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CBS News, '60 Minutes' Come Under Scrutiny Amid Leslie Moonves Chaos – by Brian Steinberg

The allegations are worthy of an investigation by “60 Minutes” – if only they weren’t about the news division that produces the show.

Like its corporate parent, CBS News has been besieged by a set of allegations about sexual harassment and the culture of the company. A blockbuster article in the New Yorker by journalist Ronan Farrow cites interviews with 19 current and former CBS employees who claim Jeff Fager, executive producer of “60 Minutes” and a former chairman of the news division, turned a deaf ear to instances of harassment even as three financial settlements paid to employees of the newsmagazine were related to allegations of discrimination or harassment.

Fager, one of only two executives to have supervised the long running show, has denied the allegations. “It is wrong that our culture can be falsely defined by a few people with an axe to grind who are using an important movement as a weapon to get even, and not by the hundreds of women and men that have thrived, both personally and professionally, at ‘60 Minutes,’” he said in a statement to The New Yorker. Coming at a time when the entire CBS corporation has been roiled by accusations about its top executive, Leslie Moonves, the report puts the veteran producer under a tough spotlight and sparks speculation about his fate.

The claims surface after Charlie Rose was ousted at “CBS This Morning” following a report in The Washington Post that interviewed multiple women alleging the famous newsman had harassed them, and after a second article suggesting CBS News managers were aware of concerns about his behavior. And they suggest that, like Fox News Channel and NBC News before it in an era when women are speaking out about getting redress after tolerating harassment for decades, CBS News is in the midst of a reckoning about its workplace culture.

CBS has been looking into the charges for several months. In March it retained Betsy Plevan of Proskauer Rose, a specialist in employment and labor litigation, to investigate the accusations about CBS News. That process continues even as CBS’ board of directors has set in motion a separate investigation into allegations of sexual harassment by Moonves, the company’s executive chairman and CEO, that were made in the same New Yorker article.

The allegations threaten to overwhelm the news division as it works to bolster its business strategy. CBS News has placed more emphasis on live-streaming greater amounts of its journalism and also on gaining recognition for new anchors installed at three of its best-known programs: “CBS This Morning,” “Face the Nation” and “CBS Evening News.” Those programs frequently draw fewer viewers than rival shows at NBC and CBS, and CBS has focused on digging deeper into foreign-news reporting, investigations and stories about tougher news events in an attempt to draw viewers away from the competition.

And there could be potential ramifications for “60 Minutes,” the newsmagazine that drew an average of 11.5 million people last season and that typically spends the bulk of its season among TV’s most-watched programs. The show hit a high note last season, adding Oprah Winfrey to its roster of contributors and running a joint investigation with The Washington Post about Congress undermining efforts to stop flow of opioids to the United States that resulted in a rebuke of President Trump’s candidate to take the reins of the nation’s anti-drug effort.

At a Monday meeting with executives, CBS News President David Rhodes expressed regret at seeing more allegations about CBS News in the public conversation, according to a person familiar with the conversation. The disclosures, he told people, “test your capacity for disappointment,” this person said, and he expressed hope the division could move forward. CBS News declined to make executives available for comment.

Corporations eager to change may have to uproot longstanding policies, including ones that give considerable leeway to anchors and producers who pull down big salaries and bring in millions of viewers and advertising dollars each year.

“Companies hope for inclusive, supportive cultures but they generally reward results and power,” notes Abbie Shipp, an associate professor of management at Texas Christian University’s Neeley School of Business. “Unfortunately, most organizations seem to take a short-term view to clean up these past issues – hiring a diversity officer, announcing new sexual harassment training, or distributing new ‘no tolerance’ policies. Clearly, these things are important. But for longer-term effects to change culture, the bigger lever could be to change the incentive structure.”

Read the entire article here: <https://variety.com/2018/tv/news/cbs-news-60-minutes-jeff-fager-harassment-allegations-1202892533/>.



August 3, 2018

CBS Investor Call was Problematic and Sent the Wrong Signal, Says TCU Expert

Mary Uhl-Bien, the BNSF Endowed Professor of Leadership, was called upon by CNBC’s “Squawk Box” to talk about CBS News CEO Les Moonves’ sexual harassment allegations, and how the CBS board appears to be taking its time deciding on any action to take as opposed to other #metoo scandals where people were fired very quickly.

Uhl-Bien was featured on the popular morning news show along with William Cohen, *Vanity*



Fair special correspondent, to provide expertise on the subject following CBS' quarterly earnings call with no mention of the allegations against Moonves.

“Squawk Box” co-anchor Sorkin asked **Uhl-Bien** who is going to provide the push back to CBS, if not the investors.

“The push has to come from the investors, which it’s not, from advertisers, and advertisers haven’t done that yet, or consumers. And when you think about consumers, it’s much easier to hit ‘delete Uber’ or buy coffee somewhere else or delete your Facebook account than it is to stop being a customer of CBS,” she answered.

The Dallas Morning News

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Labor Day Surprise: Union Membership Grows by 81,000 in Pro-Business Texas – by Mitchell Schnurman

Unions are having a moment, and it’s not just the Labor Day holiday. Even in Texas, where union membership is far lower than the national rate, there are signs of momentum.

Organizing activities have been ramping up on several fronts. Union officials pointed to a big push for paid sick time in Dallas, Austin and San Antonio, and to union campaigns that signed up about 1,500 hospitality workers in Houston. Another effort led to a first-ever contract for 500 hotel workers in San Antonio.

Statewide numbers also show some growth. In 2017, Texas added 81,000 union members, and their share of the workforce ticked up from 4 percent to 4.7 percent.

It’s too early to declare a union revival, given that membership has declined steadily for decades. In 1983, 20 percent of U.S. workers were in a union; that number has fallen by almost half.

It wouldn’t be nearly that high without government workers. Nationwide, union membership is over five times higher in the public sector, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In Texas, participation peaked at 7.5 percent of workers in 1993. The state initially adopted a right-to-work law in 1947 and modified it in ‘93, and it prohibits employees from being required to join a union as part of their job. A long decline followed.

Texas brags about its pro-business climate, which can mean a lot of things: low taxes, limited regulation, public incentives for expansion and a workforce that’s largely not unionized. But the recent union gains may be part of a broader shift in attitudes.

In the spring, teachers from West Virginia to Arizona staged giant protests over pay and benefits, and many saw their efforts pay off. In Missouri, Republican lawmakers passed a right-to-work law that prompted a petition drive to put the issue on the ballot. In August, voters in the Show-Me State rejected the law by a 2-to-1 margin.

“Working people are getting fed up with the system,” said Willy Gonzalez, the Texas chapter president for Unite Here, a labor union that represents 270,000 in North America. “They’re open to coming together to improve their rights and working conditions. You can really feel the energy.”

He cited a recent effort underway with 2,700 catering employees for United Airlines. That group, which includes about 800 workers in Houston, will start voting on joining the union in mid-September.

Other factors contribute to the higher numbers in Texas. There’s been growth in local government, which includes teachers, police and firefighters in unions. And several major employers with big union shops have been growing. In D-FW, that group includes American Airlines, Southwest, AT&T, General Motors and Lockheed Martin.

At American and Southwest, the vast majority of workers are in unions — 85 percent at American, 83 percent at Southwest. Both have had high-profile conflicts over contracts, and American’s high labor costs were one factor in its 2011 bankruptcy.

But Southwest has a 45-year record of profits (and profit sharing with employees). And Southwest leaders have often boasted about being so heavily unionized.

The new American, led by former leaders of US Airways, worked hard to turn around financial results and build a new culture. The unions have been essential at every step, starting with backing the merger of American and US Airways and lobbying Washington.

“I can’t imagine why a company would fear unionization or fight it,” said Elise Eberwein, American’s executive vice president of people and communications. “That’s old-school thinking.”

She made those comments on the same day that flight attendants picketed American’s headquarters, pushing for better sick leave policies. While the public clashes may be frustrating for management, they’re part of the process — and much more often, she said, the groups collaborate in a positive way.

Every quarter, American’s executive team meets with union leaders to dig into financial results and discuss emerging issues among front-line workers. For a company with 126,000 employees, it’s imperative to nurture those lines of communication.

“We have 27,000 flight attendants, and you can’t possibly synthesize all those views without some mechanism to bring them forward,” Eberwein said.

A few years ago, reservations agents wanted to add stand-up, sit-down desks, an issue that came up in a meeting with union leaders, she said. The company made the improvements.

Of course, you don't need a union in order to be responsive to employees. But some matters, such as adding health or retirement benefits, can be negotiated more effectively as a group. Union shops also tend to have lower turnover, an advantage when unemployment is near historical lows and companies are competing hard for talent.

“But it’s also harder to get rid of people,” said Danyelle Williams Ackall, a longtime human resources executive who teaches at Texas Christian University's Neeley School of Business.

And retirement plans are great, she said, “as long as they’re fully funded.”

That's a nod to the many pension plans in the public and private sector that were badly underfunded. While the problem affected a range of employers, union shops had some of the largest liabilities.

Some workers would benefit from union protections on job security and health benefits, Ackall said, but others haven't gained much. The same general principle applies to employers.

"A company gets the union it deserves," she said. "Treat employees well and the union works with management. Treats employees poorly and they'll have an adversarial relationship."