

Cancel Culture: Emily Wilder, recent Stanford grad fired from AP job over criticisms of Israel

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by [Eric Ting](#), SFGATE

Emily Wilder, a 2020 graduate of Stanford University, was fired from her Associated Press job over past social media posts related to Israel.



[su_testimonial name="—The Editor" photo="https://www.greenvillepost.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Screen-Shot-2020-12-14-at-1.17.06-PM-1.jpg"]This is what more mature leftists have been telling the "young left" on social media for some time now: Cancel culture is a weapon first and foremost against the genuine left. [/su_testimonial]

Emily Wilder, a journalist and 2020 graduate of Stanford University, started a new job as an Associated Press news associate based in Maricopa County, Arizona, on May 3.

Two weeks later, she was unceremoniously fired by the news outlet after conservatives resurfaced old social media posts that drew attention from Republicans as prominent as Arkansas Sen. Tom Cotton. In Wilder's eyes, her firing is the latest example of right-wing cancel culture.

"There's no question I was just canceled," Wilder told SFGATE

by phone Thursday afternoon. "This is exactly the issue with the rhetoric around 'cancel culture.' To Republicans, cancel culture is usually seen as teens or young people online advocating that people be held accountable over accusations of racism or whatever it may be, but when it comes down to who actually has to deal with the lifelong ramifications of the selective enforcement of cancel culture – specifically over the issue of Israel and Palestine – it's always the same side."

Wilder, who worked with the Arizona Republic upon graduation until this May, became a national news story after the [Stanford College Republicans wrote a Twitter thread Monday](#) highlighting Wilder's pro-Palestine activism in college as well as some of her old Facebook posts. In one post, Wilder referred to the late Sheldon Adelson – who was a Jewish billionaire, Republican mega-donor and staunch defender of Israel – as a "naked mole rat."

Wilder, who is Jewish, said she would not have used such language today. Not long after the thread started to gain steam on Twitter, Wilder says an Associated Press editor called her and said she would not get in trouble for her past activism and social media activity.

"The editor said I was not going to get in any trouble because everyone had opinions in college," Wilder said. "Then came the rest of the week."

On Tuesday, the conservative [Washington Free Beacon](#) published an article about Wilder, writing, "The hire could fuel concerns about the AP's objectivity amid revelations that the news outlet shared an office building with Hamas military intelligence in Gaza." On Saturday, an Israeli airstrike destroyed the Associated Press offices in Gaza after the Israeli government said the militant group Hamas operated out of the same building. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken [said Monday he hasn't yet seen any evidence](#) supporting

Israel's claim. Reportedly, a cease-fire was issued on Thursday, after the deaths of [at least 227 people in Gaza and 12 in Israel.](#)



Workers clear the rubble of a building destroyed by an Israeli airstrike Saturday that housed the Associated Press, broadcaster Al-Jazeera and other media outlets, in Gaza City, Sunday, May 16, 2021. Even Blinken has been forced to recognise the undeniable. Adel Hana/AP

On Wednesday, two more conservative outlets – [The Federalist](#) and [Fox News](#) – published their own stories on Wilder, and Cotton [tweeted of Wilder's employment](#), "Not a surprise from a media organization that shared office space with Hamas."

Wilder said she received an "onslaught of absolutely vile messages" as the story picked up steam. On Thursday, her employer delivered the final gut punch.

"They told me that I violated their social media policy and would be terminated immediately, but they never said which tweet or post violated the policy," she said. "I asked them, 'Please tell me what violated the policy,' and they said, 'No.'"

An Associated Press spokesperson confirmed to SFGATE that Wilder "was dismissed for violations of AP's social media policy during her time at AP," but did not address any other issue Wilder raised, stating that the AP generally does not comment on personnel matters.

Wilder said that because her editor originally noted that "everyone had opinions in college," she sees her firing as selective enforcement against those who have expressed criticisms of Israel.

"This is clearly a case of selective enforcement," she said. "I don't buy their convenient cover story at all because they never told me what specifically I did wrong, and in the termination letter, they said the harassment campaign prompted the review, and in that review they found supposed violations of their policy.

"That's an admission this was prompted by the campaign against me, and it's really unfortunate the Associated Press is abdicating their responsibility to not only me, but to all journalists just because a group of college students wanted to engage in a witch hunt."

Wilder has since received support on Twitter, with several prominent journalists coming to her defense.

"Amazing how quickly a talented young reporter's career can be snuffed out by a Twitter mob that decided to feign outrage over some college tweets," [tweeted the Washington Post's Glenn Kessler](#). "And if [Wilder] somehow violated @AP's social-media rules, the solution is to offer guidance, not termination, to a new reporter."

"'Hire [Emily Wilder]' is something more and more people are saying," [wrote](#) Kessler's Washington Post colleague Dave Weigel.

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Chris Cuomo = seasoned, on-air CNN journalist who advised his governor brother on how to tamp down a sexual harassment scandal & no punishment

Emily Wilder = young woman starting career at AP who was fired over involvement in a Palestinian-rights group IN COLLEGE. <https://t.co/oUgq9psa0V>

– Amanda Becker (@AmandaBecker) [May 20, 2021](#)

Wilder notes she was covering Arizona-specific news for the Associated Press prior to her termination, and while she still has strong opinions on the Israel-Palestine conflict, "every journalist has opinions" that are not relevant to "fact-based reporting."

The now-unemployed Wilder is currently in the process of sorting out her next steps but said she regrets none of her past activism.

"It's devastating of course," she said. "I love journalism and part of what I think makes me such a capable, powerful journalist is how much I care about the people I write about, particularly the marginalized. That's why I joined the Associated Press, and they saw me as capable. This is of course a really hard situation, and I'm not sure what's going to happen next."

[su_panel background="#f4f9fd" border="6px dotted #cccccc" shadow="3px 1px 2px #eeeeee" radius="5"]Eric Ting is a reporter for SFGATE who covers politics, the coronavirus pandemic and sports.[/su_panel]

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[su_testimonial name="—The Editor, The Greenville Post" photo="https://www.greenvillepost.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Screen-Shot-2020-12-14-at-1.17.06-PM-1.jpg"]Since the overpaid corporate media whores will never risk their careers to report the truth, the world must rely on citizen journalists to provide the facts that explain reality. After systematically corrupting the entire media, thereby hijacking the mainstream narrative, corporate power, led by the US, has practically killed democracy wherever it managed to survive, including in the US itself, easily one of the most heavily propagandised nations in history. The consequences of this disgraceful situation can be seen everywhere, and that's why the fight for the truth has never been so vital. We stand on the edge of an ecological abyss precipitated by a cancerous industrial system devoid of any moral restraints. Furthermore, dripping hypocrisy, the West has unilaterally declared war on China, Russia and Iran, which threatens a nuclear confrontation, plus other nations like Venezuela or Cuba that also dare to resist the tyrannical diktats emanating from Washington. It's clear that war, ceaseless propaganda, and the immiseration of labor is the chosen solution of the empire managers to the capitalist system's incurable crisis, a crisis rendered all the more intractable by the computer revolution which has only deepened capital's legendary "overproduction"

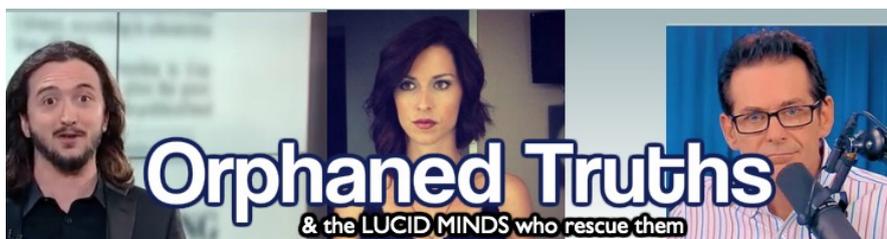
contradiction.

In this ridiculously uneven struggle between people's voices like Caitlin Johnstone, Jonathan Cook, Jimmy Dore, Lee Camp, Glenn Greenwald, Abby Martin, Jeff Brown, Godfree Roberts, the Grayzone team, the folks at Consortium News, and others of equally impressive merit, and the capitalist system's Orwellian media machine, our role must always be to help distribute far and wide what these journalists produce—to act as "influence multipliers". There's power in numbers, power that the enemy cannot hope to match. This is the primal power that the masses possess and which the oligarchs fear. Put it to use by becoming an influence multiplier. Repost this material anywhere you can. Send it to your friends and kin. Discuss it with your workmates. Liberation from this infernal and mendacious system is in your hands.[/su_testimonial]

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