ago](#)

Denton blew it by not taking the moral high ground, by not simply saying the story was trash. Instead, he cited worries about advertising revenues, instantly destroying his journalistic credibility. Gawker's story was reprehensible because it invaded a person's privacy for no reason -- as many have said, the CFO was not hypocritical on gay rights, he wasn't a public figure and he really wasn't very important in the business world. The idea of "if it's true, publish" is juvenile. So Denton's decision was correct; part of his motivation wasn't. -- Chris Simmons, Harrisonburg, Va.

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

calbeck357 → [jammmick](#) • [21 hours ago](#)

"If it's true, publish" is the basis for anyone who commits "doxing" as part of a harassment campaign. Should we be thinking of Gawker Media in the same way Gawker Media thinks of the #GamerGate hashtag campaign?

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

felttippen • [4 days ago](#)

gawker is on the verge of going out of business. and the second all of gawker media dies, the internet will become a MUCH better place.

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

Mac Turner • [5 days ago](#)

If working in the porn business for 10 yrs taught me anything, it's YOU GOTTA HAVE A RELEASE. You can't secretly film someone having sex, then post it, especially for profit. We would even video the girls while they filled out release forms, asked them what they were expected to do, and if they were given any drugs, or alcohol. THEN, we take pics of the performers holding their IDs on each side of their face. Each performer must have 2 forms of ID. THEN you have to photo copy those ids. In other words... GAWKER REALLY FUCKED UP!!!

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

CT_Resident → [Mac Turner](#) • [4 days ago](#)

It's not entertainment videos, for prurient interests. There's newsworthy edification, when a public figure/celebrity, who sells their image as a family guy, and publicly speaks about their behavior is caught engaging in activities diametrically opposed to aforementioned proclamations. The video wasn't included in its entirety, nor was it intended to titillate, but rather to illustrate the expose.

I'm not taking a position on the good taste of anything involving Gawker, Nick Denton, or Hulk Hogan... but the situation doesn't exactly correlate to video purely intended for entertainment purposes.

[11/20/15](#) • [Reply](#) • [Share](#)

Fraga123 • [4 days ago](#)

Jezebel is a cesspool unless you like revenue minimal sites that advertise menstrual cups and Etsy bikinis sizes 23 and up.

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joemidtown@yahoo.com • [4 days ago](#)

It's laughable that Denton and Finnegan compare Gawker to the Times and refer to their gossip mongering hacks as "journalists". Journalism requires an element of ethics completely absent from the garbage they published about Geithner. The story never should have been published. Craggs and Read failed miserably in their roles as editors, and Sargent is so toxic now he'll be quietly "resigning" before the end of the year, headed for a job at one of the bottom feeding tabloids on display at the supermarket checkout. Or law school.

1429523 • Reply • Share

1429523 • 1 day ago

This article is riddled with typos.

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Chendo • 1 day ago

I know. They mistakenly put the word 'Gawker' in instead of 'Scumbags'.

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bazzar • 1 day ago

that's a synonym, expect it in the next thesaurus update. See also: assholes, dickheads and oxygen thieves.

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nickmccallum386 • 4 days ago

As far as they are concerned, every single thing in the history of the world is racist, and sexist, other than what they write.

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Al Pine • 4 days ago

Junk in, junk out. Tigers eat their young.

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David Bonfiglio • 4 days ago

I've never really looked at Gawker, but it sounds like this guy made the right choice, for the wrong reasons.

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EXODUS 7 days ago

Gawkers Quit to Defend Gay Smear Job



Facebook/Gawker

Two top Gawker editors resigned Monday over management's decision to take down and back away from a post that claimed the married CFO of a rival media company offered a male prostitute \$2,500 for sex. Executive Editor Tommy Craggs and Editor in Chief Max Read said their main cause for concern was that decisions about the site's editorial content were being made by the site's business employees. In a staff meeting, the two outgoing editors explained that Gawker founder Nick Denton was trying to transform the site into explainer-based news site Vox. "This is Nick's Reichstag fire," Craggs said.

In an earlier memo to Gawker's editorial employees, Denton wrote that he "was ashamed to have my name and Gawker's associated with a story on the private life of a closeted gay man who some felt had done nothing to warrant the attention." Denton also claimed that he only knew of one advertiser's concerns when he made the decision to pull the post, but admitted that leaving it up "would have triggered advertising losses this week into the seven figures." The story, he added, would have been "pure poison to our reputation as we go into the [Hulk] Hogan trial."

Read it at Gawker >>

MORE FROM THE BEAST

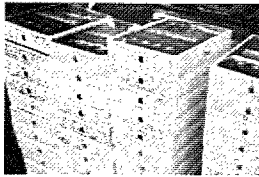
Outing Will Not Vanquish Gay Shame *By Tim Teeman*

Gawker's Crusade to Out James Franco *By Marlow Stern*

Gawker Got In Bed With The Wrong Escort *By Lloyd Grove*

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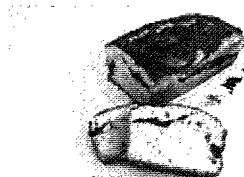
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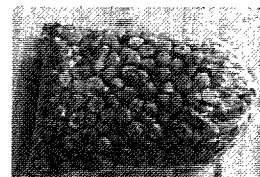


TOM HANKS REVEALS STARTLING HEALTH NEWS

LIFESCRIPT



PATRIOTIC POUND CAKE THE CHIC SITE



COULD YOU BE MAKING YOUR DOG SICK BY STORING HIS FOOD WRONG?

PET MD

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LOW 6 days ago

1. Trump Doxxes Graham on Live TV



Chris Keane/Reuters

Donald Trump revealed what Sen. Lindsey Graham's cell phone number during a televised rally in South Carolina. Graham "doesn't seem as bright as Rick Perry," Trump said before reading the number aloud. "Give it a shot." The Daily Beast's Betsy Woodruff reports that when called, the number goes to voicemail and says that Graham is not available. Graham is also running for the Republican presidential nomination against Trump and blasted The Donald for saying John McCain was not a war hero.

MORE FROM THE BEAST

Trump Hits Double Digits in GOP Poll

John Oliver Slams 'Asshole' Donald Trump *By Marlow Stern*

Draft-Dodging Trump Says McCain No Hero *By Olivia Nuzzi*



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JUST THE BEGINNING 6 days ago

2. Planned Parenthood Attacked in New Video



Kevork Djansezian / Getty Images

A new video spreading disinformation about Planned Parenthood's services was released Tuesday, after the organization warned that an anti-abortion group could release more edited videos accusing the group of illegal activity. Planned Parenthood came under fire last week after an activist group Center for Medical Progress released a heavily edited sting video appearing to show one of Planned Parenthood's doctors discussing the "sale" of fetal tissue after an abortion. The organization contends the

video had been edited to misconstrue its policy of sometimes donating fetal tissue for scientific research at the request of its patients. In a letter to a congressional committee, Planned Parenthood lawyer Roger Evans revealed that the anti-abortion group posed as a fake fetal-tissue procurement company called Biomax in order to gain access to its facilities and doctors. Evans said the group may have “thousands of hours” of footage that they will “deceptively edit into short video clips to release for many months.”

Read it at The Daily Beast >>

MORE FROM THE BEAST

The Gross-Out Politics of Abortion *By Ana Marie Cox*

Planned Parenthood Doesn't Sell Fetuses *By Samantha Allen*

Extremist Made Planned Parenthood Video *By Samantha Allen*



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BURN 6 days ago

3. First-Ever TV Ad for Pot Axed by Station



REUTERS/Steve Dipaola

Denver television station KMGH axed the country's first-ever television ad for recreational marijuana Monday night, out of fear of running afoul of federal prohibitions. Parent company E.W. Scripps said it is "proud to be a company of free speech and open expression, but we have concerns about the lack of clarity around federal regulations that govern broadcast involving such ads." The station was preparing to air two commercials this week, including for Neos, a purveyor of vaporizers and products to be used with them.

Read it at The Cannabist >>

MORE FROM THE BEAST

Feds: \$3 Million to Cure 'Pot Addiction' *By James Joiner*
Denver to Air America's First Pot TV Ad

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SEIZED 6 days ago

4. China Steals Monk's Ashes at Gunpoint



Adnan Abidi/Reuters

Chinese officials took the ashes of Tibetan Buddhist monk Tenzin Delek Rinpoche from his family at gunpoint last Thursday, friends of the family say. "The ashes were taken back and not given to the family," a cousin said from exile in Dharamsala, India. "Police said that they would throw the ashes into the nearby river. The four people don't know what happened to the ashes." The monk's death in a Chinese prison under mysterious circumstances has garnered international attention. The family was not allowed to give him traditional Buddhist funeral rites.

Read it at The New York Times >>

MORE FROM THE BEAST

Uproar in China as Tibetan Monk Dies *By Jay Michaelson*

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STEEP DECLINE 6 days ago

5. Women With Dementia Deteriorate Faster



Will Oliver/AFP/Getty

A new study suggests that women with small memory deficits as they age deteriorate faster than their male counterparts with mild impairments. “All we can say at this point is that there appears to be a faster trajectory for women than men” toward dementia, said a Duke professor who worked on the study. He added that the study, whose primary author was his undergraduate student, does not offer reasons for this disparity or a way to address them. The new study found that this disparity in decline persists over eight years, much longer than the one year previously observed. Women make up two-thirds of dementia patients, in part because they tend to live longer than men.

Read it at *The New York Times* >>

MORE FROM THE BEAST

How Eating Brains Revealed A Clue Towards ... *By Anand*

Veeravagu, Christian Swinney

Brain-Eating Tribe Immune to Dementia



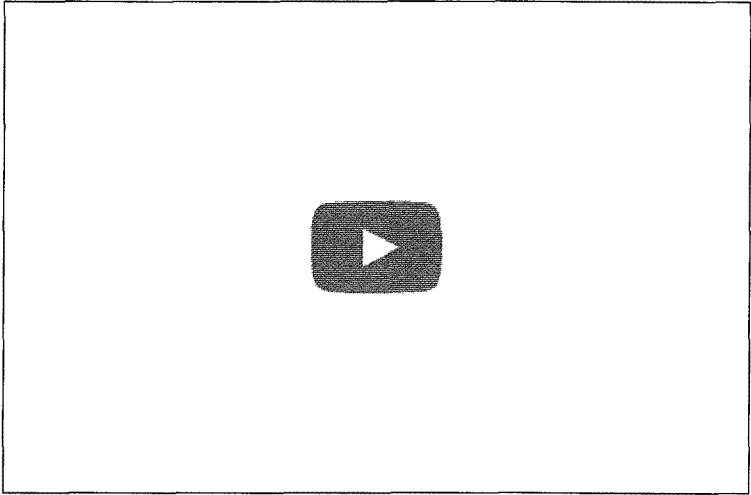
TIED UP 6 days ago

6. Unarmed Man Died in Police Hogtie



via Youtube

An attorney for a Memphis man who died in police custody Saturday says the victim was hogtied and struggled to breathe because of his asthma. Troy Goode, 30, got out of the car his wife was driving and was behaving “erratically” when approached by police. He was detained and placed in a hogtie on a stretcher, all while telling officers that he couldn’t breathe. The attorney emphasized that he’s not speculating about the cause of death, but that it doesn’t appear that Goode posed a threat. “Paramedics arrived on scene, and I see them put him in a four-point restraint or hogtie, I don’t know how else to describe it,” a witness said. “He looked to me like he was struggling or convulsing or both. He appeared to be in distress to me.”



Read it at WTSP >>

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IN CUSTODY *7 days ago*

7. Bland's Death Treated 'As a Murder Case'