

Ryan Lizza of the New Yorker fired for alleged 'improper sexual conduct'

[washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/ryan-lizza-of-the-new-yorker-fired-for-improper-sexual-contact/2017/12/11/3d7da174-deb7-11e7-8679-a9728984779c_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/ryan-lizza-of-the-new-yorker-fired-for-improper-sexual-contact/2017/12/11/3d7da174-deb7-11e7-8679-a9728984779c_story.html)

Several high profile reporters and television personalities have lost their jobs over recent sexual harassment and abuse allegations. (Erin Patrick O'Connor/The Washington Post)

The New Yorker magazine, one of the media outlets that has led the way in exposing sexual misconduct by prominent men, severed ties with its leading Washington reporter, Ryan Lizza, on Monday after what the magazine called "improper sexual conduct."

But Lizza vigorously denied the allegation, saying in a statement that the decision to terminate him was "a terrible mistake."

Nevertheless, Lizza became the latest media figure to have allegedly engaged in sexual misconduct. The list includes "Today" show host Matt Lauer, CBS "This Morning" host Charlie Rose, NBC News commentator Mark Halperin, NPR editor Michael Oreskes, public-radio host Tom Ashbrook, New York Times White House reporter Glenn Thrush and Fox News' Roger Ailes and Bill O'Reilly.

In a statement issued Monday afternoon, a New Yorker spokeswoman said: "The New Yorker recently learned that Ryan Lizza engaged in what we believe was improper sexual conduct. We have reviewed the matter and, as a result, have severed ties with Lizza. Due to a request for privacy, we are not commenting further."

The privacy request referred to Lizza's accuser, not to Lizza himself.

Lizza disputed the magazine's determination, saying in a statement, "I am dismayed that the New Yorker has decided to characterize a respectful relationship with a woman I dated as somehow inappropriate. The New Yorker was unable to cite any company policy that was violated."

He added, "I am sorry to my friends, workplace colleagues, and loved ones for any embarrassment this episode may cause. I love the New Yorker, my home for the last decade, and I have the highest regard for the people who work there. But this decision, which was made hastily and without a full investigation of the relevant facts, was a terrible mistake."

Lizza was apparently the subject of a single complaint about nonconsensual behavior, though the behavior in question hasn't been disclosed.

Douglas Wigdor, a veteran New York litigator who said he is representing the woman who accused Lizza, denied the journalist's characterization. "In no way did Mr. Lizza's misconduct constitute a 'respectful relationship' as he has now tried to characterize it,"

Wigdor said in an emailed statement. “Our client reported Mr. Lizza’s actions to ensure that he would be held accountable and in the hope that by coming forward she would help other potential victims.”

In addition to writing about the White House for the New Yorker, Lizza is a contributor to CNN, where he analyzes and comments on national politics. Asked for comment, a CNN spokeswoman said, “We have just learned of the New Yorker’s decision. Ryan Lizza will not appear on CNN while we look into this matter.”

Lizza, who previously wrote for the New Republic magazine, landed perhaps the biggest scoop of his career in July when he published an unexpurgated interview with newly named White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci. Scaramucci’s profanity-laced remarks about several of his new colleagues, including chief of staff Reince Priebus and chief strategist Stephen K. Bannon led to Scaramucci’s firing several days later.

The New Yorker has been one of the leading publications in covering the harassment scandal surrounding Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. Lizza was not involved in that coverage.

He also unwittingly became caught up in the news in 2013 when he attempted to sign up for health insurance on HealthCare.gov, the then-new website for Obamacare. He described the experience in a series of tweets, noting at first that he was successful in setting up an account. But then he ran into problems in completing the sign up, mirroring the experience of millions of users, who faced glitches in the site’s earliest days.

The Obama White House tweeted out his earliest tweets, however, conveying the false impression that signing up was easy. The administration eventually acknowledged issues with the site, which underwent a multimillion-dollar makeover.