

WOOD-TV Memo Executive Summary

The recommendation is termination of the following individuals in the following order:

- Stanton Tang, News Director
- Lucas Stier, Executive Producer
- Amy Fox, Assistant News Director
- Madeline Odle, Executive Producer

Leadership Team

The General Manager was out of the station due to a personal matter. On Tuesday, June 13, 2023, Julie Brink conducted her usual management meeting via Zoom. There was no discussion of issues regarding Pride coverage brought up at that meeting. News Director Stanton Tang, left the management meeting, entered his office and called Amy Fox to discuss coverage of Pride. After this discussion, he asked her to write a memo based on what was discussed. She drafted the memo and asked him to review. He added two lines. Amy Fox then sent the memo out to the news staff. Due to the managers meeting taking place shortly prior to the memo being sent, employees originally believed that management took place in drafting the memo. The leadership team outside of the News Director was not aware of the memo being sent or the problems caused by the memo until employees approached them about the memo.

During the management meeting held during the Grand Rapids visit, the leadership team expressed their anger and disappointment in Stanton Tang.

Julie Brinks

Julie learned of the memo from Lucas Stier, EP at the station. Regarding the news department, Julie Brinks was made aware of a few issues regarding Stanton Tang previously which she addressed. None of the complaints rose to the level of incompetence as this instance. There had also been complaints against Lucas Stier which were investigated and unsubstantiated. Julie is engaged with her staff with the leadership team having zero complaints about her. During our discussions with multiple employees, the majority did not raise any concerns about the General Manager.

Stanton Tang and Amy Fox

The memo generated by Stanton Tang and Amy Fox was because of conversations he had with members of his church. He finally stated that this was the reason after being questioned about his rationale. He kept changing his rationale for drafting the memo which was confusing because the previous reasons did not have anything to do with coverage of Pride.

Amy Fox drafted the memo with input from Stanton after their conversation on the morning of June 13th. She was aware the memo was controversial yet chose to send the memo to all news staff. Stanton and Amy at no point conveyed how controversial the memo was to their General Manager or fellow members of their leadership team.

Rationale for termination is that they have lost the confidence of the room and there is evidence that they are violating the standards of journalism by letting their personal views impact their guidance on news coverage.

Executive Producers

The executive producers, Lucas Stier and Madeline Odle were clearly aware that it is against company policy to speak on behalf of the organization without permission. Their explanation is that they were protecting members of the news staff. They support the LGBTQ+ community and wanted to ensure that the reporters were not associated with the memo.

Lucas Stier was given clear instruction by the General Manager to refrain from making comments and continuing to insert himself into the situation. He chose to disregard her instructions. Madeline Odle confirmed to Theresa Underwood and Courtney Williams that she was aware she was not to speak on behalf of the company and comment.

Both individuals took an internal matter to external sources. Lucas Stier directly contacted the National Lesbian and Gay Journalist Association and the previous News Director who works at a competitor station. He also participated in an interview with an external media organization and expressly gave permission for his tweets to be used in articles.



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