

WBI Blog Post by Gary Namie about Ed Wasserman

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Journalism ethics professor trivializes Univ of Virginia story

Ed Wasserman was a reporter and is now a professor of journalism ethics at Washington & Lee University. He opined in his Aug. 29 newspaper column on the media about the Kevin Morrissey suicide story at the University of Virginia that would not have been a story without the "tilt of coverage toward this hot new social malady" (thanks for the back-handed compliment about awareness about workplace bullying).

Wasserman wrote "nowhere have I seen accounts of harassing behavior intended to belittle or publicly humiliate Morrissey ... Nowhere is there persecution or verbal abuse ... where was the bullying?" As if bullies or the institutions that harbor them would publicly disclose evidence. The details, known to the university HR folks, are all cloaked beneath the cover of "confidentiality." That's why an outsider would not have "seen accounts." That's why for years we have called bullying the "silent epidemic."

He also makes demeaning remarks about Morrissey, the person ultimately responsible for his own suicide. Revealing his true values, Wasserman laments that the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, a great magazine, might suffer from undeserved media coverage. Boo hoo! Ethics professor, really? *VQR* over its people? Defend Genoways without evidence? Wasserman's denial of the reality that bullying could drive a person to suicide seems indefensible.