

# **Silencing a Local Journalist:**

## **WPFW's Suspension of Pete Tucker**

### **Introduction**

For the past two years, I have worked as a local journalist in the District of Columbia to bring more time and attention to social activists who routinely are ignored and silenced by the corporate media. Most of my stories, reports and long-form interviews have aired on WPFW 89.3 FM, Pacifica Radio (and are archived at [TheFightBack.org](http://TheFightBack.org)). But now, my work no longer appears on this important station. I want to offer a brief summary of this situation in the hopes that it can be resolved.

Beginning in mid-April, my reporting became a nightly fixture on Spectrum Today, WPFW's evening news program hosted by WPFW News Director Askia Muhammad. Over a six month period, Mr. Muhammad aired more than 100 of my reports and introduced me as "Journalist Peter Tucker." These interviews were cited in the [Washington Post](#), [City Paper](#) and [FAIR's Extra!](#), among other outlets.

My reports exposed D.C. Councilmembers' second-six figure salaries ([Jack Evans](#), [David Catania](#)), as well as their possible conflicts of interest ([Jack Evans](#), [Harry Thomas](#)). I've covered former D.C. Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee's "school reform." But rather than only interviewing her (which I did until she [stormed away](#)), I spoke with parents, [students](#), [teachers](#), [activists](#) and [journalists](#), who have a very different take. I also examined the Washington Post's possible [conflict of interest](#) when it comes to reporting on education issues due to its ownership of the testing company Kaplan.

Additionally, I've reported on: D.C.'s twin epidemics of [HIV/AIDS](#) and [poverty](#); the closing of homeless [shelters](#) and the [children](#) within homeless shelters; the [Black Farmers'](#) struggle for justice, as well as a [farmers' market](#) in the Ward 8 food desert; [anti-war](#) activists and [anti-slavery](#) activists; [Net Neutrality](#), as well as the dangers of [online voting](#); the fight for [youth space](#) in

Silver Spring and the fight against a [youth detention facility](#) in Baltimore; [public housing](#) issues, as well as [private housing](#) issues, not to mention [WPFW's housing](#) issues; former Mayor Adrian Fenty's [election maneuverings](#) and then-mayoral challenger Vincent [Gray's candidacy](#).

It is not a coincidence that my reports aired on Pacifica Radio. Six years ago, I picked up Amy Goodman's "The Exception to the Rulers" and read about Lew Hill, a World War II resister who was placed in a detention facility because of his beliefs. Upon release, Lew Hill set out to create a media that didn't benefit from war. This marked not only the birth of Pacifica Radio, but also the beginning of listener-sponsored radio in this country. This proud history drew me to WPFW and drove me to continue reporting for the station, without pay.

In late September, Askia Muhammad fell ill and was out for an extended period. In his absence, I hosted Spectrum Today during the station's Fall Fundraising Drive and the response from listeners was gratifying. Many listeners pledged in order to receive copies of interviews I had done for Spectrum Today.

In late October, Mr. Muhammad returned to the station not only with renewed health, but apparently with an agenda that included getting rid of me. Upon returning, Mr. Muhammad began cutting my pieces, saying they were "always way too long," "too old," "often polemical," and "didn't fit" with his program. Then, on Dec. 1, without explanation, he suspended me.

In subsequent emails, Mr. Muhammad said, "I began to realize that I no longer trusted your journalistic judgment, worse still, I realized I no longer respected your ethics, or your journalistic integrity."<sup>1</sup> He accused me of being "insubordinate to senior staff members" and "overbearing toward other volunteers,"<sup>2</sup> among "OTHER ETHICAL AND JOURNALISTIC OFFENSES OF WHICH YOU ARE GUILTY."<sup>3</sup>

When I asked for a fair and open hearing, Mr. Muhammad replied in a Dec. 6 email, "I have no interest in engaging in a spitting contest with you over my reasons for suspending you, certainly not out in the open... These are not "allegations" against you, this is a confidential personnel matter. This is not some cause celebre ala Juan Williams being purged from the ranks of NPR.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix I

These are delicate matters, that regardless of their outcome, could ultimately reflect on any potential news outlet's future consideration of you as a potential employee. What is your goal? To have some adjudicating body force you back into the WPFW News Department? Please consider very carefully how you choose to proceed in this matter."<sup>4</sup>

At the Dec. 15 WPFW Local Station Board meeting, more than a dozen longtime activists and community leaders raised concerns about my suspension. In his Dec. 20 email, Mr. Muhammad referred to them as a "Lynch Mob... with torches and pitchforks."<sup>5</sup>

This has gone too far. I respectfully request that my December 1st, 2010 suspension from the WPFW News Department by WPFW News Director Askia Muhammad be recognized as illegitimate and undone in writing as soon as possible.

### **Fundraising Drive**

Askia Muhammad's absence coincided with the station's Fall Fundraising Drive. When I hosted Spectrum Today, the program raised far more money on a nightly basis than it had previously. In a personally signed Oct. 29 letter, members of the WPFW Development Department wrote to me: "We wanted to say a special thank you for stepping in for Spectrum during the Fall Membership Drive and really running with it. Not only did you make yourself available at the last minute throughout the duration of the drive, but you came up with some original thank you gifts appropriate to Spectrum's local focus, and produced a show which regularly met its quota of pledges!"<sup>6</sup>

When Mr. Muhammad began cutting my pieces, I asked him what I was doing differently or what I should be covering, but he had nothing constructive to offer. What's more, it became next to impossible to get a phone call or email returned. In one of the only calls Mr. Muhammad returned, I said it was ironic that, after stepping in and hosting Spectrum Today in his absence, he was now cutting my pieces. Mr. Muhammad replied, "I wouldn't look into that too much."

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<sup>4</sup> See Appendix E

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix N

## **My Treatment of Volunteers**

After requesting an explanation for my suspension, I received a Dec. 3 email from Askia Muhammad saying I was "overbearing toward other volunteers making them feel uncomfortable and unwilling to continue to contribute to Spectrum Today."

Malcolm L. Wiseman Jr. is a volunteer with the WPFW News Department. In Askia Muhammad's absence, Mr. Wiseman went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that Spectrum Today stayed on the air. He described our interactions: "From my numerous encounters with Pete Tucker, which were about once a week overall during the last year or more but as much as two or three times a week during Mr. Muhammad's recent medical leave, I didn't observe any negative, news-team-threatening behavior. He was adamant in taking on the tasks of gathering news stories and making them ready for airing on Spectrum Today (ST), and he was extremely concerned that ST not be removed from the air during Mr. Muhammad's absence."

Mr. Wiseman continued, "Pete, at least on my duty days at the station, comported himself professionally, especially in preparation for the airing of ST. He would entreat me to participate in the airings, even days that were not my regular schedule. He liked me to take the lead role of anchoring and preparing intros and outros, mixing his stories with those of others."

At a Nov. 19 meeting with WPFW Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Pope, Mr. Muhammad said, "On one instance, both Mr. Tucker and his colleague, Mr. Lawson, were instructed not to include a piece, and Mr. Tucker then told Mr. Lawson that they would include it anyway, upsetting Mr. Lawson." Oct. 4 is what I assume to be the day of my "upsetting" conversation with WPFW News Volunteer Michael Lawson. Oct. 4 is also the day that Interim Program Director Bob Daughtry attempted to ban me from the station (more on this later). On that day, I wasn't given instructions for that evening's broadcast of Spectrum Today. It was only through Michael Lawson that I learned that Bob Daughtry had said that no piece of mine was to air that evening (regardless of the subject matter, about which Mr. Daughtry never inquired).

As we sat next to one another in the WPFW News Department, Mr. Lawson told me that Mr. Daughtry had offered no explanation for banning my piece. I said to Mr. Lawson that if I had been asked to ban his work, I would at least ask why. Mr. Lawson said there was no way that I

could know how I would handle such a situation. I told him that, at 31 years of age, I knew that I would not ban someone without so much as asking a question.

This quiet Oct. 4 exchange is the sum total of the disagreements I've had with Mr. Lawson. I explained this to Askia Muhammad at our Dec. 14 meeting, which seemed to go well. But in his Dec. 20 email, Mr. Muhammad wrote: "By your own admission you have offended... Michael Lawson."<sup>7</sup> By my own admission, I had a quiet discussion with Mr. Lawson in which I calmly stated that I would not ban his work without so much as asking a question.

Additionally, Mr. Muhammad stated: "Mr. Tucker also had confrontations with news messengers David Whettstone, Sudeep Bhatia and James Bradley."<sup>8</sup> I don't recall any confrontations with either James Bradley or David Whettstone. While I was unable to contact Mr. Bradley, Mr. Whettstone said, "I have not had a confrontation with Peter."

Nor do I recall any confrontations with Sudeep Bhatia, who I met through the WPFW News Department where he reads the 1 PM and 3 PM headlines news on Fridays. After we became friends, Mr. Bhatia expressed interest in helping to get my website (TheFightBack.org) off the ground. Not possessing much technological skill, I was grateful for his efforts and expertise. Unfortunately, it appears that Mr. Bhatia went from assisting TheFightBack.org to sabotaging it. In mid-October, Mr. Bhatia's behavior suddenly changed and he stopped returning phone calls and emails. Then he started sporadically sending strange emails.

Alarmed at his behavior and concerned for his well-being, Navid Nasr, my partner at TheFightBack.org, and I went to visit Mr. Bhatia at his father's house. Sudeep Bhatia seemed to be doing fine. Not long after this, however, The Fight Back's website and Facebook page were attacked. Mr. Bhatia had the passwords to both. Additionally, around this time, we received vicious anonymous emails at TheFightBack.org, most of which attacked me personally and discussed WPFW in detail.

The only vicious email that wasn't anonymous purported to be from Bob Daughtry ("bobd@wpfw.org"). It was in response to my testimony before the D.C. Council regarding Councilmember Tommy Wells' then-proposed proof of District residency requirement for

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<sup>7</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix J

obtaining shelter and services ([posted at TheFightBack.org](#)). In my testimony, I mentioned my brother who has paranoid schizophrenia. The comment from "bobd@wlfw.org" reads: "Calumny is a mortal sin, Pete. Think about it. Think about how many falling [*sic*] out you have had in DC. Like you testified about your brother, you may be paranoid schizophrenic. To have so many disputes is not normal. To talk hatefully about so many people is not healthy. People only wish the best for you. Get some help."<sup>9</sup>

Of course, this email is not from Bob Daughtry. Had I believed otherwise, I would have brought it to his attention immediately. Yet when the situation was reversed and "I" was the one sending hurtful emails, the station suspended me, then slandered me, all without showing me the email "I" sent or asking me about it.

### **Trial by Email**

This may be Askia Muhammad's most serious allegation: "[Y]ou sent me and several others an e-mail that was totally out of bounds. It was posted on the DC Indy Media website by a "Kent Clark" and it purported a 15-year-old conversation according a THIRD HAND SOURCE named "Doctor Radio" which alleged that interim Program Director Bob Daughtry said in a conversation with Tom Porter at the old WFLW studios that he "hated White people."<sup>10</sup>

In my Dec. 5 response to Mr. Muhammad, I wrote: "Let me state unequivocally that I deny writing such an email, sending such an email to "you and several others," "post[ing it] on the DC Indy Media website," or distributing it to "prominent other journalists outside of WFLW." I have searched my "sent" box but have been unable to find any such emails. I fear that emails may have been sent out from my email account by another individual and without my knowledge."<sup>11</sup>

To date, only one email has been forwarded to me by Mr. Muhammad. He is the recipient of the email and it appears that I ("pete10506@yahoo.com") am the sender.<sup>12</sup> Initially, I believed that someone had sent an email from my email account. Upon closer examination, however,

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<sup>9</sup> See Appendix O

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix D

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix K

it turns out that the email was sent from the DC Indymedia website (dc.indymedia.org). DC Indymedia offers users the ability to send an article to any email address, *from any email address*. When a user opts to "Email this article," they are asked for the "Recipient email," as well as "Your email." Additionally, the user can insert an "Extra message."

Johnny Barnes is the Executive Director of the D.C. chapter of the ACLU. I asked him if I could send an email through DC Indymedia that appeared to come from him. The email was sent to Linda Leaks, Co-Founder and Lead Housing Organizer for Empower DC. When DC Indymedia asked me for "Your email," I entered Johnny Barnes' email, rather than my own. Linda Leaks received the email, but saw no indication that I was, in fact, the sender.<sup>13</sup> The quote Johnny Barnes gave me permission to send reads, "The First Amendment allows individuals to express themselves freely, but it does not allow other individuals to make statements for them." (The email Askia Muhammad received from "me" has the same format as the email Linda Leaks received from "Johnny Barnes": Compare Appendices K and L.)

"My" email to Askia Muhammad - in addition to containing the text of a post at DC Indymedia which made unfounded allegations against Bob Daughtry - had this "Extra message" from "me": "i've mailed this to lots of people - tom sherwood, my partner navid nasr."<sup>14</sup> NBC4 reporter Tom Sherwood said, "I have checked my extensive email files back to last summer and have not found the subject email. Having been shown its substance, I'm certain I would remember it even if I subsequently had deleted it. So it is my honest feeling that I never received it." Navid Nasr said, "With rare exceptions, I never delete my emails. Working backwards and forwards from the date that Askia received the email, I haven't been able to find any such email from Pete at all."

Without ever discussing it with me, Mr. Muhammad assumed that I sent the email in question. In his Dec. 3 email, he stated: "That action on your part showed abominable journalistic judgment... You distributed that suspicious, slanderous item widely, including to prominent other journalists outside of WPFW! Why would anyone inside the WPFW family circulate such a slanderous item to outsiders? Especially such a suspicious, and unverified report? That act demonstrated a

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<sup>13</sup> See Appendix L

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix K

callous lack of judgment and more importantly, an ugly contempt for journalistic integrity in my opinion."<sup>15</sup>

### **Where's the "Violation"?**

In his Dec. 3 email, Askia Muhammad wrote: "As journalists we have a bond of trust with our listeners (readers/viewers) that they can feel comfortable that the reports they receive from us are reported because of their "news worthiness" and not necessarily because we have an axe to grind in the story's outcome. You and I have had several conversations about my fear that your interest in one story or another came close to or crossed over that boundary. Whenever I was here I policed such content so that it did not reach our airwaves. Twice in my absence however, you violated that trust. Once when I was away for just a short time and you aired a DC Schools interview I had cautioned you about (we subsequently talked about that violation), and on several occasions it happened during my illness."<sup>16</sup>

After my Dec. 14 face-to-face meeting with Mr. Muhammad, it became apparent that the "DC Schools" interview he was describing as a "violation" was my first [audio interview](#) with Chris Bergfalk, an award winning DCPS teacher who exposed how then-DC Schools Chancellor Michelle Rhee manipulated test data. In the hopes of getting ongoing coverage for the important issues Mr. Bergfalk was raising, I set up a meeting with him, Mr. Muhammad and myself at Mr. Bergfalk's house on Sunday, May 16. At the conclusion of our meeting, Mr. Muhammad told Mr. Bergfalk that he would follow up with him, but weeks passed and he did not. It had taken me several weeks to get all three of us together, so I had patiently sat on this story for well over a month.

In June, I co-hosted four shows about DCPS on "More Room On the Outside" on DCTV with Toussaint Tingling-Clemmons. We kicked off the month with an hour long [televised interview](#) with Mr. Bergfalk. Directly following the show, I conducted an [audio interview](#) with Mr. Bergfalk in the parking lot of DCTV. This interview aired in two parts on June 10 and June 11 on Spectrum Today, when Mr. Muhammad was on vacation (a vacation for which he did not

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<sup>15</sup> See Appendix C

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix C



give me advance notice). It's not clear to me what the "violation" is. I went out of my way to include Mr. Muhammad, hoping to spark his interest. Unfortunately, he decided to sit on the story for over a month. When he returned and we spoke about the piece, Mr. Muhammad said that he felt hurt because he had hoped to do the story together. I don't recall him referring to this as a "violation," but apparently doing so now fits his agenda.

Regarding the interview with Mr. Bergfalk, he also stated, "Mr. Muhammad received a complaint from the schoolboard for unfair coverage." The complaint that Mr. Muhammad showed me was not from the school board, but from Frederick Lewis, Assistant Press Secretary for then-Chancellor Michelle Rhee. The Nov. 19 minutes also state: "Mr. Muhammad had asked Mr. Tucker not to air a piece on education until they had an opinion from the school board for it." This is also incorrect.

Interestingly, Mr. Muhammad did not always think poorly of my education coverage. Malcolm L. Wiseman Jr. said: "My one concern about Pete which I brought up to Mr. Muhammad about eight months ago was his dogged reporting in pursuit of the Fenty/Rhee school and other administration policies. I told Mr. Muhammad that I thought his reporting was one-sided, against the policies. Mr. M was not troubled by this and basically supported Pete, saying he was doing his job. I came to agree with Mr. Muhammad. Pete has a passion for his job, and I enjoyed working with him."

### **"Insubordinate" or Unwilling to be Bullied?**

In his Dec. 3 email, Askia Muhammad said he'd heard I was "insubordinate to senior staff members." While no specifics were offered, he is referring to an Oct. 4 exchange I had with Gloria Minott, the Director of Public Affairs, and Bob Daughtry, the Interim Program Director.

In Mr. Muhammad's absence, Gloria Minott was the producer of Spectrum Today, but in name only. Ms. Minott didn't pull audio clips (which is required for the production of Spectrum Today), nor did she necessarily listen to Democracy Now! (which is the main source of content for Spectrum Today). Also she was not always around in the afternoons, yet the show airs from 6:00-7:00 PM on weekdays.

What's more, Ms. Minott has a history of berating me. In a July 1 email to Bob Daughtry I wrote: "I'd like to discuss with someone how I was treated by Gloria Minott yesterday evening. In my three years being around this station, I've never raised my voice at Gloria Minott, yet she continues to feel it is acceptable to verbally attack me. Last night was quite possibly the worst of her tirades. I look forward to hearing from you."<sup>17</sup>

After speaking with me, Bob Daughtry set up a meeting in which the two of us were joined by Donnie McKethan, the Human Resources person. At the conclusion of the meeting, it was determined that the next steps were for Bob Daughtry and Donnie McKethan to have a meeting with Gloria Minott, and then for all four of us to sit down together, which has yet to happen.

Monday, Oct. 4, Gloria Minott, Bob Daughtry and I had an impromptu meeting, unfortunately without Donnie McKethan. Ms. Minott and Mr. Daughtry were angry with me for separate reasons. After Ms. Minott ripped into me for having hosted Spectrum Today that prior Friday, it was Mr. Daughtry's turn. He accused me of not having properly "vetted" Nils Devita, a participant in the Oct. 2 "One Nation" rally on the National Mall.

The One Nation rally took place the day after the release of "Waiting for Superman," a film which stars Michelle Rhee and attacks public school teachers. (On Spectrum Today Oct. 1, I hosted a [panel discussion on the film](#) with Chris Bergfalk and Jim Lyons, upsetting Ms. Minott). Dressed as Superman, Nils Devita, a 23-year veteran New York City public school teacher, fielded interviews as he held a sign which read "Stop Searching for a 'Superman.' We Are Here! Public School Teachers." As I waited with Mr. Devita, I learned that he knew Michelle Rhee from a Teach for America training they did together in Texas. I passed this tidbit along to Bob Daughtry, who was back at the studio. At the appropriate time, I handed Mr. Devita my phone. During the interview, apparently Mr. DeVita was more eager to discuss the ongoing attacks on public education than the fact that he personally knew Michelle Rhee.

At the Oct. 4 meeting at the station, Mr. Daughtry repeatedly said that Mr. Devita did not, in fact, know Michelle Rhee and that I hadn't properly "vetted" him. Mr. Daughtry's accusation didn't bother me. As a journalist, it's not my job to "vet" people, but to interview them. Furthermore, it is incorrect that Mr. Devita didn't know Chancellor Rhee ("Yeah, I know Michelle Rhee,"

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix M

Nils Devita said in a Dec. 28 phone conversation. "We were in Teach for America together in Houston in 1994.") But when Bob Daughtry repeatedly called my journalism suspect, I responded, equally forcefully, saying, "I'm a good journalist whether you know it or not." Mr. Daughtry then accused me of being "insubordinate." After abruptly declaring the meeting over, Mr. Daughtry stuck his arm in my chest as he stormed out of the room. He then stepped to me like he wanted to fight. Ms. Minott stepped between us and Mr. Daughtry calmed down and walked away. He didn't walk far, however, but instead stopped at the desk of Interim General Manager Robert West and requested that I be banned from the station. Mr. West refused the request and instead sat the three of us down. As I was describing to Mr. West how Mr. Daughtry had put his arm in my chest, Mr. Daughtry threatened, "If I touched you, you'd know it."

Askia Muhammad's allegation that I "was insubordinate to senior staff members" is likely based on these Oct. 4 exchanges. The impromptu Oct. 4 meeting was put together by Bob Daughtry, who knew that Ms. Minott was upset with me and that she had a history of losing her temper at me. Mr. Daughtry not only conjoined his and Ms. Minott's attacks on me, but he accused me of practicing suspect journalism, put his arm in my chest, stepped to me like he wanted to fight, requested that I be banned from the station and threatened me in front of Robert West. Yet Mr. Muhammad, without asking me a question, labeled me "insubordinate" and suspended me.

### **Other Miscellaneous Allegations**

Determining which allegations to take most seriously has not been easy (all of the allegations can be found in the Appendix). For example, do I take seriously Askia Muhammad's statement that, "WAMU has accused Mr. Tucker of pretending to be from their station"?<sup>18</sup> Mr. Muhammad dismissed this allegation when the WAMU News Director called him about it several months ago. Mr. Muhammad said that he knew that I wouldn't impersonate a WAMU reporter and that what almost certainly happened is that people got the stations' call letters mixed up. Yet Mr. Muhammad is presently using WAMU's accusation as part of his justification for suspending me. In a Dec. 17 phone conversation, I questioned WAMU News Director Jim Asendio. Mr. Asendio said that he called WPFW after receiving two separate reports that a white male reporter

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<sup>18</sup> See Appendix J

from WPFW was impersonating a WAMU reporter. I asked Mr. Asendio if he could provide the names of the people who had made this claim, but he said he did not have them.

Mr. Muhammad also alleges, "[The] Prince George's County Council and the DC Council have complained about Mr. Tucker's behavior and said that he falsely represented himself."<sup>19</sup> Karen Zavakos, Legislative Officer for the Prince George's County Council, denied that the Prince George's County Council either complained about my behavior or stated that I misrepresented myself.

When I asked Mr. Muhammad at our Dec. 14 meeting about the alleged complaints from the D.C. Council, he was less than clear. He asked me if I had been banned from the D.C. Council at one point. I explained to him that Councilmember David Catania had, in fact, banned me from testifying before the Health Committee for over a year (without any explanation) and that he subsequently lifted that ban (also without explanation).

The ban was initiated almost two years ago, prior to my becoming a regular contributor to Spectrum Today. It was the result of my activism in opposition to the dangerously under-tested HPV vaccine being mandated for sixth grade girls in D.C., which Mr. Catania pushed through. I discussed this in a series of articles published in *themail* (dcwatch.com) in 2009.<sup>20</sup> (At an April 9, 2009 hearing before Mr. Catania, numerous witnesses [testified in opposition to my ban](#), including Renee Bowser, a lawyer and then-elected official, who now chairs the WPFW Local Station Board.)

To summarize, Mr. Muhammad has provided no evidence backing up his allegation that I misbehaved and/or misrepresented myself at either the Prince George's County Council or the DC Council.

### **A Fair and Open Hearing**

Serious allegations have been leveled against me with little to no evidence to back them up. In light of this, it seems appropriate to call for a fair and open hearing. Yet when I suggested this,

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix J

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix P

Mr. Muhammad made veiled threats: "I am sensing an adversarial tone in your correspondence... There are no "allegations" against you and you don't need Perry Mason or Johnny Cochran to defend you. This is not that kind of party. I do not intend to participate in any "open hearing" concerning your work in the WPFW News Department. My reasons for terminating you are confidential personnel matters and are not appropriate for any kind of "open hearing."... You seem to be intent on making this case some sort of "cause celebre." You have already told people outside of the WPFW family about your suspension, and I was told you have promised to make some sort of a public statement about this in the future. To be perfectly honest about the way the tone of your correspondence strikes me, it seems like you are trying to gather "evidence" for some sort of inquisition against me, if so, I assure you, I will not participate in such a Salem Trial... As I said before, be careful how you proceed. It's your career, your record of service and your relationship with WPFW that are in the balance here. Once again I ask: What is it that you want? How would you have this matter resolved?"<sup>21</sup>

A number of longtime activists, while praising the station, expressed concern about my suspension at the Dec. 15 WPFW Local Station Board (LSB) meeting. In his Dec. 20 email, Mr. Muhammad referred to them as a "Lynch Mob... with torches and pitchforks."<sup>22</sup> This "Lynch Mob" consisted of: Linda Leaks; Navid Nasr; Greg Wragg, videographer with STREATS TV; Zein El Amine, a leading education activist; Candace Wolf, an activist and storyteller; Brian Anders, a homeless advocate who works with Empower DC; several D.C. taxicab drivers, including Ali Tahmaseb, Carolyn Robinson, Larry Frankel, Trevor Young, Billy Ray Edwards (a former WPFW LSB member); among others.

### **From Bad to Worse: Dec. 14 - Dec. 20**

Getting into the station for my scheduled Dec. 14 meeting with Askia Muhammad wasn't easy. On the evening of Dec. 1, as per Askia Muhammad's request of that same day, I handed in my WPFW security card, which was somewhat challenging since it had already been deactivated. For the Dec. 14 meeting, I had to rely on WPFW Office Manager Gerri Mahdi, who sits at the

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix G

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix I

front desk, to let me into the station. But she refused to do so. Fortunately, someone else let me in.

At my meeting with Mr. Muhammad, I laid out much of what is contained in this report, apparently to no effect. In his Dec. 20 email, Mr. Muhammad misrepresented what was said at our meeting (all caps are Mr. Muhammad's): "This will be my final correspondence with you on this subject... I will for the record reiterate what I told you in our private meeting Dec. 14. Before I EVEN CONSIDER lifting your suspension, I must see some contrition on your part, and acceptance of your responsibility for your relations with others on the staff... By your own admission you have offended: Interim Program Director Bob Daughtry; Public Affairs Director Gloria Minott; Office Manager Gerrie Mahdi; among the paid staff; and Michael Lawson; and Sudeep Bhatia among the unpaid staff!!... BEFORE I WILL EVEN CONSIDER WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN IN THE NEWS DEPARTMENT YOU MUST APOLOGIZE VERBALLY AND IN WRITING TO THOSE PEOPLE, who you admit offending(!!) and with whom I work all the time."

By my own admission, I have not offended these individuals. When I have been presented with specific allegations, I have carefully shown them to be inaccurate. Mr. Muhammad's willingness to misrepresent what was said at our Dec. 14 meeting is troubling. In his Dec. 20 email, Mr. Muhammad also stated: "And finally, I think you owe me an apology for taking so much of my time to respond to and be concerned about these appeals of you and your posse, WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF REMORSE OR CONTRITION ON YOUR PART OR CONSIDERATION OF THE TROUBLE OR TIME CONSUMED WHICH YOU HAVE CAUSED FOR ALL CONCERNED!"

"In addition, I am personally offended by your dragging my name and the reputation of the News Department through the mud with the Lynch Mob you assembled with torches and pitchforks at the LSB meeting Dec. 15. From what I understand, they spoke against the News Department and made veiled threats to withhold support from the station if you and you alone are not a part of it. I ASK AGAIN, WHAT OUTCOME DO YOU DESIRE FROM YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS PROCESS??? NOT A MUMBLING WORD HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT YOU, OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICIAL CHANNELS BY ME OR ANYONE ELSE ON THE STAFF, YET YOU

HAVE ENGAGED IN A VOCAL PUBLIC CAMPAIGN TELLING PEOPLE FAR AND WIDE ABOUT YOUR SUSPENSION. Ordinarily employees don't want to publicize their firings. I don't understand what you are trying to accomplish, except the disruption of the station and its relationship with our listeners, at the most critical time in its history!

"DO YOU BELIEVE SOME OUTSIDE AUTHORITY OR FORCE, SUCH AS THE LSB CAN FORCE YOU BACK INTO A NEWS DEPARTMENT WHERE YOU HAVE ADMITTEDLY OFFENDED SO MANY PEOPLE?? AND HAVE SHOWN NO SIGN OF ATTEMPTING TO MEND THE FENCES? NOT TO MENTION OTHER ETHICAL AND JOURNALISTIC OFFENSES OF WHICH YOU ARE GUILTY WHICH HAVE BEEN SPELLED OUT PLAINLY!! WHAT IS YOUR GOAL? TO DISRUPT THE HARMONY OF OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT ONCE AGAIN?? WELL YOU'RE CERTAINLY DOING A GOOD JOB OF THAT WITH THIS CAMPAIGN OF YOURS!!

"IF YOUR GOAL IS TO RETURN AS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING IN THE WPFW NEWS DEPARTMENT, YOU MUST BEGIN BY APOLOGIZING VERBALLY AND IN WRITING TO THE PEOPLE BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION YOU HAVE OFFENDED ON THE WPFW STAFF!! Namely Bob Daughtry, Gloria Minott, Gerrie Mahdi, Michael Lawson, and Sudeep Bhatia. Otherwise, there is no point in you saying nice things to me, while harboring a grudge against the people who work together with me in relative harmony in your absence! I hope I have made myself clear!"<sup>23</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Being a journalist is not easy, and it is all but impossible without support. Whenever I was in a difficult situation, Askia Muhammad was there for me. I felt privileged to work with him. Not only did he have my back, but he aired my work on a nightly basis. It's hard to imagine a bigger vote of confidence. Yet when he returned to work in late October, he began cutting my pieces. Whereas before we discussed things, now there was no opportunity to do so. Unable to

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<sup>23</sup> See Appendix I

communicate with Mr. Muhammad and unable to get meaningful feedback regarding why my reports were being cut, I stopped submitting pieces.

Mr. Muhammad had carried out his agenda. After working together for an extended period, and very closely for sixth months, he had effectively suspended me by cutting my reports. But apparently that wasn't enough and on Dec. 1 he went further and officially suspended me.

I respectfully request that my December 1st, 2010 suspension from the WPFW News Department by WPFW News Director Askia Muhammad be recognized as illegitimate and undone in writing as soon as possible.



## Appendix A

Wed, December 1, 2010 3:39:58 PM

### Suspension

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>	
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>	
Cc:	pope_rachel@wpfw.org	

Peter Tucker:

Effective immediately, you are suspended from the WPFW News Department.

Please return your green-door-access-security "GE entreecard" to Office Manager Gerri Mahdi at your earliest convenience.

If you have not already done so, please refrain from identifying yourself as being affiliated with the WPFW News Department.

Thank you for your past service and your expected cooperation in this matter.

Askia Muhammad,  
News Director

## Appendix B

Thu, December 2, 2010 8:23:13 AM

Re: Suspension

From:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	Askia Muhammad <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Askia,

It has been a privilege and a pleasure working with you. Per your request, I put the "GE entrecard" on Gerri Mahdi's desk yesterday evening. As soon as possible, please provide a written explanation for my suspension from the WPFW News Department.

Thanks,  
Pete

Website: <http://TheFightBack.org/>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/TheFightBack>

## Appendix C

Fri, December 3, 2010 3:45:02 PM

Re: Suspension

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Peter,

As I have expressed to you on many occasions, I have valued your contributions to WPFW's News program Spectrum Today. The benefits always outweighed the costs, until my extended illness and absence.

Since I returned to work Monday, Oct. 25 your level of contribution has changed. Since the first week in November, you have withdrawn from the WPFW News Department without explanation. This followed a conversation in which I critiqued your contributions and complained about the manner in which you presented material to us. Your pieces were always way too long, and often polemical. Sometimes they were old or out of date. I subsequently decided not to air an out-of-date piece, the last you submitted to us. You apparently took umbrage with my decision, and I have not seen or heard from you since then.

\*Your self-imposed, month-long, unexplained absence from the WPFW News Department was the first reason I began to question your continued participation as a news volunteer, which led to my decision to suspend you.

\*At that point I began to realize that I no longer trusted your journalistic judgement, worse still, I realized I no longer respected your ethics, or your journalistic integrity.

\*I received several reports that your conduct in the newsroom during my absence were insubordinate to senior staff members; and overbearing toward other volunteers making them feel uncomfortable and unwilling to continue to contribute to Spectrum Today. In the weeks since your self-imposed absence, none of those problems have recurred among managers and/or volunteers. I wondered if this and other behavior suggested that you have a problem working with people in authority.

As journalists we have a bond of trust with our listeners (readers/viewers) that they can feel comfortable that the reports they receive from us are reported because of their "news worthiness" and not necessarily because we have an axe to grind in the story's outcome. You and I have had several conversations about my fear that your interest in one story or another came close to or crossed over that boundary. Whenever I was here I policed such content so that it did not reach our airwaves. Twice in my absence however, you violated that trust. Once when I was away for just a short time and you aired a DC Schools interview I had cautioned you about (we subsequently talked about that violation), and on several occasions it happened during my illness.

Furthermore, after I returned you sent me and several others an e-mail that was totally out of

bounds. It was posted on the DC Indy Media website by a "Kent Clark" and it purported a 15-year-old conversation according a THIRD HAND SOURCE named "Doctor Radio" which alleged that interim Program Director Bob Daughtry said in a conversation with Tom Porter at the old WPFW studios that he "hated White people." That action on your part showed abominable journalistic judgement, and suggested a vendetta on your part against the iPD, with whom you had a loud, insubordinate and disruptive argument in the newsroom, according to several sources. First: Why would an alleged 15-year-old conversation be relevant today? Second: Who would circulate such a questionable item that quoted an anonymous THIRD PARTY WITNESS? And Third and most importantly: Tom Porter denied that the conversation ever took place. You distributed that suspicious, slanderous item widely, including to prominent other journalists outside of WPFW! Why would anyone inside the WPFW family circulate such a slanderous item to outsiders? Especially such a suspicious, and unverified report?

That act demonstrated a callous lack of judgement and more importantly, an ugly contempt for journalistic integrity in my opinion.

Briefly, that is why, in spite of the valuable contributions you made over an extended period of time, I decided that it was best that you be suspended from the WPFW News Department.

Sincerely,

Askia Muhammad,  
News Director

## Appendix D

Sun, December 5, 2010 9:34:49 PM

### Re: Suspension

From:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	muhammad_askia@wlfw.org
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wlfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wlfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wlfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Askia,

Thanks for your reply. Let me begin by saying that I feel that I should have been given a chance to respond to your allegations before being suspended, and I look forward to a fair and open hearing on these matters in the very near future. With this email, I would like to address just one of your accusations.

In stating your reasons for suspending me, you wrote, "[Y]ou sent me and several others an e-mail that was totally out of bounds. It was posted on the DC Indy Media website by a "Kent Clark" and it purported a 15-year-old conversation according a THIRD HAND SOURCE named "Doctor Radio" which alleged that interim Program Director Bob Daughtry said in a conversation with Tom Porter at the old WFLW studios that he "hated White people."... You distributed that suspicious, slanderous item widely, including to prominent other journalists outside of WFLW!"

Let me state unequivocally that I deny writing such an email, sending such an email to "you and several others," "post[ing it] on the DC Indy Media website," or distributing it to "prominent other journalists outside of WFLW." I have searched my "sent" box but have been unable to find any such emails.

I fear that emails may have been sent out from my email account by another individual and without my knowledge. I respectfully request that all of the emails in question be forwarded to me without delay. I also request a full and open hearing dealing with all of the accusations leveled against me.

Sincerely,

Pete

Website: <http://TheFightBack.org/>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/TheFightBack>

## Appendix E

Mon, December 6, 2010 5:32:27 AM

### Re: Suspension

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Peter,

I have forwarded the suspicious e-mail separately.

Regarding your suggestion that a fair and open hearing be held on these matters, I would simply say this, and I have no interest in engaging in a spitting contest with you over my reasons for suspending you, certainly not in the open. These are not "allegations" against you, this is a confidential personnel matter which should be discussed in accordance with the WPFW Volunteer Manual, with you, the Volunteer Coordinator, and the Interim General Manager. I have bent over backwards to be fair to you in the past. The process of evaluating my decision by the WPFW management concerning your suspension, I am certain will also be fair.

I believe these confidential personnel matters are best discussed in a confidential environment and not in the open because they deal with your professional fitness as a journalist and your ability to function as a part of the WPFW News "team."

This is not some cause celebre, ala Juan Williams being purged from the ranks of NPR. These are very delicate matters, that regardless of their outcome, could ultimately reflect on any potential news outlet's future consideration of you as a potential employee.

What is your goal? To have some adjudicating body force you back into the WPFW News Department? Please consider very carefully how you choose to proceed in this matter.

Peace,

Askia Muhammad  
News Director  
WPFW-FM, Washington

## Appendix F

Mon, December 13, 2010 2:41:37 PM

Re: Suspension

From:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com> . <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	muhammad_askia@wpfw.org
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Askia,

Thank you for your most recent email. While I look forward to the opportunity to address each of the allegations in a fair and open hearing in the very near future, I would appreciate further clarification of the one allegation for which I requested information in my previous email.

In a prior email, you wrote, "[Y]ou sent me and several others an email that was totally out bounds... You distributed that suspicious, slanderous item widely, including to prominent other journalists outside of WPFW!"

Unless I have missed the others, I have only seen one forwarded email. The suspect email appears to be sent from my email account to yours. Without delay, can you please make available all of the emails in question, with their IP address, if possible? (Also, please provide the IP address for the one email that you have already sent, if possible.)

Additionally, I am requesting copies of any reports and other documents that you considered in suspending me. For example, you wrote, "I received several reports that your conduct in the newsroom were insubordinate to senior staff members." It would be helpful to see any such written reports or summaries of any oral complaints.

Thank you in advance for your efforts to resolve this matter so that we may all refocus on the important work of our station. I look forward to meeting with you tomorrow at 2:30 PM at the station.

Sincerely,  
Pete

Website: <http://TheFightBack.org/>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/TheFightBack>

## Appendix G

Mon, December 13, 2010 3:18:01 PM

### Re: Suspension

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Peter,

I am sensing an adversarial tone in your correspondence. What is it that you want as a result of these proceedings? Do you want some adjudicating body to force you back into the news department? The department you voluntarily (and without any pressure or coercion) withdrew yourself from for more than a month without explanation. There are no "allegations" against you and you don't need Perry Mason or Johnny Cochran to defend you. This is not that kind of party.

I do not intend to participate in any "open hearing" concerning your work in the WPFW News Department. My reasons for terminating you are confidential personnel matters and are not appropriate for any kind of "open hearing."

You seem to be intent on making this case some sort of "cause celebre." You have already told people outside of the WPFW family about your suspension, and I was told you have promised to make some sort of a public statement about this in the future.

To be perfectly honest about the way the tone of your correspondence strikes me, it seems like you are trying to gather "evidence" for some sort of inquisition against me, if so, I assure you, I will not participate in such a Salem Trial.

After our meeting you are free to write a letter to the Volunteer Coordinator who will investigate your complaint and reply within one week. After that you are free to take your complaint to the Interim General Manager who has the final say in this matter, according to WPFW volunteer procedures.

As I said before, be careful how you proceed. It's your career, your record of service and your relationship with WPFW that are in the balance here. Once again I ask: What is it that you want? How would you have this matter resolved?

Peace,  
Askia



## Appendix H

Mon, December 20, 2010 8:51:55 AM

### Re: Suspension

From:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com> . <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	muhammad_askia@wpfw.org
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

 Askia,

Thank you very much for meeting with me on Tuesday, December 14th. You showed me a November 19, 2010 memo entitled, "Minutes from Meeting with Askia Muhammad." Could you possibly email me these minutes? Also, it would help to know who attended that meeting.

I apologize for being such a bother, but I have been hard at work on a report that I'll be submitting to Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Pope. The Nov. 19th memo may cause my report to be revised or delayed. And if there is any other written material that you considered for my suspension, I would appreciate seeing that, too, so that I can prepare a full response.

Again, thank you for your time and interest in resolving this situation.

Sincerely,

Pete

Website: <http://TheFightBack.org/>

Facebook: <http://facebook.com/TheFightBack>

## Appendix I

Mon, December 20, 2010 10:17:52 AM

### Re: Suspension

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

 Peter,

This will be my final correspondence with you on this subject. It is now in your hands and in the hands of the station management, in accordance with the Volunteer Manual. Any further material you require, you can obtain from Volunteer Coordinator Rachel Pope. The Nov. 19 meeting about which you inquire was private between myself and Rachel Pope only.

I will for the record reiterate what I told you in our private meeting Dec. 14. Before I EVEN CONSIDER lifting your suspension, I must see some contrition on your part, and acceptance of your responsibility for your relations with others on the staff, what I described to you as "a quorum," as opposed to your "quorum of one" among the persons actually involved in the WPFW News Department. By your own admission you have offended: Interim Program Director Bob Daughtry; Public Affairs Director Gloria Minott; Office Manager Gerrie Mahdi; among the paid staff; and Michael Lawson; and Sudeep Bhatia among the unpaid staff!!

BEFORE I WILL EVEN CONSIDER WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN IN THE NEWS DEPARTMENT YOU MUST APOLOGIZE VERBALLY AND IN WRITING TO THOSE PEOPLE, who you admit offending(!) and with whom I work all the time. In addition, you must also speak with Tom Porter who feels you slandered him in the questionable email posted at the IndyMedia website.

And finally, I think you owe me an apology for taking so much of my time to respond to and be concerned about these appeals of you and your posse, WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF REMORSE OR CONTRITION ON YOUR PART OR CONSIDERATION OF THE TROUBLE OR TIME CONSUMED WHICH YOU HAVE CAUSED FOR ALL CONCERNED!

In addition, I am personally offended by your dragging my name and the reputation of the News Department through the mud with the Lynch Mob you assembled with torches and pitchforks at the LSB meeting Dec. 15. From what I understand, they spoke against the News Department and made veiled threats to withhold support from the station if you and you alone are not a part of it. I ASK AGAIN, WHAT OUTCOME DO YOU DESIRE FROM YOUR RESPONSE TO THIS PROCESS??? NOT A MUMBLING WORD HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT YOU, OUTSIDE OF THE OFFICIAL CHANNELS BY ME OR ANYONE ELSE ON THE STAFF, YET YOU HAVE ENGAGED IN A VOCAL PUBLIC CAMPAIGN TELLING PEOPLE FAR AND WIDE ABOUT YOUR SUSPENSION. Ordinarily employees don't want to publicize their firings. I don't understand what you are trying to accomplish, except the disruption of the station and its relationship with our listeners, at the most critical time in its history!

DO YOU BELIEVE SOME OUTSIDE AUTHORITY OR FORCE, SUCH AS THE LSB CAN FORCE YOU BACK INTO A NEWS DEPARTMENT WHERE YOU HAVE ADMITTEDLY OFFENDED SO MANY PEOPLE?? AND HAVE SHOWN NO SIGN OF ATTEMPTING TO MEND THE FENCES? NOT TO MENTION OTHER ETHICAL AND JOURNALISTIC OFFENSES OF WHICH YOU ARE GUILTY WHICH HAVE BEEN SPELLED OUT PLAINLY!!

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL? TO DISRUPT THE HARMONY OF OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT ONCE AGAIN?? WELL YOU'RE CERTAINLY DOING A GOOD JOB OF THAT WITH THIS CAMPAIGN OF YOURS!!

IF YOUR GOAL IS TO RETURN AS A MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING IN THE WPFW NEWS DEPARTMENT, YOU MUST BEGIN BY APOLOGIZING VERBALLY AND IN WRITING TO THE PEOPLE BY YOUR OWN ADMISSION YOU HAVE OFFENDED ON THE WPFW STAFF!! Namely Bob Daughtry, Gloria Minott, Gerrie Mahdi, Michael Lawson, and Sudeep Bhatia. Otherwise, there is no point in you saying nice things to me, while harboring a grudge against the people who work together with me in relative harmony in your absence!

I hope I have made myself clear!

Address all your future requests to the WPFW management in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Volunteer Manual.

Peace,

Askia Muhammad  
News Director, WPFW-FM

## Appendix J

Minutes from Meeting with Askia Muhammad

November 19, 2010

RE: Pete Tucker

During this meeting, Mr. Muhammad expressed his concerns about Pete Tucker, who he described as being insubordinate and alienating staff, volunteers and community members. Below is a list of Mr. Muhammad's complaints.

Prince George County's Council and the DC Council have complained about Mr. Tucker's behaviour and said that he falsely represented himself.

WAMU has accused Mr. Tucker of pretending to be from their station.

Mr. Muhammad had asked Mr. Tucker not to air a piece on education until they had an opinion from the school board for it, but Mr. Tucker took advantage of an absence of Mr. Muhammad's to air the piece and consequently Mr. Muhammad received a complaint from the schoolboard for unfair coverage.

In October, during Mr. Muhammad's leave of absence, Mr. Tucker was responsible for putting together the news show and he ignored the advice of both the Program Director and the Public Affairs Director, leading to several loud confrontations. As an example, Mr. Muhammad said that Mr. Tucker, told not to have the usual panel discussion on Friday, did.

In one instance, both Mr. Tucker, and his colleague, Mr. Lawson, were instructed not to include a piece, and Mr. Tucker then told Mr. Lawson that they would include it anyway, upsetting Mr. Lawson.

Mr. Daughtry, Mr. Minott and Mr. Lawson all complained about Mr. Tucker. Mr. Tucker also had confrontations with news messengers, David Whettstone, Sudeep Bhatia, and James Bradley.

Most recently, Mr. Tucker sent out an email about a conversation which took place between Bob Daughtry and Tom Porter fifteen years ago, in which Bob Daughtry said that he hated white people. The source for this conversation was anonymous, and Tom Porter denies it ever took place. Mr. Muhammad said that he considered this poor journalism.

## Appendix K

Mon, December 6, 2010 4:54:50 AM

Fwd: Washington, DC Independent Media Center: Controversial Figure Back At Pacifica Radio.

From:	"muhammad_askia@wpfw.org" <muhammad_askia@wpfw.org> <a href="#">View Contact</a>
To:	peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>
Cc:	Robert West <west_robert@wpfw.org>; Rachel Pope <pope_rachel@wpfw.org>; Bob Daughtry <bobd@wpfw.org>; Renee Bowser <scatting@comcast.net>

Peter,

Here is the email in question. I never said you authored or posted the slanderous article. I said it was posted by "Kent Clark." I said you irresponsibly forwarded it to me and several others, as the "sender" of this email using your account boasts.

AM

----- Forwarded message from [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com) -----

Date: Wed, 10 Nov 2010 22:12:38 -0500 (EST)

From: [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)

Reply-To: [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)

Subject: Washington, DC Independent Media Center: Controversial Figure Back At Pacifica Radio.

To: [muhammad\\_askia@wpfw.org](mailto:muhammad_askia@wpfw.org)

<http://dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/150307>

The following Article has been sent to you by [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com).

The sender writes:

i've mailed this to lots of people - tom sherwood, my partner navid nasr.

---

Controversial Figure Back At Pacifica Radio.

---

Tuesday, 09 November 2010

by

Summary: Ousted in 2002 from being general manager of New York affiliate WBAI over huge protests, Bob Daughtry is back in the saddle---WPFW's interim programming director. Another TKO is needed, even on this one.

Reporting from Washington, D.C.

For a radio station that receives listener and public funds for its operations, one would think executive staff at WPFW would be above racism. None of that applies here. We are not talking discriminatory practices carried out from Whites against Blacks. This is Black against White, and the holder of that dishonor rests with interim programming director Bob Daughtry. A former volunteer and staff member who goes by the alias Radio Doctor, emailed current general manager Robert West on October 25th, 2010 about past statements made by Daughtry against Whites. Radio Doctor is the same race as Daughtry. In an open letter to WPFW's chief administrator, between 1989 and 1990 as then-WPFW operations director, Daughtry mentioned to then-programming director Tom Porter of having beat up a White guy on an undisclosed D.C. street, then remarked: "I hate folks, they think they own everything". The letter to the general manager also informs that the source emailed Daughtry in September this year, where he brought up the past operations director statement, acknowledging his current assignment at WPFW and concluded to Daughtry: "For someone who hates White folks, you sure enough have a strange way of showing it". Since then, Daughtry has not commented on his prior statements to that former staffer, which was like wise brought to the attention of West.

In 2002, Daughtry was briefly interim-general manager for Pacifica's WBAI Radio station in New York. But was quickly fired over intense protests. ("The Outsiders Are Back", Jan. 28th, 2002---www.current.org. ) Now he has returned in a position that oversees broadcast programming at its D.C. station. ("Pacifica Ousts 2 At D.C. Station; Programming Director Reinstated", August 16th, 2010---Richard Pince's Journal-isms. )

Racism, whether if it is aimed at Blacks, Whites---or any other race of people---is practice of intolerance. And from this, a broadcasting station runs counter to the community.

Washington, DC Independent Media Center: <http://dc.indymedia.org/>

----- End forwarded message -----

Appendix L

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: [AttorneyJB@comcast.net](mailto:AttorneyJB@comcast.net)

To: [lleaks1@juno.com](mailto:lleaks1@juno.com)

Subject: Washington, DC Independent Media Center: Photos and a song from the 6th annual Activist Awards

Date: Mon, 13 Dec 2010 12:59:46 -0500 (EST)

<http://dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/150492>

The following Article has been sent to you by [AttorneyJB@comcast.net](mailto:AttorneyJB@comcast.net).

The sender writes:

The First Amendment allows individuals to express themselves freely, but it does not allow other individuals to make statements for them.

-----  
Photos and a song from the 6th annual Activist Awards  
-----

Thursday, 09 December 2010

by

Summary: The Washington Peace Center held the 6th annual Activist Awards at All-Souls Church on the evening of December 8. Over 100 people were present.

Before awards were announced, a local musician put on a traditional African stroytelling about the origin of the Talking drum, a scam artist-and the scam artist getting his comuppance when the &quot;talking drum&quot; that formerly held a kidnapped child was filled with bees for him to encounter!

There were ten awards issued and 8 honorable mentions,my own journalism getting one of them.

Below are the main awards:

Planting Seeds of Peace:  
Ayize Sabater MOMIES, TLC

Be the Change:  
Mike Marceau Veterans for Peace, Peace action Montgomery

The People United:  
April Goggans Marbury Plaza Tenants Association

Another World is Possible:  
Walda Katz-Fishman, DC Metro Social Forum and Social Responsibility

The Peace Drum:  
Ayo Handy-Kendi  
African-American Holiday Association

No Justice No Peace:  
Johnny Barnes, ACLU National Capitol region

Power to the People:  
Rosa Lozano, CASA de Maryland

We Shall Overcome:  
Cheryl Barnes, National Coalition for the Homeless

Empowering the Future:  
Isaiah Toney, DC Jobs with Justice, GW Student

Speak Truth to Power:  
Marcus Raskin Institute for Policy Studies

Washington, DC Independent Media Center: <http://dc.indymedia.org/>



## Appendix M

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** peter tucker <pete10506@yahoo.com>

**To:** Bob Daultry <bobd@wpfw.org>

**Cc:** Grigsby Hubbard <grigsbyh@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Thu, July 1, 2010 4:37:30 PM

**Subject:** Gloria Minott

Bob,

I'm not sure who to approach about this, but I'd like to discuss with someone how I was treated by Gloria Minott yesterday evening. In my three years being around this station, I've never raised my voice at Gloria Minott, yet she continues to feel it is acceptable to verbally attack me. Last night was quite possibly the worst of her tirades. I look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks,

Pete

202 365 6118

## Appendix N

[Below is the text of the October 29, 2010 letter I received from the WPFW Development Department. It is signed by the names below.]

"Pete-

We wanted to say a special thank you to you for stepping in for Spectrum during the Fall Membership Drive and really running with it. Not only did you make yourself available at the last minute throughout the duration of the drive, but you came up with some original thank you gifts appropriate to Spectrum's local focus, and produced a show which regularly met its quota of pledges!

Sincerely,  
Tiffany Jordan, Rachel Pope, Bryan K. Bernard, Satariah Joyner  
WPFW Development Department"

## Appendix O

Tue, November 16, 2010 3:48:36 PM

[The Fight Back] Please moderate: "About"

From:	WordPress <wordpress@thefightback.org> <a href="#">Add to Contacts</a>
To:	pete10506@yahoo.com

 A new comment on the post "About" is waiting for your approval

<http://thefightback.org/about/>

Author : Bob d (IP: 173.66.12.94 , [pool-173-66-12-94.washdc.fios.verizon.net](http://pool-173-66-12-94.washdc.fios.verizon.net))

E-mail : [bobd@wpfw.org](mailto:bobd@wpfw.org)

URL :

Whois : <http://ws.arin.net/cgi-bin/whois.pl?queryinput=173.66.12.94>

Comment:

Calumny is a mortal sin, Pete. Think about it. Think about how many falling out you have had in DC. Like you testified about your brother, you may be paranoid schizophrenic. To have so many disputes is not normal. To talk hatefully about so many people is not healthy. People only wish the best for you. Get some help.

Approve it: <http://thefightback.org/wp-admin/comment.php?action=approve&c=148>

Trash it: <http://thefightback.org/wp-admin/comment.php?action=trash&c=148>

Spam it: <http://thefightback.org/wp-admin/comment.php?action=spam&c=148>

Currently 53 comments are waiting for approval. Please visit the moderation panel:

[http://thefightback.org/wp-admin/edit-comments.php?comment\\_status=moderated](http://thefightback.org/wp-admin/edit-comments.php?comment_status=moderated)

## Appendix P

What follows below is from *The Mail* (dcwatch.com), a twice weekly, independent, on-line newsletter put together by Gary Imhoff and Dorothy Brizill, two long-time, local, muckraking journalists. At the top of each issue appears Gary's comments on the issues of the day, and below are articles from citizen journalists. The first paragraph is from Gary's intro to the Feb. 25th edition of *The Mail*. The rest are articles of mine that were published in *The Mail*.

***Wednesday, February 25, 2009 (from Gary Imhoff's introduction)***

Peter Tucker, below, opposes the use of Gardasil, a vaccine against cervical cancer that he believes is dangerous, experimental, and untested for use in young girls. Councilmember David Catania is a champion of Gardasil, and sponsored legislation that requires sixth grade girls to be vaccinated with it. Tucker wants to testify about Gardasil at an oversight hearing for the Department of Health that Catania will hold this Friday. Tucker signed up as a witness at Catania's hearing and was placed on the witness list. He was then told that he would not be allowed to testify under any circumstances, and that he would not be given any reason for being barred. Here is the relevant rule of the city council, Rule No. 504(b): "If a committee, in the publication of notice of a public hearing, sets a deadline before which a member of the public must contact the committee to be permitted to be a witness at the public hearing, then at the time that the public hearing is held, each member of the public who complied with the committee's requirements shall be given an opportunity to testify." Catania is not just insulting Tucker, and by extension all citizens, by commanding that someone who disagrees with his policy preferences not be allowed to testify before his committee; he is also flouting a rule of the city council. If Catania stands by his position, will he be disciplined by the city council? If he is not disciplined, can citizens rely on any guarantee by the council that they will be treated fairly by it?

## **Banning Witnesses**

**Pete Tucker, [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)**

This Friday, Councilmember David Catania is chairing the Department of Health oversight hearing. While I was a confirmed witness for this hearing as of last week, on Monday I received a call from Jen Barry of Mr. Catania's office informing me that my name had been removed from the witness list and I would not be allowed to testify, but I was free to submit written testimony. Ms. Barry offered no reason for my name's removal, and referred me to the Office of the Secretary for any follow up questions. A quick call to the Office of the Secretary revealed that it has no role in determining who is allowed testify, which is the

decision of the chair of the relevant committee, in this case Mr. Catania. Numerous E-mails to Mr. Catania asking for a justification for my removal from the witness list have been met with no response.

My exclusion is the result of the work I've been doing for the past two years raising questions about the experimental and dangerous HPV vaccine known as Gardasil. As a result of Mr. Catania's efforts, Gardasil is now required for sixth grade girls for this upcoming school year, despite its having been associated with thousands of illnesses and dozens of deaths (<http://www.judicialwatch.org/gardasil>). Dr. Diane Harper, a professor at Dartmouth medical school, and a leading researcher of Gardasil, has called its use in girls under the age of 18 "a great big public health experiment." Additional concerns of Dr. Harper and other medical professionals can be found in this front page *New York Times* article, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/health/policy/20vaccine.html>.

Mr. Catania is attempting to avoid having to publicly discuss these issues on Friday. But if we are to have proper oversight for the Department of Health, it requires that Mr. Catania not pick and choose who is allowed to testify.

Sunday, March 1, 2009

## I Was Denied the Right to Testify

Pete Tucker, [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)

This past Friday, there was an oversight hearing for the Department of Health. I was confirmed as a witness for the hearing until Councilmember David Catania's office called to inform me that I was being removed from the witness list and I would not be allowed to testify. Numerous calls and E-mails asking for an explanation for this action have yielded nothing. Was I prohibited from testifying because I disagree with Mr. Catania's push to have the experimental HPV vaccine required for sixth grade girls for this upcoming school year? On Friday, as he has done so often in the past, Mr. Catania referred to those who oppose his position as "conspiracy theorists." It must be disturbing for Mr. Catania to note the large number of "conspiracy theorists" now on the council: Harry Thomas, Kwame Brown, Muriel Bowser, Yvette Alexander, Michael Brown, and possibly Jim Graham.

At Friday's hearing, Councilmember Alexander, who sits on the Health Committee, said, "The test market for the [HPV] vaccine does not involve the ages of the young girls who are going to be [made] mandatory to have this vaccine. So I'm really concerned with the side effects down the road." She went on to say, "[T]here has not been enough proof for me to say that there [aren't] other mechanisms that we need to stress before we use our babies, our young girls, as guinea pigs, and primarily in underserved communities. I'm going to continue to advocate, I'm going to continue to spread the word."

At the next Health Committee hearing, I'd like to join Ms. Alexander in advocating and spreading the word, but will I be allowed to testify? As Gary pointed out in the last edition of the mail, the council's own rules make it clear that anyone who signs up within the given time has the right to testify. It is a dangerous precedent to allow the chair of a committee to violate our rights as citizens, as well as the council's own rules, if he happens to disagree with what will be said. As George Orwell put it, "If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear."

Wednesday, March 4th, 2009

## **Two Banned, and Counting**

**Pete Tucker, [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)**

Councilmember David Catania is experimenting on sixth grade girls with a dangerously under-tested HPV vaccine. When two concerned citizens spoke out last week, Mr. Catania silenced them by prohibiting them from testifying. First Mr. Catania, who chairs the Health Committee, removed me from the witness list for last Friday's Department of Health oversight hearing. On Monday, I called his office for an explanation, and was given none. I asked Mr. Catania's staffer, Jen Barry, to add my name to the witness list for the Monday, March 9, Department of Health Care Finance oversight hearing. She refused, informing me that I have been banned from testifying at all future Health Committee hearings. I asked that she send me an E-mail stating this, but I have received none, and when I placed a follow-up call to Ms. Barry, she hung up on me. Two days later, Miguel Rosario, an independent chef who testified against the required vaccination at Friday's hearing, called Mr. Catania's office to sign up for Monday's hearing. After keeping him on hold for seven minutes, a staffer told Miguel he wouldn't be allowed to testify. Again the staffer offered no explanation.

Are we being banned from testifying before the Health Committee because of our opposition to Mr. Catania's experimental use of the HPV vaccine on eleven- and twelve-year-old girls for this upcoming school year (for more information please visit <http://www.noHPVshots4me.com>)? If so, as Gary has written previously, "Catania is not just insulting Tucker, and by extension all citizens, by commanding that someone who disagrees with his policy preferences not be allowed to testify before his committee; he is also flouting a rule of the city council. If Catania stands by his position, will he be disciplined by the city council? If he is not disciplined, can citizens rely on any guarantee by the council that they will be treated fairly by it?"

On Friday, Miguel and I will testify before the Committee of the Whole and ask Chair Vincent Gray to investigate whether Mr. Catania is violating the council's rules by banning witnesses with whom he does not agree. As the District pushes for voting rights from Congress and 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, is it not hypocritical that at 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue basic democratic principles are being disregarded?

March 18, 2009

## **Some Food for Thought Regarding Gardasil**

**Peter Tucker, [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)**

On Friday, The National Research Center for Women and Families held a luncheon entitled, "HPV Vaccine: The Facts behind the Hype. We thought it would save lives. But now we're not so sure." The two keynote speakers were Dr. Susan Wood, a professor at George Washington University and the former Director of the FDA's Office for Women's Health; and Dr. Diana Zuckerman, President of the National Research Center for Women and Families.

The talk and the question and answer session that followed raised one major concern after another regarding Merck's Gardasil. Yet here in DC, thanks to Councilmember David Catania, this dangerously undertested HPV vaccine is required for sixth grade girls for the upcoming school year. Interestingly, Catania refers to those who oppose his push as "conspiracy theorists." This luncheon, hosted and attended by some of the more reputable folks in the medical field, gives lie to Catania's accusation.

Catania will be further undermined if there are a good number of us, from all walks of life, publicly

expressing concern for his actions by testifying at the Thursday, April 9 Department of Health budget hearing. At the last hearing we attended, we rattled Catania with just five of us testifying (it should have been six, but Catania has, without explanation, banned me from testifying). What will happen on April 9 when we number not five, but ten, or maybe even twenty? Let's not look back years from now and say, "Should've, could've, would've." On April 9, let's stand up for our children and stand up to Catania. It's time for him to stop working for Merck and to start working for us.

March 29, 2009

## **Merck's Murky Dealings**

**Peter Tucker, [pete10506@yahoo.com](mailto:pete10506@yahoo.com)**

In the March 22 edition of themail, Wayne Turner comments on my "recent diatribes" about the law requiring the HPV vaccine for sixth grade girls ("Much Ado about Nothing"). He correctly states, "Far from being a mandatory program, the law allows parents and legal guardians 'to opt out of the HPV vaccination program, for any reason.'" This expanded opt-out provision is at least partly the result of our small group's work ([noHPVshots4me.com](http://noHPVshots4me.com)), and we certainly encourage parents to consider exercising this option.

While Gardasil is not "mandatory" for sixth grade girls, it is "required," and this has important implications. When a state requires a vaccine, liability is substantially shifted from the vaccine manufacturer to the state. This creates a near perfect business model for Merck: government guaranteed sales of the most expensive vaccine in history (three shots are required, at \$120 a piece, with a possible booster shot(s) after five years), along with substantial immunity from prosecution.

The shifting of liability away from Merck to the state is no small matter. Merck rushed Gardasil to the market as its stock price was dropping due to lawsuits stemming from the tens of thousands of deaths that resulted from Merck's painkiller Vioxx. Merck recently settled with a number of Vioxx's American victims for \$4.85 billion (yes, that's billion with a "b"). In the court proceedings regarding Vioxx, Merck turned over internal E-mails that showed that the company knew there were problems with Vioxx some seven years before taking it off the market. Due to its recent murky dealings, as well as many other factors, I think Merck should maintain full liability for Gardasil and the District should overturn its legislation requiring it for sixth grade girls.

Mr. Turner concluded by saying, "Residents of the District of Columbia are facing grave and very real health concerns, including a raging HIV/AIDS epidemic. Councilmember Catania and the Committee on Health need to conduct agency and budget oversight hearings without irrelevant distractions." I agree. Of course, heading off what may turn out to be an additional health disaster is not an "irrelevant distraction."

[I'm calling a pause on discussion of Gardasil in themail, unless and until there are new local developments. However, if you want to continue to discuss Councilmember Catania's policy of not allowing citizens who disagree with him to testify before his committee, please feel free to do so. — Gary Imhoff]