

EXHIBIT C

(Plaintiff's Trial Exhibit 573)

On Gawker's Problem With Women

A former staff writer describes how a media company founded on whistleblowing and radical transparency failed its female employees.



The following story—on the treatment of female editors, writers, and managers at Gawker Media—was scheduled to appear on Gawker.com on Friday, November 13. It had been originally written in July, kiboshed in August, reported further in October, and prepped to run in early November. On the day it was expected to be published (after edits and approval from Gawker's editor-in-chief Alex Pareene and Gawker's legal team), executive editor John Cook emailed me and Leah Beckmann (the story's editor) and explained that he'd be killing the piece after deciding that he was “done with Gawker writing about Gawker.”

Cook also noted that I had not reached out to him for comment in the “the four-month reporting and editing process.” But on August 4, I had emailed Cook asking him to please “call me any time” to speak about the story, though he never did. He and I talked on the phone on Saturday and again on Sunday.

Cook's decision to kill the piece was reportedly protested heavily by Gawker staff members on Friday, many of them insisting that they'd prefer to see it published on Gawker.com, if anywhere. In his email to me, Cook remarked, however, that he trusted that the piece would get picked up elsewhere, and that he hoped it would. We've made some minor edits to the original piece since Friday, but here it is in full.

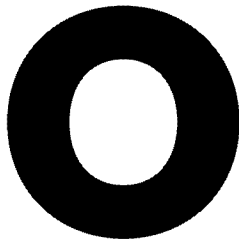
. . .

From Gawker: An Oral History:

"Nick has issues working with women in general. I think it's sort of a semi-purposeful thing where he doesn't understand how to talk to them and how to listen to them." — Alex Pareene

"Oh, that one is too silly for me to respond to." — Nick Denton

. . .



July 16, Gawker.com published a tabloid story about a male escort's thwarted dalliance with a media executive. It did not go over well with readers, many of whom found it to be an irredeemably cruel intrusion on the private affairs of a not very public man. In response to the maelstrom of anger surrounding the story, Gawker Media's managing partnership, which included its president of advertising, voted to pull the post, with founder and CEO Nick Denton arguing later that he'd been "ashamed" to have his name attached to it. The fallout was huge and rippling, inspiring two respected editors at the company, Max Read and Tommy Craggs, to resign in protest. Before the end of the following week, Gawker.com's staff was offered a chance to walk away—with severance—so that a new, "20 percent nicer Gawker" could be built in its stead under then-acting executive editor John Cook.

The proper names above all belong to men, which is fitting because this is a story about the unseen women of Gawker Media. I no longer work at Gawker, and as of two weeks ago neither does the woman who edited this story, Leah Beckmann, who for four months served as interim editor-in-chief of Gawker.com. At the end of October, a permanent EIC for the site was named: Alex Pareene, a well-liked former Gawker writer with undeniable qualifications

for the job. This was the first bit of company news in a long while to receive uniformly positive notices both within the company and without, but there was a context to his hiring that didn't receive due attention anywhere. As Beckmann told me a few months ago, when I was still on staff, "To say that Gawker treats men and women equally is simply untrue."

Gawker Media, an allegedly progressive, whistle-blowing aggravator in the easily-bristled media landscape—one that was the first to break stories on Josh Duggar's attempted infidelity, to expose Greg Hardy's buried domestic abuse, to reveal *The Daily Show's* staff gender inequality, to time and time again call out all sorts of people and publications for their wicked or misleading behavior—was deserving of a harsh critique. Gawker Media itself, despite its proud claims to enlightenment, has a woman problem.



The following excerpt from an interview Nick Denton did with *The New York Times* in July is a good place to start when searching for how Denton envisioned a future Gawker.com:

"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."

There are no women in Denton's vision of an ideal Gawker.com, and when no stories by women were held out for praise in an introductory memo from now-official executive editor John Cook, many felt like they were absent from his vision of an ideal Gawker Media as well. This is a notable omission, given that the company's flagship site was launched and defined by the sharp writing of Elizabeth Spiers, further shaped by the ferocious Jessica Coen and confessional Emily Gould, enhanced by fearless Maureen O'Connor and hilarious Caity Weaver (the site's obvious marquee voice for several years), and managed by Emma Carmichael and Leah Beckmann and Lacey Donohue, adroit editors who did the sort of unseen work that gives a publication its internal momentum. When asked to name his ideal editor-in-chief of Gawker.com, Denton told the *Times*:

"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."

Denton was posturing for *New York Times* readers, but the message unwittingly sent to the female writers and editors of Gawker was that their boss would sooner name a dead man than any living woman for the position. This notion was then further confirmed in Denton's treatment (or rather, maltreatment) of Gawker.com's former features editor, Leah Finnegan, a woman whom many in the company assumed was in line for the editor-in-chief job herself—that is, if she happened to be a man named John. The lesson women are taught at Gawker is that they can either be rabble-rousers for a short time, or reliable composed workers to guarantee some modicum of job security. Lacey Donohue, Gawker Media's executive managing editor, told me over the phone on Saturday that she agreed that "Gawker.com and Deadspin and some of the bigger sites and central management that drive the company have been very masculine. I think the culture of screaming at people or [acting] dismissively, it isn't acceptable. It isn't appropriate. We need to just work better. The way to do that at this company is just to get more female managers."

Diversity in general is a blind spot for Gawker Media. On Monday, John Cook published race and gender diversity statistics for the entire company: Overall it is 79 percent white and 57 percent male. In editorial, the staff is 61 percent male and 38 percent female, though given the fact that Jezebel.com is almost 100 percent female, excluding the women-focused site from his stats would skew editorial to being only 28 percent female. The statistics were released by Cook after BuzzFeed did the same for their company in October, in an equally unsatisfying look at who exactly runs the media.

But as Anna Holmes wrote in *The New York Times Magazine* at the beginning of November, the idea of "diversity" at many companies is more and more just that: a hollow idea. "Bragging about hiring a few people of color, or women, seems to come from the same interpretive bias, where a small amount is enough." In order to foster a diverse company or industry, generous support and integration (for lack of a better word) must be a continual commitment in growing talent.

In January, a black senior editor at Gawker.com, Jason Parham, wrote a post on his personal blog called Gawker Media's Responsibility to Diversity, one that later inspired Cook's release of Gawker's diversity statistics. He was concerned in part by the creation of a new executive editorial team—cheekily called the Politburo, and featuring five male editors and two women editors—reflected a waning interest in editorial diversity. Nick Denton responded in a comment on Parham's post with this:

“Let's welcome, if not out-and-out racists, then at least the wide array of people with whom a conversation is possible: national greatness conservatives, Burkean Tories and business pragmatists, for instance; Christians and other spiritual people; economic liberals, libertarians and techno-utopians; and black and other social conservatives.”

Instead of focusing on a simple request, one familiar to any self-aware media company in 2015—a commitment to “publishing and hiring more Latina voices, queer voices, black voices, and marginalized voices across its core sites”—Denton waved his hand and advocated for more or less the opposite.

And so of course the great remaking of Gawker ended this month with Gawker looking much the same as it did before. Despite his having paid lip service to the idea of reaching beyond the usual precincts to find a new executive editor and a new editor of Gawker.com, despite his having made lots of noise in the press about changing the face of the company, Denton wound up installing two male Gawker Media veterans in jobs that had been held by two male Gawker Media veterans before them. The memo that went out introducing Pareene as the new Gawker EIC also thanked Leah Beckmann for “stepping into the breach and helping out.” Beckmann had taken on the full-time role of Gawker EIC at a time when the site was wavering on the brink of chaos and implosion. During her tenure, Gawker.com had its highest traffic day in history. This recognition of her performance in the role came off both dismissive and gendered. Only a woman would be thanked for “helping out.”

This issue apparently operates differently elsewhere in the company. Denton would eagerly point to Heather Dietrick, the company's president and general counsel, as evidence that women are valued at Gawker. Since Dietrick's hiring, for instance, Gawker Media has assembled a formidable all-female legal team. When asked at the end of July about her thoughts on Gawker's treatment of women, Dietrick sent me this statement:

"I think this is a place that really values women, as evidenced by the powerful positions held by women—me as President, our Chief Strategy Officer, one of the heads of product, four out of the eight site leads—and it's certainly a place that lets good people reach out and excel at whatever they choose. If we need to look closer at making sure we're also raising up good people who are too shy or quiet to reach out, we absolutely will."

On October 30, Chief Strategy Officer Erin Pettigrew stepped down, making her the third executive, after advertising and partnerships president Andrew Gorenstein and executive editor Tommy Craggs, to leave the online publisher's six-member management board this year. Lacey Donohue insisted—after Gawker's recent shakeups—that, "A lot more women are being asked to join the conversations than have ever been at my tenure at Gawker Media." In her position as executive managing editor, she explained that she saw it as "part of her job" to guarantee more leadership roles for women. "We've started to take recruiting a lot more seriously," she said. "I don't think we're fucking around." And in fact, at Gawker's all-hands meeting in October, John Cook's first since accepting the Executive Editor position, he said that the company met with "nine men, seven women, and two of those people were African-American."

I came to write this story as a result of several arguments I'd had with my male then-bosses and colleagues about what was perceived as a pay disparity in the many thousands of dollars between male and female employees hired at the same time in equivalent positions. At a company like Gawker, where the primary missive is radical transparency, there was very little shame in asking colleagues about their salaries or promotions, especially as the entire company began openly discussing the option of unionizing.

The union effort prompted my discovery of an egregious pay discrepancy, which I brought up with male writers and editors to their either mild interest or argumentative dismissal. At one point I was advised by a male superior—a man I like and consider a friend, and who is both progressive and feminist—to not "dick-measure over salary" when I became aware of distinct difference in pay among writers with equivalent jobs. As Joanne Lipman wrote in the *New York Times* in August, "[Men are] absolutely certain that they don't have a gender problem themselves; it must be some other guys who do. Yet they're leaders of companies that pay men more than women for the same jobs." The debate over pay, worth, and skill kept spiraling until I found a new job and left the company.

Perhaps you've had a chance to read through a recently published text called *Gawker: An Oral History*. It's \$2.99 on Kindle, if you'd like me to Venmo you the money. As a person who not all that long ago walked away from Gawker Media, and who also grew up reading Gawker, Jezebel, and Deadspin, the little Kindle Single can actually be a delight—it's not short on insights about the history of a company that changed the way we think about what the troubled media industry in this day and age should be or even aspire to be. There's the stuff about Julia Allison; there's the hiring of A.J. Daulerio to work at a gambling site despite not knowing anything about gambling; there's—invariably—the talk of what happened to Emily Gould, according to the many men around her at the time.

Gawker had already produced female stars, but Emily, one could argue, was the biggest yet. There was the notorious Jimmy Kimmel interview, the confessional posts and public resignation, and after she left Gawker, there was the *New York Times Magazine* cover story about her time at the company. Days before the story—which would embarrass both Denton and the company—was published, Denton saw a video of Gould mimicking a blow job on a plastic tube and fed it to Gawker writer Andrew Krucoff to post. Even now, in 2015, while being interviewed for the *Oral History*, Denton remarked:

“Why not? She's a public person. I'm a public person. This was publicly available.”

But the big issue with Denton's constant fighting with Gould was the way that attitude toward women permeated the company well into the future. After all, when your number one priority as a media empire is to criticize and rattle anyone who enters into your view, it can be hard to remember which subjects are worth the aggression and needling. This leads to targeting your own employees and writers because maybe they're assholes, too.

Former Jezebel features editor and current head of content and editor-in-chief of Broadly, Tracie Morrissey, speaking to Brian Abrams for the *Oral History*, said:

“Emily really ushered in Trojan horse feminism without people realizing it. People were really uncomfortable with a woman in charge of her own narrative and using a platform for a selfish reason. That's what men fucking do all the time. It was just such shit when she would get shit for it.”

Gawker Media was founded on excitement and freedom, which is what drew so many people to become fans and writers there, including myself; but excitement and freedom can lead to dismissiveness and insensitivity, harm and marginalization, often unforgettable and unforgivable damage. Emily Gould

had this to say about Gawker in the *Oral History*: “Nick has a really sort of creepy relationship with women in general. It’s a tough thing for him. It was not like an ordinary workplace. I think a lot of it would never fly today.”

On the phone in July, when I originally hoped this story would run, Jezebel founder Anna Holmes gave me her perspective on the way she feels women are treated at Gawker Media:

“My feeling—now more than ever—is that Nick [Denton] has women in two sorts of positions at the company. The few women who actually wield power are, by and large, incredibly competent and dedicated and are expected to clean up other people’s messes and act as emotional caretakers and moral compasses. The women who are not in power, well, it sometimes felt to me like the company saw them as circus acts; provocative and good for pageviews but ultimately very disposable.”

She continued:

“This isn’t to say that some men at Gawker Media haven’t been considered disposable. But what IS notable is that men in positions of power are not expected or required to be as thoughtful and responsible as their female counterparts—many are in fact REWARDED and admired for their recklessness and immaturity, a recklessness and immaturity, that, as you know, has gotten the company in heaps of trouble over the past couple of years.”

What recently transpired with features editor Leah Finnegan is good proof of Holmes’ assertion. Finnegan had butted heads with Denton (a characteristic of which he is usually fond), and when she requested to be moved to edit at Jezebel instead of leaving the company entirely, Denton (through Heather Dietrick) encouraged her to take the buyout. Dietrick told Finnegan, “Nick is too far away from you creatively and doesn’t see a way to turn it around.”

But then again, maybe this disparaging attitude to women was only limited to Gawker.com, a site where aggressiveness and chafing has defined its voice for 13 years. Were the other sites feeling what many women at Gawker.com had long felt?

“My answer is always: hire women. The more you hire women, the more women will work for you because women will see that coming there, they won’t be treated like outsiders or freaks.” I spoke to io9.com founder and current Gizmodo editor-in-chief Annalee Newitz on the phone in July in an attempt to figure out if gender played a role in how she ran her sites. Newitz told me she’s always made an effort to keep a good gender balance, saying that “When I first started at Gawker, there was racial diversity among the site leads and gender diversity. It’s really shitty because I don’t think it’s a bias toward

white men, I feel like what it is is more laziness toward trying to find people to make it diverse.”

Many staff writers and editors at Jezebel (former and present, who mostly spoke off the record) explained to me that the case for them was very different. Like Gawker, Deadspin, and the other Gawker Media properties, Jezebel is familiar with trials and trouble, and has gotten itself into murky waters, too. But the sense that I got in doing interviews with Jezebel staff writers and editors is that outside of a few controversies, for good or ill, Jezebel is largely left to its own devices by upper management and the executive staff.

This was working in the “pink ghetto,” as one editor put it.

Erin Ryan, Jezebel’s current managing editor, explained the isolation of Jezebel to me this way:

“[Nick Denton]’s statement that we should step out of the shadows is particularly egregious; we’ve been breaking stories and turning in original reporting since the site was founded. We turn in funny, original, edgy, and brave stuff every single fucking day. Nick just doesn’t read it.”

The inverse of this feeling of freedom, however, is one of neglect, and while many writers told me that they loved not having management involved in their business or their editorial decisions, there were two cases that were brought up where a little attention was desperately needed.

In August 2014, Jezebel published “We Have a Rape Gif Problem and Gawker Media Won’t Do Anything About It.” I remember when it appeared because I thought it was exciting to work at a company where people were directly questioning authority on their own site—rather than waiting for another outlet to pick up the story—while also recognizing how fucked up it was that they’d had to resort to this. “In refusing to address the problem,” the post read, “Gawker’s leadership is prioritizing theoretical anonymous tipsters over a very real and immediate threat to the mental health of Jezebel’s staff and readers.” When I spoke to several Jezebel staff writers about their decision to publish it, the same narratives came up over and over.

“It took me four years to build up a callus where I didn’t care anymore and I was able to not read how much people hated me. That was so awful psychologically. It’s way worse for women and it’s way worse when you’re writing about women’s issues and it’s way worse when you’re forced to look at graphic images of sexual assault,” former Jezebel features editor Tracie Morrissey told me about the rape gifs that were littering Jezebel’s comment

section. “No one did anything about the rape gif issue until we wrote a public story and called them out for it.”

The idea that the well-being of the women at Gawker Media was considered only when there was a public outrage over it is not just something that happened in a vacuum, nor is it something of the distant past. Only a few months following the rape gif controversy, the Gawker office seating chart was leaked to The Awl, a boys' club oversight made without considering the real threats that were lobbied against women writers at the company (and on a larger scale, in the media) every day. That same month, reporter Anna Merlan published a report on how the police respond to violent online threats, which thoroughly covered how authority figures largely have no clue or no interest in protecting women who work or exist on the web.

Just as the concerns of women in editorial remain invisible barring extraordinary disclosure, so do their talents. Emma Carmichael, Jezebel's current editor-in-chief and former managing editor of both Gawker and Deadspin, explained that she found “Gawker's gossip sites often operate off of more or less ‘invisible’ female management behind the scenes.” She told me over email that “it's hard for those women to get recognized for their work, because it's not on the top of the masthead or on bylines, but they're the ones pulling the strings each day. Their work isn't missed until they leave out of frustration or get forced out. It's a shameful cycle.”

At Gawker, as in much of the media, women are frequently managing editors or deputy editors, the kinds of jobs that require corralling stables of neurotic writers into successfully running a daily publication. This task can be thankless no matter where a woman works, but especially so at a place like Gawker, where bylines are associated with traffic and traffic is associated with success. To the reader, this labor is invisible, and internally, there was often a sense that this work was unappreciated as star reporters (who were often male) were feted and celebrated for major scoops and big stories. As senior writer Sam Biddle told me over email about editing Valleywag with Nitasha Tiku, who is now a senior writer at BuzzFeed, “As far as I could see, she received the same amount of support and attention from inside Gawker, but in terms of readership and media peer recognition, a lot of her work was skipped over, or undervalued, or even attributed to me. I don't know how exactly to account for that but I think the entire media world reflexively rewards and pays attention to the work of men more than women.”

It is on the backs of women that many publications flourish, and that's why it matters that Denton could hardly muster a female writer or editor's name if he tried. Tireless invisible labor, after all, costs nothing to abuse.

W

hile reporting this story, I encountered two kinds of people: the ones who couldn't wait to read it, and the ones who suggested to me that there simply wasn't a problem and I was thinking myself into a tizzy. Hysterical is another word for it. The former were mostly all women, with the exception of a one or two male editors who accepted that this story needed to exist while also admitting their own culpability. And while mostly all women were supportive of the story as a whole, in the process of reporting, I did find that the issue was far more nuanced than I had originally anticipated.

It became clear that Jezebel staffers were intrigued but quietly removed, while Gawker.com staffers were incredibly worked up about the issue, especially after seeing the way Beckmann and Finnegan (and women in Gawker.com's past) were treated. Female writers at Gizmodo were aware of the problem but didn't identify with it as fiercely, though a few told me about the childish, sexual humor men would often use in their Slack and Campfire chats and of a pay discrepancy that they discovered, too. One female editor at a heavily male website told me she was thrilled to see it written but could not speak to me on the record. It goes without saying that I cannot possibly speak for every woman who has worked at Gawker, past or present, but the hope is that women hired in the future will agree that whatever problem there was has now been extinguished.

An early draft began circulating among the senior staff in August, which led to phone calls from both male and female managers asking me to temper my arguments and walk back my claims, or kill the piece entirely. The first male writer that I let read the story was enthusiastic but insistent that I find more specific examples of how misogyny made it hard for women to do their jobs. Systemic sexism is that bad, especially when it comes to the internal negotiating women do with themselves over whether their experiences are real or imagined. At workplaces where men are the bosses, it is hard to overcome unconscious social bias, and most men don't make it their business to try. Male editors, male writers. Value is determined by the people in charge.

"It's so hard to point out a specific instance of 'this is when sexism at Gawker affected me' because it's so generally engrained in everything we do," Ashley Feinberg, a Gawker.com senior writer told me. "After all, we're supposed to be a progressive company. We're liberal. We're (theoretically, of course) open to diversity. Of course everyone has an equal shot."

She continued:

“But after we write the posts about Gawker trying harder, the posts slamming Silicon Valley for its rampant issues with gender, the posts championing an equal work force. After everyone gets done patting themselves on the back for being a ‘feminist man,’ you have to go back to your seat and watch the men in charge (and it is, at almost every site and in almost all of Politburo [Gawker’s governing editorial body] save for Lacey Donohue, men who are in charge) consistently drop stories, scoops, and tips into the laps of their male mentees.”

“It’s subtle, and it’s easy to excuse any time you point it out. ‘Oh, I was already talking to them about ‘x.’ ‘Oh, it just didn’t cross my mind.’ Which is the whole crux of the problem. It never crosses any guy’s mind. And it makes sense. If it’s not something that they have to be publicly making a show of or publicly being judged on, why would it? So it’s hard to be mad at anyone specific, because these men who are nurtured within a system of wildly pervasive but wholly tacit male favoritism get the best of both worlds. They get to make a show of being progressive and they also get to reap the benefits of a system they’re supposedly fighting against.”

Even in the eleventh hour of writing this piece, I almost scrapped what I had written, as I found myself being asked to question whether the incidents and stories I had experienced and been told about represented a serious, ingrained cultural problem at the company, or in the media at large. But these are facts: A male editor once referred to a female new hire as a “walking sexual harassment case.” There was a pervasive feeling at Gawker that young male reporters are favored for scoops and investigative projects and more thoughtful edits over their female equals. Gawker.com’s most internally-beloved female editor was pushed to take the buyout, even though her supposedly objectionable tone was identical to that of the company’s most valued male editors and writers. No one wants to be straightforward about sexism in their industries because hey, what if it really is in our heads?

In July, right around the time that I was debating quitting Gawker because of the ways I had seen my female superiors and colleagues treated, I emailed my mom, a woman with a doctorate in business who had spent several years working with and consulting in mostly male industries. I explained I was frustrated about gender inequality at work. As Joanne Lipmann noted in her Op-Ed arguing for exposing the gender pay gap, “It’s not that men are intentionally discriminating against women—far from it. I’ve spent the past year interviewing male executives for a book about men and women in the workplace. A vast majority of them are fair-minded guys who want women to succeed.” A Pew Research Center study from 2013 saw 57% of millennial men asserting that more needs to be done to achieve gender equality in the workplace. Not surprisingly, 75% of millennial women felt the same.

This was the essence of my email to my mother—how could men who appeared to respect and admire the women they worked alongside be so callous to what many of us interpreted to be deep-seated sexism or gender favoritism?

She responded in four short lines:

“I’m sorry Dayns. But this is still a man’s world. You aren’t going to change that in your lifetime. Maybe your daughter?”

When women perform invisible labor, they often keep their grievances invisible, too. She’s right. It’s not going to change in my lifetime.



During Gawker.com’s brutal summer—one which saw Leah Finnegan’s departure and Leah Beckmann’s ascension, there were many heated conversations about the future voice and purpose of Gawker as a site, and who got to define what that meant. In one particularly spirited conversation I had with Keenan Trotter, a senior writer at Gawker.com, the topic of “worth” at a publication like Gawker was pored over. I suggested that a personal essay is just as valuable as an investigative piece if both have the power to change the way people think about and reassess the culture we live in. Trotter kindly suggested that my thinking on this matter could be why I was not considered as valuable as my equivalent male writers. He sent me a link to a story that was the result of the male staff writer hunting down an investigation handed to him from the obsessive mind of John Cook, our then-investigations editor. Trotter asked me, “I mean, would you really want to do this story?”

I responded to him: “I would do any kind of story if I was asked. But I was never asked.”

Ashley Feinberg later told me:

“Your value at Gawker is defined by how well your interests line up with those of the people in power. When you have the same predilections, the same fascinations as someone, you are obviously going to speak to them more; you’re going to become closer, and you’re going to trust them more. Because men are almost always going to have more in common with other men, that’s who they’re going to default to

when it comes time to pass out a tip, a piece of advice, or more noticeably, a promotion.

“Which is why it’s hard to fault them for it entirely—women do the same thing to other women. The problem is that, because so few women are in positions of authority, it creates a terrible cycle where women have to work twice as hard to command the same sort of attention. Otherwise, you’ll just get drowned out.”

I sent Nick Denton three requests for comment on this story. In his first two responses, Denton asked for me to divert to Dietrick in his stead, which I did twice, but with questions about Denton’s attitudes specifically left unanswered by her. After enough goading, two and a half weeks after my first attempt to reach out to him, he responded to my third email, “Were there any more general questions, about the company as a whole, that are better answered by me?” By that time, I’d gotten all I needed.

Though this is a story about Gawker Media—a cohort of publications that I grew up reading and admiring, a place where I saw my writing grow and where I’ve worked alongside some of the smartest and most talented people I’ve ever met—it could be about any company in any number of industries. Gawker may pride itself on being a trailblazer in the stubbornly slow-to-adapt media, but only if starts to treat gender favoritism as the toxic epidemic that it is, will that reputation truly be deserved. After all, someone’s gotta do it.



*This story was written by **Dayna Evans**, a writer for *The Cut* at New York Magazine. It was edited by **Leah Beckmann**, former interim editor-in-chief of Gawker and former senior editor at Matter. Illustration by **Jim Cooke**.*

