If you know anything about me, you know that Twitter is my favorite form of social media. The real-time updates, the candidness of some users, and the plethora of information makes it - in my opinion - the best social media tool out there.

If you’re looking for a job in the PR/marketing/communications field like I am, you know that your future employers are almost guaranteed to check your social media profiles as part of the interviewing process. According to a 2014 article on Time.com, 93% of hiring managers will review a candidate’s social media profiles before making a final decision.

As someone who’s had their Twitter profile for years, including upwards of 5,000 tweets and 360 followers, I’ve learned a few tricks of the trade I’d like to share to any millennial who loves Twitter and still wants to get a great, professional job.

1. Just because your account is locked doesn’t mean it’s truly private.
Because you may like posting Lil’ Wayne lyrics or uploading drunken selfies, you’ve chosen to keep your Twitter private. However, it’s not truly private. The fact that it says private with that adorable little lock by your
name says something in and of itself. It says, “Hi, I post inappropriate things on social media and cannot be trusted with a private account, so I lock mine up.” I think your best bet is to just not post those kinds of things on social media in the first place. Save your Lil’ Wayne lyrics for your Spotify playlist. You know the old saying, “If you can’t tweet anything nice, then don’t tweet at all.”

2. Make lists to keep your tweets organized.
Personally, I have eight lists on Twitter that range from news to PR agencies to people who go to my university. I mainly use the lists to keep up on the news of different organizations, such as Mic, Mashable, and PR Daily. Not only is this a great way to clear through the clutter of the main Twitter feed, but it’s also a great answer to the classic interview question, “How do you get your news?” I told them during one interview that I use Twitter lists and they said they’ve never heard that before, but that they liked how I use social media to cater to my personal needs.

3. Use Twitter to find out about the latest jobs.
Many companies tweet about their latest job openings, much sooner than they post on LinkedIn or a third-party website. There are also accounts that tweet exclusively about job openings, such as @MarketJobsUSA. This also gives you a chance to interact with the company ahead of time, such as favoriting or tweeting back once they post a job opening. It also makes it easy to share with friends who are looking for similar jobs.

4. Twitter chats are a glorious thing.
This is your chance to ask questions and participate in a discussion with professionals in real-time. For example, the Public Relations Student Society of America hosts multiple Twitter chats a year, all covering different topics in the PR/communications field. They have a variety of professionals to participate, ranging from account executives to CEOs, such as JRM Comm president, Jason Mollica. This is your chance to get personal advice from the best in the business. Use it to your advantage. Companies and organizations will typically promote the Twitter chat with a designated hashtag a few days beforehand. Yet another reason to follow companies you like on Twitter.

5. Use your bio to your advantage.
Besides your profile picture, your biography will be the first thing people read when they visit your profile. Use that to your advantage showing everyone what you do. Do you go to a university? Link them. Do you intern for a company? Link them. Are you heavily involved in a student organization? Link them. Provide information that lets people know who you are and what you’re currently doing. That way, when future employers check your profile, you have more substantial things to brag about besides how you’re a “Karkov enthusiast” or “In a relationship with Netflix.” However, you don’t have to make it completely professional. Have fun with it! You’re still a student.

My current Twitter profile bio:
@IUNews senior. Alumni Engagement for @iuPRSSA. Marketing and Publicity Intern for @iupress.
Coffee, cheese, and cats. Pro-Oxford comma. Tweets are mine.

*Edited by LinkedIn Campus Editor Kelsey Roadruck
You Can Now Use Twitter to Book Dinner Reservations

Food News

For those nights when you don’t want to cook, and making a reservation over the phone or on Open Table is too complicated as well, you can now book your dinner reservations just by tweeting.

Twizoo, the service that lets you book your reservation, has been around for a while, but primarily curating restaurant reviews on Twitter. The ability to reserve a dinner table with a tweet just launched.

Of course, to take advantage of Twizoo's new #TweettoBook, you'll have to be in London. No word on when the service will roll out to additional cities, nor how many restaurants are participating.

(Image credits: Twizoo)
Journalism Center Experiments With Delivering Campus News on Yik Yak – Wired Campus - Blogs

June 3, 2015 by Meg Bernhard

Yik Yak, the anonymous social-media app, is perhaps best known for spreading rumors and bullying on many campuses. But journalism students at the
University of Florida are experimenting with using the platform to deliver news updates, in what the project’s leaders say could become a model for other colleges.

Over the past few months, students at the university’s Innovation News Center have been developing and adding content to a news feed, called “Swamp Juice,” for people on or near the campus who have the app. Through the feed, users can learn about campus and local news, local deals or business promotions, and national and international developments.

Matt Sheehan, director of the innovation center, and Whitney Lavaux, a graduate student involved in project, said that other universities should use the app to broadcast useful information to people on their campuses. “Yik Yak’s the new town square,” said Mr. Sheehan. “Media organizations and governing organizations, like a university would be, should be part of the conversations that are going on there.”

Ms. Lavaux added that she thinks other universities will — and should — follow suit because students are now consuming news and information on social media more than ever before. “If you want to reach this kind of audience, you can’t keep doing the same kind of thing that you’ve been doing — you have to go where they are,” Ms. Lavaux said. “They’re not going to follow you. Usually, you have to follow them.”

The student journalists involved in the project write each of the posts — about 10 to 20 a day — in a casual tone similar to regular Yik Yak posts. And while Yik Yak’s normal feed gives users a live view of
anonymous posts uploaded within a certain geographic area, the section curated by the journalism students at Florida is separate from that feed and distinguished by a brief note explaining its purpose.

When asked whether he had ethical concerns about working on a platform known for bullying behavior by some of its anonymous users, Mr. Sheehan said that in most cases the community on Yik Yak is supportive in ways users might not find on other forms of social media.

“In terms of the controversy, I think sometimes that platform may have gotten a bad rap,” he said. “There are definitely opportunities for those sorts of controversial messages to come out, but in my observations of the [University of Florida] community in particular, it’s a remarkably self-policing community.”

Yik Yak doesn’t have similar partnerships with other universities, but Hilary McQuaide, a spokeswoman for the company, said that Yik Yak might pursue comparable partnerships in the future.

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April 19, 2015 by Casey Fabris

How Social Media Helps Students Adapt to College

For today’s students, social media isn’t just a diversion. It’s a support system.

That’s the key finding of a paper exploring the role that Facebook plays in helping students adjust to campus life. Collin M. Ruud, a postdoctoral research associate at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, presented the paper, “Social Networking and Social Support: Does It Play a Role in College Social Integration?,” on Sunday at the American Educational Research Association’s annual meeting.

Mr. Ruud has been observing the effects of social media for years. He was an assistant residence-hall manager when social-networking sites first started to take off, and he was immediately interested in how they might affect student development.

For his recent research, Mr. Ruud conducted online surveys, collecting 159 responses from undergraduates at an unnamed flagship university in the Midwest. He identified a strong link between social-media use and feelings of belonging to the broader campus community.

Mr. Ruud found, as he expected, that students today spend more time on Facebook than they did in 2007, and that more students have made Facebook part of their daily routines. “It’s just part of what we do now,” he said.

But there was a more surprising finding, too: Students who used Facebook to keep in touch with high-school friends reported feeling stronger connections to their college communities. Mr. Ruud said he’d had a feeling there might be a link there. When he got the numbers to back up that hunch, “it was like an alarm going off,” he said.
On its face, Mr. Rudd said, it makes no sense that students feel more connected to their colleges when they continue to interact with friends from high school. But look closer, he said, and there’s a logic to that link. Facebook acts as a support network for students. A virtual network can help college students bond with high-school friends who are going through the same process of adapting to life on other campuses, Mr. Ruud said. With social media, all a student has to do to feel supported is log in.

Now that Facebook has become so ingrained in daily life, Mr. Ruud said, he’s curious to see what the broader implications will be. “We’ve got all these student-development theories,” he said. “Is technology going to change the way students develop socially?”

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Cincinnati Shooting Tests the University’s Twitter-Savvy Chief

By Jack Stripling

In a moment of crisis, Santa J. Ono has no place to hide. That’s because nearly 54,000 people are following the University of Cincinnati president every day.

College leaders increasingly use social media to communicate in real time or to establish street cred with students, but Mr. Ono’s tens of thousands of Twitter followers qualify him as a pioneer in the emerging realm of digital higher-education administration. He regularly updates his Twitter feed with photographs, musings, and gentle provocations — "Shake Shack or In-N-Out?" — and answers students’ questions directly, no matter how mundane. Indeed, few university presidents talk so much or to so many in 140 characters or less.

But the past few days have tested Mr. Ono’s reputation for accessibility and off-the-cuff candor. On July 19 a University of Cincinnati police officer shot and killed an unarmed man during a traffic stop, after the officer said he was nearly run over by the motorist.

The officer, Ray Tensing, is white, and the 43-year-old victim, Samuel Dubose, is black, thrusting the university into a difficult national conversation about community policing and race.

The incident has the makings of a powder keg for the university, and college leaders in similar situations are often encouraged by lawyers and communications advisers to err on the side of caution in their public comments. For Cincinnati’s Twitter-happy president that may be more of a challenge, but he says he has edited himself more than usual in recent days.
"I try to think twice before I tweet; I think even longer than that in this kind of situation," he said in an interview. "I am very careful. Even though it’s a personal account, I represent the institution as well."

**An Easy Target**

At the same time, Mr. Ono wants to uphold his reputation for responsiveness and openness. In several instances over the last week, he has answered direct questions on Twitter about the university’s decision, in the wake of the shooting, to limit university police patrols to the campus and adjacent areas.

He fielded one such question from Kimberly K. McCarthy, the mother of an engineering student who will be starting his sophomore year at Cincinnati in the fall. Ms. McCarthy was concerned that her son’s apartment, which is located just off campus, would no longer be patrolled by university officers. Mr. Ono assured her that the campus police would still be active in the area, which Ms. McCarthy said had put her more at ease.

"It’s not like these presidents who sit in their office and ignore everyone," she said. "He makes you feel important in his Twitter response as well as through his Twitter presence in general."

But Mr. Ono’s outsize social-media presence also makes him an easy target in a crisis. He describes the feedback he has received as mostly cordial, but there has been plenty of vitriol aimed at @prezono:

![Twitter post by Todd Davis](http://chronicle.com/article/Cincinnati-Shooting-Tests-the/231961/?cid=wc&utm_source=wc&utm_medium=en)

Asked about that sort of criticism, Mr. Ono observed: "There are some individuals who are passionate about their opinions."

**Available Yet Constrained**

As much as Mr. Ono appears available through social media, he
has crafted only a few original tweets about the shooting. The first, which he sent out two days after the incident, linked to his first official statement, which described "unimaginable sadness for all involved."

The president was on vacation when the shooting occurred, and university officials described any delay in his statement as a cautious effort to ascertain the facts of the case before commenting on it.

Suzanne E. Boys, an associate professor of communications at Cincinnati, said Mr. Ono had managed to appear responsive and sensitive without saying more than he should about a developing investigation.

"He’s not really getting into the nitty-gritty," Ms. Boys said. "He is smart enough to know that, by legal rationale, he needs to be constrained."

At the same time, it would be odd for a president who has tweeted more than 38,000 times since 2010 to say nothing about a tragedy that strikes a national chord. Peter F. Lake, who has written extensively about higher-education law, said that any risks associated with a president’s use of social media in a crisis are probably outweighed by the unique opportunity to personalize the institution’s response and to help shape the narrative of a controversial story.

"There is no question that it runs against a longstanding trend in higher education to be very careful about public utterances from senior leadership," said Mr. Lake, director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson University. "But what’s interesting to me is that this signals a change in higher ed that may be coming. We may see more senior leadership who become extremely adroit at real-time social-media communication."

‘A Challenging Situation’
If anything threatens to chip away at Mr. Ono’s reputation for transparency, it is a controversy over the yet-to-be-released body-
camera video of the shooting. The Associated Press and other news media have filed a lawsuit to force a Hamilton County prosecutor to release the video.

Joseph T. Deters, the prosecutor, has said that doing so could taint grand-jury deliberations over whether to bring charges against Officer Tensing.

Mr. Ono, who said he had not seen the video, asserted that the university has a "legal responsibility to release all public records." At the same time, he said he must defer to the prosecutor under the circumstances.

"It’s definitely a challenging situation for us," Mr. Ono said. "But we certainly have to be a law-abiding institution. If we’re asked not to share something, we’re not going to go down that path."

Mr. Ono has asked the prosecutor to show the video to the victim’s family, and he made that request public on Twitter. There is no indication that Mr. Deters heeded the request, and a public-information officer at his office said she could not comment on the matter.

For Mr. Ono, social media is just one piece of the university’s crisis response. He has held a news conference with the city’s mayor, met with community leaders, and announced plans for an independent external review of campus-police practices and policies. On Tuesday the president attended Mr. Dubose’s funeral.

Daniel A. Zaiontz, author of #FollowTheLeader: Lessons in Social Media Success From #HigherEd CEOs (EDUniverse Media, 2015), said it is important that college leaders view the Internet as just one of many important vehicles for engagement.

"It shouldn’t be the be all and end all of presidential communications," Mr. Zaiontz said. "It is one tool in the tool kit. It doesn’t take away the importance of face-to-face communication."

*Jack Stripling covers college leadership, particularly presidents and*
How One Stupid Tweet Blew Up Justine Sacco’s Life

By JON RONSON
FEBRUARY 12, 2015

As she made the long journey from New York to South Africa, to visit family during the holidays in 2013, Justine Sacco, 30 years old and the senior director of corporate communications at IAC, began tweeting acerbic little jokes about the indignities of travel. There was one about a fellow passenger on the flight from John F. Kennedy International Airport:

“‘Weird German Dude: You’re in First Class. It’s 2014. Get some deodorant.’ — Inner monologue as I inhale BO. Thank God for pharmaceuticals.”

Then, during her layover at Heathrow:

And on Dec. 20, before the final leg of her trip to Cape Town:

“Going to Africa. Hope I don’t get AIDS. Just kidding. I’m white!”

She chuckled to herself as she pressed send on this last one, then wandered around Heathrow’s international terminal for half an hour, sporadically checking her phone. No one replied, which didn’t surprise her. She had only 170 Twitter followers.

Sacco boarded the plane. It was an 11-hour flight, so she slept. When the plane landed in Cape Town and was taxiing on the runway, she turned on her phone. Right away, she got a text from someone she hadn’t spoken to since high school: “I’m so sorry to see what’s happening.” Sacco looked at it, baffled.
Then another text: “You need to call me immediately.” It was from her best friend, Hannah. Then her phone exploded with more texts and alerts. And then it rang. It was Hannah. “You’re the No. 1 worldwide trend on Twitter right now,” she said.

Sacco’s Twitter feed had become a horror show. “In light of @Justine-Sacco disgusting racist tweet, I’m donating to @care today” and “How did @JustineSacco get a PR job?! Her level of racist ignorance belongs on Fox News. #AIDS can affect anyone!” and “I’m an IAC employee and I don’t want @JustineSacco doing any communications on our behalf ever again. Ever.” And then one from her employer, IAC, the corporate owner of The Daily Beast, OKCupid and Vimeo: “This is an outrageous, offensive comment. Employee in question currently unreachable on an intl flight.” The anger soon turned to excitement: “All I want for Christmas is to see @JustineSacco’s face when her plane lands and she checks her inbox/voicemail” and “Oh man, @JustineSacco is going to have the most painful phone-turning-on moment ever when her plane lands” and “We are about to watch this @JustineSacco bitch get fired. In REAL time. Before she even KNOWS she’s getting fired.”

The furor over Sacco’s tweet had become not just an ideological crusade against her perceived bigotry but also a form of idle entertainment. Her complete ignorance of her predicament for those 11 hours lent the episode both dramatic irony and a pleasing narrative arc. As Sacco’s flight traversed the length of Africa, a hashtag began to trend worldwide: #HasJustineLandedYet. “Seriously. I just want to go home to go to bed, but everyone at the bar is SO into #HasJustineLandedYet. Can’t look away. Can’t leave” and “Right, is there no one in Cape Town going to the airport to tweet her arrival? Come on, Twitter! I’d like pictures #HasJustineLandedYet.”

A Twitter user did indeed go to the airport to tweet her arrival. He took her photograph and posted it online. “Yup,” he wrote, “@JustineSacco HAS in fact
landed at Cape Town International. She’s decided to wear sunnies as a disguise.”

By the time Sacco had touched down, tens of thousands of angry tweets had been sent in response to her joke. Hannah, meanwhile, frantically deleted her friend’s tweet and her account — Sacco didn’t want to look — but it was far too late. “Sorry @JustineSacco,” wrote one Twitter user, “your tweet lives on forever.”

**In the early days** of Twitter, I was a keen shamer. When newspaper columnists made racist or homophobic statements, I joined the pile-on. Sometimes I led it. The journalist A. A. Gill once wrote a column about shooting a baboon on safari in Tanzania: “I’m told they can be tricky to shoot. They run up trees, hang on for grim life. They die hard, baboons. But not this one. A soft-nosed .357 blew his lungs out.” Gill did the deed because he “wanted to get a sense of what it might be like to kill someone, a stranger.”

I was among the first people to alert social media. (This was because Gill always gave my television documentaries bad reviews, so I tended to keep a vigilant eye on things he could be got for.) Within minutes, it was everywhere. Amid the hundreds of congratulatory messages I received, one stuck out: “Were you a bully at school?”

Still, in those early days, the collective fury felt righteous, powerful and effective. It felt as if hierarchies were being dismantled, as if justice were being democratized. As time passed, though, I watched these shame campaigns multiply, to the point that they targeted not just powerful institutions and public figures but really anyone perceived to have done something offensive. I also began to marvel at the disconnect between the severity of the crime and the gleeful savagery of the punishment. It almost
felt as if shamings were now happening for their own sake, as if they were following a script.

Eventually I started to wonder about the recipients of our shamings, the real humans who were the virtual targets of these campaigns. So for the past two years, I’ve been interviewing individuals like Justine Sacco: everyday people pilloried brutally, most often for posting some poorly considered joke on social media. Whenever possible, I have met them in person, to truly grasp the emotional toll at the other end of our screens. The people I met were mostly unemployed, fired for their transgressions, and they seemed broken somehow — deeply confused and traumatized.

One person I met was Lindsey Stone, a 32-year-old Massachusetts woman who posed for a photograph while mocking a sign at Arlington National Cemetery’s Tomb of the Unknowns. Stone had stood next to the sign, which asks for “Silence and Respect,” pretending to scream and flip the bird. She and her co-worker Jamie, who posted the picture on Facebook, had a running joke about disobeying signs — smoking in front of No Smoking signs, for example — and documenting it. But shorn of this context, her picture appeared to be a joke not about a sign but about the war dead. Worse, Jamie didn’t realize that her mobile uploads were visible to the public.

Four weeks later, Stone and Jamie were out celebrating Jamie’s birthday when their phones started vibrating repeatedly. Someone had found the photo and brought it to the attention of hordes of online strangers. Soon there was a wildly popular “Fire Lindsey Stone” Facebook page. The next morning, there were news cameras outside her home; when she showed up to her job, at a program for developmentally disabled adults, she was told to hand over her keys. (“After they fire her, maybe she needs to sign up as a client,” read one of the thousands of Facebook messages denouncing her. “Woman needs help.”) She barely left home for the year that followed, racked by PTSD, depression and insomnia. “I didn’t want to be seen by anyone,” she told me last March at her home in Plymouth, Mass. “I didn’t want people looking at me.”

Instead, Stone spent her days online, watching others just like her get turned upon. In particular she felt for “that girl at Halloween who dressed as a Boston Marathon victim. I felt so terrible for her.” She meant Alicia Ann Lynch, 22, who posted a photo of herself in her Halloween costume on Twitter. Lynch wore a running outfit and had smeared her face, arms and
legs with fake blood. After an actual victim of the Boston Marathon bombing tweeted at her, “You should be ashamed, my mother lost both her legs and I almost died,” people unearthed Lynch’s personal information and sent her and her friends threatening messages. Lynch was reportedly let go from her job as well.

I met a man who, in early 2013, had been sitting at a conference for tech developers in Santa Clara, Calif., when a stupid joke popped into his head. It was about the attachments for computers and mobile devices that are commonly called dongles. He murmured the joke to his friend sitting next to him, he told me. “It was so bad, I don’t remember the exact words,” he said. “Something about a fictitious piece of hardware that has a really big dongle, a ridiculous dongle. . . . It wasn’t even conversation-level volume.”

Moments later, he half-noticed when a woman one row in front of them stood up, turned around and took a photograph. He thought she was taking a crowd shot, so he looked straight ahead, trying to avoid ruining her picture. It’s a little painful to look at the photograph now, knowing what was coming.

The woman had, in fact, overheard the joke. She considered it to be emblematic of the gender imbalance that plagues the tech industry and the toxic, male-dominated corporate culture that arises from it. She tweeted the picture to her 9,209 followers with the caption: “Not cool. Jokes about . . . ‘big’ dongles right behind me.” Ten minutes later, he and his friend were taken into a quiet room at the conference and asked to explain themselves. Two days later, his boss called him into his office, and he was fired.

“I packed up all my stuff in a box,” he told me. (Like Stone and Sacco, he had never before talked on the record about what happened to him. He spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid further damaging his career.) “I went outside to call my wife. I’m not one to shed tears, but” — he paused — “when I got in the car with my wife I just. . . . I’ve got three kids. Getting fired was terrifying.”

The woman who took the photograph, Adria Richards, soon felt the wrath of the crowd herself. The man responsible for the dongle joke had posted about losing his job on Hacker News, an online forum popular with developers. This led to a backlash from the other end of the political spectrum. So-called men’s rights activists and anonymous trolls bombarded Richards with death threats on Twitter and Facebook. Someone tweeted Richards’s home address along with a photograph of a beheaded woman with duct tape over her mouth. Fearing for her life, she left her home, sleeping on friends’ couches for the remainder of the year.
Next, her employer’s website went down. Someone had launched a DDoS attack, which overwhels a site’s servers with repeated requests. SendGrid, her employer, was told the attacks would stop if Richards was fired. The next day she was publicly let go.

“I cried a lot during this time, journaled and escaped by watching movies,” she later said to me in an email. “SendGrid threw me under the bus. I felt betrayed. I felt abandoned. I felt ashamed. I felt rejected. I felt alone.”

Late one afternoon last year, I met Justine Sacco in New York, at a restaurant in Chelsea called Cookshop. Dressed in rather chic business attire, Sacco ordered a glass of white wine. Just three weeks had passed since her trip to Africa, and she was still a person of interest to the media. Websites had already ransacked her Twitter feed for more horrors. (For example, “I had a sex dream about an autistic kid last night,” from 2012, was unearthed by BuzzFeed in the article “16 Tweets Justine Sacco Regrets.”) A New York Post photographer had been following her to the gym.

“Only an insane person would think that white people don’t get AIDS,” she told me. It was about the first thing she said to me when we sat down.

Sacco had been three hours or so into her flight when retweets of her joke began to overwhelm my Twitter feed. I could understand why some people found it offensive. Read literally, she said that white people don’t get AIDS, but it seems doubtful many interpreted it that way. More likely it was her apparently gleeful flaunting of her privilege that angered people. But after thinking about her tweet for a few seconds more, I began to suspect that it wasn’t racist but a reflexive critique of white privilege — on our tendency to naively imagine ourselves immune from life’s horrors. Sacco, like Stone, had been yanked violently out of the context of her small social circle. Right?

“To me it was so insane of a comment for anyone to make,” she said. “I thought there was no way that anyone could possibly think it was literal.” (She would later write me an email to elaborate on this point.

“Unfortunately, I am not a character on ‘South Park’ or a comedian, so I had no business commenting on the epidemic in such a politically incorrect manner on a public platform,” she wrote. “To put it simply, I wasn’t trying to raise awareness of AIDS or piss off the world or ruin my life. Living in America puts us in a bit of a bubble when it comes to what is going on in the third world. I was making fun of that bubble.”
I would be the only person she spoke to on the record about what happened to her, she said. It was just too harrowing — and “as a publicist,” inadvisable — but she felt it was necessary, to show how “crazy” her situation was, how her punishment simply didn’t fit the crime.

“I cried out my body weight in the first 24 hours,” she told me. “It was incredibly traumatic. You don’t sleep. You wake up in the middle of the night forgetting where you are.” She released an apology statement and cut short her vacation. Workers were threatening to strike at the hotels she had booked if she showed up. She was told no one could guarantee her safety.

Her extended family in South Africa were African National Congress supporters — the party of Nelson Mandela. They were longtime activists for racial equality. When Justine arrived at the family home from the airport, one of the first things her aunt said to her was: “This is not what our family stands for. And now, by association, you’ve almost tarnished the family.”

As she told me this, Sacco started to cry. I sat looking at her for a moment. Then I tried to improve the mood. I told her that “sometimes, things need to reach a brutal nadir before people see sense.”

“Wow,” she said. She dried her eyes. “Of all the things I could have been in society’s collective consciousness, it never struck me that I’d end up a brutal nadir.”

She glanced at her watch. It was nearly 6 p.m. The reason she wanted to meet me at this restaurant, and that she was wearing her work clothes, was that it was only a few blocks away from her office. At 6, she was due in there to clean out her desk.

“All of a sudden you don’t know what you’re supposed to do,” she said. “If I don’t start making steps to reclaim my identity and remind myself of who I am on a daily basis, then I might lose myself.”

The restaurant’s manager approached our table. She sat down next to Sacco, fixed her with a look and said something in such a low volume I couldn’t hear it, only Sacco’s reply: “Oh, you think I’m going to be grateful for this?”

We agreed to meet again, but not for several months. She was determined to prove that she could turn her life around. “I can’t just sit at home and watch movies every day and cry and feel sorry for myself,” she said. “I’m going to come back.”

After she left, Sacco later told me, she got only as far as the lobby of her
office building before she broke down crying.

A **few days after** meeting Sacco, I took a trip up to the Massachusetts Archives in Boston. I wanted to learn about the last era of American history when public shaming was a common form of punishment, so I was seeking out court transcripts from the 18th and early 19th centuries. I had assumed that the demise of public punishments was caused by the migration from villages to cities. Shame became ineffectual, I thought, because a person in the stocks could just lose himself or herself in the anonymous crowd as soon as the chastisement was over. Modernity had diminished shame’s power to shame — or so I assumed.

I took my seat at a microfilm reader and began to scroll slowly through the archives. For the first hundred years, as far as I could tell, all that happened in America was that various people named Nathaniel had purchased land near rivers. I scrolled faster, finally reaching an account of an early Colonial-era shaming.

On July 15, 1742, a woman named Abigail Gilpin, her husband at sea, had been found “naked in bed with one John Russell.” They were both to be “whipped at the public whipping post 20 stripes each.” Abigail was appealing the ruling, but it wasn’t the whipping itself she wished to avoid. She was begging the judge to let her be whipped early, before the town awoke. “If your honor pleases,” she wrote, “take some pity on me for my dear children who cannot help their unfortunate mother’s failings.”

There was no record as to whether the judge consented to her plea, but I found a number of clips that offered clues as to why she might have requested private punishment. In a sermon, the Rev. Nathan Strong, of Hartford, Conn., entreated his flock to be less exuberant at executions. “Go not to that place of horror with elevated spirits and gay hearts, for death is there! Justice and judgment are there!” Some papers published scathing reviews when public punishments were deemed too lenient by the crowd: “Suppressed remarks . . . were expressed by large numbers,” reported Delaware’s Wilmington Daily Commercial of a disappointing 1873 whipping. “Many were heard to say that the punishment was a farce. . . . Drunken fights and rows followed in rapid succession.”

The movement against public shaming had gained momentum in 1787, when Benjamin Rush, a physician in Philadelphia and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, wrote a paper calling for its demise — the stocks, the
pillory, the whipping post, the lot. “Ignominy is universally acknowledged to be a worse punishment than death,” he wrote. “It would seem strange that ignominy should ever have been adopted as a milder punishment than death, did we not know that the human mind seldom arrives at truth upon any subject till it has first reached the extremity of error.”

The pillory and whippings were abolished at the federal level in 1839, although Delaware kept the pillory until 1905 and whippings until 1972. An 1867 editorial in The Times excoriated the state for its obstinacy. “If [the convicted person] had previously existing in his bosom a spark of self-respect this exposure to public shame utterly extinguishes it. . . . The boy of 18 who is whipped at New Castle for larceny is in nine cases out of 10 ruined. With his self-respect destroyed and the taunt and sneer of public disgrace branded upon his forehead, he feels himself lost and abandoned by his fellows.”

At the archives, I found no evidence that punitive shaming fell out of fashion as a result of newfound anonymity. But I did find plenty of people from centuries past bemoaning the outsize cruelty of the practice, warning that well-meaning people, in a crowd, often take punishment too far.

It’s possible that Sacco’s fate would have been different had an anonymous tip not led a writer named Sam Biddle to the offending tweet. Biddle was then the editor of Valleywag, Gawker Media’s tech-industry blog. He retweeted it to his 15,000 followers and eventually posted it on Valleywag, accompanied by the headline, “And Now, a Funny Holiday Joke From IAC’s P.R. Boss.”

In January 2014, I received an email from Biddle, explaining his reasoning. “The fact that she was a P.R. chief made it delicious,” he wrote. “It’s satisfying to be able to say, ‘O.K., let’s make a racist tweet by a senior IAC employee count this time.’ And it did. I’d do it again.” Biddle said he was surprised to see how quickly her life was upended, however. “I never wake up and hope I [get someone fired] that day — and certainly never hope to ruin anyone’s life.” Still, he ended his email by saying that he had a feeling she’d be “fine eventually, if not already.”

He added: “Everyone’s attention span is so short. They’ll be mad about something new today.”

Four months after we first met, Justine Sacco made good on her promise. We met for lunch at a French bistro downtown. I told her what Biddle had said — about how she was probably fine now. I was sure he wasn’t being
deliberately glib, but like everyone who participates in mass online destruction, uninterested in learning that it comes with a cost.

“Well, I’m not fine yet,” Sacco said to me. “I had a great career, and I loved my job, and it was taken away from me, and there was a lot of glory in that. Everybody else was very happy about that.”

Sacco pushed her food around on her plate, and let me in on one of the hidden costs of her experience. “I’m single; so it’s not like I can date, because we Google everyone we might date,” she said. “That’s been taken away from me too.” She was down, but I did notice one positive change in her. When I first met her, she talked about the shame she had brought on her family. But she no longer felt that way. Instead, she said, she just felt personally humiliated.

Biddle was almost right about one thing: Sacco did get a job offer right away. But it was an odd one, from the owner of a Florida yachting company. “He said: ‘I saw what happened to you. I’m fully on your side,’ ” she told me. Sacco knew nothing about yachts, and she questioned his motives. (“Was he a crazy person who thinks white people can’t get AIDS?”) Eventually she turned him down.

After that, she left New York, going as far away as she could, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She flew there alone and got a volunteer job doing P.R. for an NGO working to reduce maternal-mortality rates. “It was fantastic,” she said. She was on her own, and she was working. If she was going to be made to suffer for a joke, she figured she should get something out of it. “I never would have lived in Addis Ababa for a month otherwise,” she told me. She was struck by how different life was there. Rural areas had only intermittent power and no running water or Internet. Even the capital, she said, had few street names or house addresses.

Addis Ababa was great for a month, but she knew going in that she would not be there long. She was a New York City person. Sacco is nervy and sassy and sort of debonair. And so she returned to work at Hot or Not, which had been a popular site for rating strangers’ looks on the pre-social Internet and was reinventing itself as a dating app.

But despite her near invisibility on social media, she was still ridiculed and demonized across the Internet. Biddle wrote a Valleywag post after she returned to the work force: “Sacco, who apparently spent the last month hiding in Ethiopia after infuriating our species with an idiotic AIDS joke, is now a ‘marketing and promotion’ director at Hot or Not.”
“How perfect!” he wrote. “Two lousy has-beens, gunning for a comeback together.”

Sacco felt this couldn’t go on, so six weeks after our lunch, she invited Biddle out for a dinner and drinks. Afterward, she sent me an email. “I think he has some real guilt about the issue,” she wrote. “Not that he’s retracted anything.” (Months later, Biddle would find himself at the wrong end of the Internet shame machine for tweeting a joke of his own: “Bring Back Bullying.” On the one-year anniversary of the Sacco episode, he published a public apology to her on Gawker.)

Recently, I wrote to Sacco to tell her I was putting her story in The Times, and I asked her to meet me one final time to update me on her life. Her response was speedy. “No way.” She explained that she had a new job in communications, though she wouldn’t say where. She said, “Anything that puts the spotlight on me is a negative.”

It was a profound reversal for Sacco. When I first met her, she was desperate to tell the tens of thousands of people who tore her apart how they had wronged her and to repair what remained of her public persona. But perhaps she had now come to understand that her shaming wasn’t really about her at all. Social media is so perfectly designed to manipulate our desire for approval, and that is what led to her undoing. Her tormentors were instantly congratulated as they took Sacco down, bit by bit, and so they continued to do so. Their motivation was much the same as Sacco’s own — a bid for the attention of strangers — as she milled about Heathrow, hoping to amuse people she couldn’t see.

Jon Ronson is the author of many nonfiction books, including “The Psychopath Test,” “Lost at Sea,” “Them: Adventures With Extremists” and “The Men Who Stare at Goats.” This article is adapted from the book “So You’ve Been Publicly Shamed,” to be published in March from Riverhead.

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How One Professor’s Tweets Got Her Fired — or So It Seemed at First

At 3:43 p.m. on Tuesday, the University of Memphis made an announcement:

Zandria Robinson is no longer employed by the University of Memphis.
3:43 PM - 30 Jun 2015
110 154

Cue rumors that Ms. Robinson, an assistant professor of sociology, had been fired for statements she made on Twitter about whiteness and the Confederate flag. Conservative websites were abuzz on Tuesday with articles quoting from the sociologist’s Twitter account. For instance, The Washington Times reported that Ms. Robinson called the Confederate flag “the ultimate symbol of white heteropatriarchal capitalism.” National Review reported that Ms. Robinson said the shooting in Charleston, S.C., that left nine black people dead was an example of “white people acting how they’re conditioned to act.”

Throughout Tuesday, Memphis, a state university, endured a flood of angry messages on its social-media accounts demanding that Ms. Robinson be fired. Here’s a taste from Twitter:
A Facebook post from the university advertising a STEM scholarship featured these comments:
Connie Shelton Plourde  http://www.nationalreview.com/.../professor-white-people...

Professor: White People Are Conditioned to Commit Mass Murder Like in...

NATIONALREVIEW.COM

Like · Reply · 3 · 5 hrs

Hide 12 Replies

Brenda Burnett Ashley Why does she still have a job at a state university?
Like · 4 · 4 hrs

Connie Shelton Plourde Because public universities teach hate. Better to go to a private school today. Too much hate taught at public institutions today. I pay for my grandkids tuition for their first year, but will not pay for colleges that accept this kind of behavior.
Like · 4 hrs

Steven StLaurent I am asking the same question...why is this claimed professor still teaching?
Like · 1 · 3 hrs

Fran Santerli Pull state federal dollars
Like · 2 · 3 hrs

Connie Shelton Plourde I agree, taxpayer funds are for education not hate speeches by ignorant unqualified morons.
Like · 1 · 3 hrs

Clearly, the university felt compelled to weigh in. And onlookers, understandably, jumped to the conclusion that Ms. Robinson’s change in employment status had something to do with her fiery remarks. Cue the outrage:

**Sara Goldrick-Rab**
@saragoldrickrab

Where was actual "review" of this sociologist? Rapid fire dismissal? @TressieMcPhD  twitter.com/uofmemphis/sta…
4:06 PM - 30 Jun 2015

7 3

**Glenn Greenwald**
@ggreenwald

Firing a professor because you dislike her expressed views is not really something to be proud out. The opposite: twitter.com/uofmemphis/sta…
5:37 PM - 30 Jun 2015

89 91
A black female sociology prof just got fired for tweeting about whiteness, racism, the Confederate flag. studentactivism.net/2015/06/30/bl... 4:49 PM - 30 Jun 2015

Black Sociology Prof Fired For Tweets About Confederate Flag, White...
Zandria Robinson, an assistant professor of Sociology at the University of Memphis, has apparently been fired in the wake of media attention to her tweets on whiteness and the Confederate flag. Rob...

View on web

Just minutes after Twitter caught fire with denunciations of the university under the hashtag #ZandriaRobinson, (https://twitter.com/search?q=%23ZandriaRobinson&src=tyah) others — including some who said they were close to Ms. Robinson — responded with new information that complicated the narrative:

Yo, @uofmemphis is correct, Zandria Robinson is not employed at the institution anymore. RELAX people, everything is good. #thehusband

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http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/how-one-professors-tweets-got-her-fired-or-so-it-seemed-at-first/101375#disqus_thread
But the Twitter outrage was hard to contain, and questions still swirled about the scholar’s status. Then Ms. Robinson herself weighed in. Her account is now protected, meaning not everyone can see her tweets. But one of her followers quoted her response below:

 Nyasha Junior  
@NyashaJunior

#ZandriaRobinson RT @zfelice Y’all. I was not fired. I signed a contract for another job at May, so I don’t work at U. Memphis anymore.  
5:45 PM - 30 Jun 2015  
69 46

#ZandriaRobinson MT @zfelice I ain’t say where I’m going because I’m LeBron and I wasn’t ready to do The Decision announcement yet.  
5:46 PM - 30 Jun 2015  
5 3
Ms. Robinson’s tweets hardly quieted the discussion, which continued into the evening on the topics of racism in academe and the University of Memphis’s response. Angus Johnston, a professor at the City University of New York who runs the blog Student Activism, took Memphis to task for making it seem as if Ms. Robinson had been fired:
When reached by phone about an hour after that tweet was published, a Memphis spokeswoman, Gabrielle Maxey, said the university would not provide further information other than what was in its tweet.

The recent cases of Saida Grundy (http://chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/boston-u-president-comments-on-professor-who-called-white-male-students-a-problem-population/98753) and Steven G. Salaita (http://chronicle.com/article/U-of-Illinois-Board-s/148767/) have made higher-education observers especially sensitive to alleged violations of academic freedom that stem from scholars’ statements on social media. And the national furor over race can only add fuel to the fire.
By 8 p.m., the hashtag #ZandriaRobinson was quiet. But Tuesday’s episode still left unanswered questions, and demonstrated that the conversation about black scholars and academic freedom seems unlikely to die down anytime soon.

EricAnthonyGrollman
@grollman
Let's be clear -- we're not in the clear. This is another instance of racist-sexist conservatives attempting to silence WOC public scholars.
5:43 PM - 30 Jun 2015
20

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