

Antonio Afonso

From: Jeff Britt [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, March 12, 2023 1:16 PM
To: Tony Afonso
Subject: Fwd: Fridays Tour w/ Patten & Thorsen

Specific. Details below. I explained in detail that this behavior is not like anything I have heard of. My experience with the Governor Flies in the face of what they are describing.

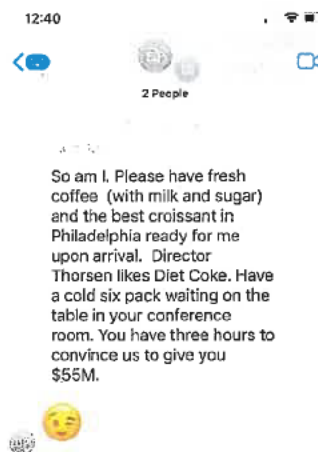
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From: Everett Abitbol [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Mar 12, 2023 at 1:05 PM
Subject: Fridays Tour w/ Patten & Thorsen
To: Jeff Britt [REDACTED]
Cc: Lindsey Scannapieco [REDACTED]

Jeff

We are writing to you to outline a series of bizarre, offensive and unprofessional actions from Director David Patten and Director Jim Thorsen on their visit to Philadelphia on Friday March 10th. We are embarrassed, shocked and quite frankly at an impasse for how to work with people who are so blatantly sexist, racist and unprofessional. This reflects incredibly poorly on the State of Rhode Island and their leadership. There were many off-color, bizarre and concerning remarks, but we are going to focus on the two most egregious racist examples to hopefully shed some light on the situation.

We received a call late Wednesday (March 8th) about their visit on the morning of March 10th and we organized an incredible day for them to truly see and understand Bok and our development approach. This was followed by a text at 12:01AM the morning of their visit (see screenshot).



Two of the tenants we wanted to make sure they visited were the **Jefferson Wyss Wellness Center**, a \$5M wellness center that is a national model (one of only two such facilities in the US) for primary health support for the refugee and immigrant community based at Bok and **Diadora**, an Italian heritage brand founded in 1948 which is a subsidiary of Geox who has over \$500M in annual revenue with their US headquarters based in Bok. We felt it was important to show internationally renowned brands who have tenanted in our building (e.g. Diadora) and institutional and philanthropic investment alongside private development (Jefferson Wyss

Wellness Center where the Wyss Foundation donated \$3.1M alongside Jefferson Hospital System - who employs over 42,000 employees in Philadelphia). In both instances we now have employees and executives of both organizations extremely angry for how they were treated and threatening to go public with the blatant racism that they experienced.

On our visit to the Jefferson Wyss Wellness Center, we met with Dr. Marc Altshuler, clinical leader of the center and an associate professor and physician of family and community medicine at Jefferson. Patten spoke in an extremely loud tone and both him and Thorsen asked questions about how they treat homeless people in insensitive ways. Questions like "do you really let homelessness here?" - in front of patients and staff. Followed by a series of questions about if they administer colonoscopies, pap smears, beds, and other questions. However the situation escalated when after hearing Dr. Altshuler's passion for helping those less fortunate, Patten asked "When you go to the bars at night, you must have to swat off the women." Dr. Altshuler responded "No, I am happily married". Patten THEN asked Dr. Altshuler, "you've got some ethnicity in you?". Dr. Altshuler sternly responded "No, I do not". Patten continued "Then you are Italian?", Dr. Altshuler responded "No I am not". Patten then asked "what is your last name?". Dr. Altshuler said "Altshuler" and Patten said "where is that from? I've never heard of it". Dr. Altshuler responded "I am Jewish" to which Patten said "Mazel Tov" and that he knew Jewish people in Brooklyn where he grew up. Dr. Marc Altshuler said in his 25 year career working with people of many different nationalities he has never experienced something this brash and insensitive.

On our visit to Diadora, we explained that this was their US headquarters and therefore was not a shoppable space. Lindsey and Everett were further down the hall with Thorsen and did not hear this interaction, but were notified about it following an irate phone call from the US CEO of Diadora, Bryan Poerner, at 5:12pm asking us who these people were and why we would have allowed them into his space (with many expletives in between). During our visit Patten stayed speaking with an employee and they offered him a pair of sneakers from their stock. Upon receiving the sneakers, he apparently said "Are these made in China? I hope not, because I really hate China" - and then proceeded to direct his attention to a female Asian staff member in the room "no offense, hun". The CEO is livid and has asked for their information to file a public complaint if these are government officials. He is also married to a Chinese woman and has two half-Chinese children.

These were unfortunately only two incidents, in a long stream of events that were frankly unprofessional, bizarre and at times offensive. Other situations included:

- A text received at midnight (12:01AM) the night before their visit saying "Please have french coffee (with milk and sugar) and the best croissant in Philadelphia ready for me upon arrival. Director Thorsen likes Diet Coke. Have a cold six pack waiting on the table in your conference room. You have three hours to convince us to give you \$55M."
- Asking a childcare provider in the building for them to send them a copy of their State License Inspection
- Says that they want lunch at the Michellin Star restaurant located at Bok. Lindsey tells them it is not open for lunch and is told - "well you can call in a favor if you want \$55M in funding." We arranged for a private lunch which has never happened in the history of the project.
- Condescending remarks to two makers in the building (glass blower and vegan cheese maker) where there were questions about paying above a minimum wage and shock that these businesses made any money or could pay rent.
- Patten at almost every visit insisted on taking something from the tenant home with him, whether that be vegan cheese, hand blown glass or a pair of sneakers. At each instance when doing this he made all very uncomfortable as he forced his requests on people who have a relationship and trust with us. At each instance of taking something he turned to Thorsen and said something to the extent of "I dont have to declare this right" in which Thorsen replied "its de minimis"
- Asks the coffee shop for vanilla syrup. The owner says that they do not carry vanilla syrup - only simple syrup. Followed by "well the next time I come you need to carry vanilla syrup" - and reminds the owner four times.
- Telling someone their dog was "overweight" and that 'he knows because he used to train dogs'.

- Informing us that he and Thorsen presented the Armory to the former housing Director Saal who they referred to as a man to go unnamed as a way to exit him from his job
- Repeatedly asking us if we hired Jeff Britt and were we aware that Jeff took Director Thorsens job on a state committee, and doing so in a somewhat menacing way while alluding to how bad he felt on how Jeff was then treated by the states Attorney General

What Director Patten said to our managing partner Lindsey Scannapieco was unacceptable and clearly sexual harrasment. While getting coffee just as the day began, Director Patten made comments to Lindsey directly about her appearance and going so far as to say "Lindsey, where is your husband? Why is he in Australia? Good thing your married or I would move to Philadelphia" and "if I knew your husband wasn't going to be here, I would have come last night"

The visit was **frenetic** and our team tried our best to keep the tour organized and professional. We do not understand if there is a mental health challenge underlying this behavior, drug or alcohol use, or frankly just a complete lack of competence about how to treat and interact with people. Thorsen allowed this behavior to continue to happen, even after we pulled him aside to make note that this needed to stop. We are not sure if this was intended to try to force our hand to walk away from the project - but we are disgusted and shocked by these actions. We also are quite fed up with how the state continues to characterize this project through Thorsen and Patten. This was a state RFP to improve and activate a long dormant state building, which will remain a state building! Waiving \$55 million dollars in our faces as if this is what we are receiving and benefitting is insulting, misinformed and quite frankly a tact of exerting power and control over someone that is disgusting.

We have spent years creating a community where our tenants feel safe and supportive. We are not traditional landlords or developers. We value the people in our buildings above all else. To spend the remainder of Friday apologizing for their behavior and trying to calm both our team and our tenants who wanted to call their supervisors directly, was mortifying and angering. We will not permit Patten or Thorsen to return to Bok ever again as we do not tolerate this type of behavior in our community. We do want to work with people who support casual racism and sexism and are shocked at how this reflects on the State of Rhode Island and the lack of competence there. **We would like to make the Armory into a safe and supportive space for ALL and it is clear that with their leadership this will not be possible.**

We appreciate your advice and direction for how best to handle this situation.

Everett and Lindsey

Everett Abitbol
 Director of Development
 c. [REDACTED]



scout

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