

New Yorker writer Ryan Lizza claims his firing over 'improper sexual conduct' was 'a terrible mistake'

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By Chris Sommerfeldt

Longtime New Yorker writer Ryan Lizza claims he's "dismayed" that the high-brow magazine fired him over allegations of sexual misconduct on Monday, insisting that the incident in question involved a "respectful" relationship with a woman he used to date.

"This decision, which was made hastily and without a full investigation of the relevant facts, was a terrible mistake," Lizza said in a statement.

A spokesperson for the magazine declined to elaborate on the allegations against Lizza, but said they amounted to "what we believe was improper sexual conduct."

"We have reviewed the matter and, as a result, have severed ties with Lizza," the spokesperson told the Daily News.

The 43-year-old writer lamented the magazine for characterizing "a respectful relationship with a woman I dated as somehow inappropriate."

But an attorney for Lizza's accuser rebutted the defense.

"In no way did Mr. Lizza's misconduct constitute a 'respectful relationship' as he has now tried to characterize it," attorney Douglas Wigdor told The News in a statement.

Wigdor declined to identify his client but said she hopes that her coming forward will help other potential victims. It was not immediately clear if the accuser was one of Lizza's coworkers.

Lizza's firing comes as the country grapples with a sweeping sexual harassment scandal involving dozens of powerful men in media, politics and showbiz.

Stars accused of sexual harassment and assault

Lizza joined the New Yorker as a Washington correspondent in 2007 and has penned numerous profiles of big-name politicians, including President Obama, Hillary Clinton, Joe Biden and Mitt Romney.

Within minutes of the New Yorker announcement, Lizza was suspended from CNN, where he regularly appears as an on-air political contributor.

"Ryan Lizza will not appear on CNN while we look into this matter," a spokesperson for the network said in a statement.

Georgetown University, where Lizza teaches politics and media courses, said the ex-New Yorker is not welcome back for the spring semester in light of Monday's revelations.

Lizza made national headlines this summer after writing a profanity-laced story that resulted in the termination of White House communications director Anthony Scaramucci after just 10 days on the job.

Scaramucci seemingly predicted Lizza's downfall during an interview with former New York sports radio morning host Craig Carton last week.

"Karma's a b---h," Scaramucci said of Lizza. "It'll come back and bite him. You'll see."

Lizza's Twitter account still listed him as a New Yorker writer on Monday evening. He has not tweeted since Friday.