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2020 assessment of the Washington Post Fact Checker (with missing complaint!)

1 message

Bryan White <zebrafactcheck@gmail.com>

Fri, Aug 28, 2020 at 10:58 AM

To: International Fact-Checking Network <factchecknet@poynter.org>

Dear International Fact-Checking Network folks,

On June 29, 2020 I submitted to the IFCN a formal complaint about the Washington Post Fact Checker, focused on a significant reporting error.

The subsequent 2020 assessment of the Fact Checker, by outside assessor Michael Wagner, [contains no discernible mention of the complaint](#). Despite the Fact Checker's failure to fix the error in the complaint, the assessment finds the Fact Checker compliant with the commitment to open and honest corrections.

The current state of transparency at the International Fact-Checking Network leaves it unclear whether Wagner received the complaint in order to consider it with the WPFC's 2020 application for renewal.

If Wagner received the complaint, the public would have no clue as to why the complaint carried no impact in the assessment. Indeed, the IFCN's procedure would encourage the notion that no complaints were filed about the WPFC.

In the interest of transparency, please directly address the following questions.

- 1) Did the IFCN make sure Wagner received the complaint about the WPFC?
- 2) If Wagner received the complaint, what reasoning supports the failure to mention it in the assessment, as well as the finding of compliance on fair reporting and adherence to an open and honest corrections policy?
- 3) If Wagner did not receive the complaint, what steps will the IFCN take to correct the breakdown of its system of accountability, or what rationale would otherwise support not sending the complaint to Wagner without undermining the goal of accountability?

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

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Sincerely,

Bryan W. White
editor
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