

From: The WTF, Williamstown?! Collective

To: Mandy Greenfield, Laura Savia, Jeffrey Johnson, Joe Finnegan, Annie Pell, Brad Svrluga, and Donald B. Elitzer; as well as the rest of the staff and Board of Trustees of Williamstown Theatre Festival,

In spring 2020, the United States of America was hit with an eruptive intersection of pandemics: the mass spread and death toll of the novel coronavirus, and the painful history of unreckoned anti-Blackness upon which our nation was constructed. The theater industry has upheld anti-Blackness and depended on exploitation to survive for far too long. In the last year, individual theater artists began to bravely name the harm that our industry has caused them, and their words have forced the theater industry to reckon with these truths. In response, more artists and organizations began to recognize and name their own culpability.

Like many who experienced racism and abuse of power in the industry, our collective began to speak about our own harmful experiences at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Though we are technicians, administrators, craftspeople, and artists of all races, abilities, orientations, and identities, we became united in this common denominator. And once a few of us began to speak, even more reached out - over text, over phone, over social media - all to share their solidarity.

Unlike many other theatrical institutions, WTF is not a building. It is not five to twelve full-time staff members. Williamstown Theater Festival only exists today because decades of artist cohorts - from college undergraduates to Tony winners - came together for a few summer months on a small college campus in the Berkshires. It is this energy, this electric atmosphere, and this name, that draws so many artists time and time again to be a part of WTF's mammoth undertaking. Participating in WTF at any level is seen as a resume builder, and the careers of some members of this collective have undoubtedly grown because of its name value. If we let it, the status of WTF as a theatrical stepping stone for artists could continue to eclipse the open secret of the harm done at the institution.

As our collective grew, we were (and continue to be) inspired by [We See You, W.A.T.](#), [the staff of A.R.T./NY](#), [the staff of Mosaic](#), [the staff of the Huntington](#), and [the \(now former\) resident artists of the Flea](#) who bravely spoke out against the theatrical institutions that have perpetuated harm. From personal experience, we knew that Williamstown also belonged in this category. So, we created a survey in order to provide the opportunity for others to share their experiences. Through this survey, over 75 respondents, from apprentices to award-winning theatre veterans, detailed egregious stories of anti-Blackness, racism, classism, labor exploitation, ableism, sexism, homophobia, and other discriminatory practices. Although this is only a fraction of the festival's community, these responses point to the pervasive problems at WTF. Several were anonymous reports, explicitly stating a fear of retaliation from the festival for sharing their

experiences. We are confident that the number of respondents would be even higher if not for the pervasive culture of intimidation that the festival facilitates.

What has WTF already done?

On June 01, 2020, quoting Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., WTF posted on social media, pledging to change internal practices in order to “stand with Black Americans in the quest for justice.” WTF’s expansive online community engaged with the post, **asking why WTF had not explicitly stated “Black Lives Matter,”** taking the opportunity to point to the problematic culture at the festival, and seeking clear action steps around how the institution would pursue such a project. Certain posts received up to 134 supportive likes. Despite such high levels of engagement, Williamstown did not respond to any of these comments, even when they contained egregious stories of harm done by the people and structures of WTF.

Four days later, on June 05, Williamstown Theatre Festival responded to the calls from the days before by posting “Black lives matter” and committing to “actively work to break down systems of white supremacy and engage in anti-racism work.”

You thanked us, your community, for holding you accountable.

Not long after, the Festival shared its [Anti-Racism Commitment](#), which was exciting. It seemed like the festival was beginning to really do the work that the community was calling for. But as the summer’s dust settled, priorities seemed to shift to promoting the Audible Season.

We have been recently heartened by the Festival’s announcements of a fellowship program for BIPOC artists and leaders, and the altered financial requirements in the Internship program, anti-racism training for full-time, year-round staff, and a new focus on anti-racism through the steps outlined in the Work & Learn section of the website.

However, the year-round staff of the festival is small, and represents a tiny portion of the Festival’s summer community. While these steps are important, we believe that they alone are insufficient to change the culture of abuse and oppression at the Festival.

So, here we are again, your community, holding you accountable.

It has long been an open secret that Williamstown Theatre Festival’s producing model, primarily built on the unpaid labor of young artists, discriminates against, dehumanizes, and historically harms artists - specifically, the marginalized communities of Black,

Indigenous, POC, LGBTQ+ and non-binary people, disabled people, women, and those at these communities' intersections.

It wasn't just one summer. It wasn't just one production. It wasn't just one bad apple. The system that sustains Williamstown Theatre Festival is deeply broken. The behavior tolerated at WTF exemplifies the worst of the pervasive white and male supremacy in our field. **Central to the stories reported in our survey is an unchecked abuse of power.** Respondents told of many instances in which complaints were brought to the administration, and festival leadership did absolutely nothing.

We believe, with the knowledge we provide in this letter and in the attached appendix, you have a profound opportunity to change the flawed foundations upon which the U.S. theater is built. Our collective seeks to open the door to you, sharing our own experiences, so that the staff and board at WTF can no longer claim ignorance and remain complicit in the widespread discrimination and exploitation annually occurring at the festival.

Based on our survey and WTF's lengthy history of exploitation, here are the steps that our collective believes are the **only** acceptable solutions going forward.

All italicized text included below is from survey responses; these statements have been made in confidence and in good faith.

We call for Williamstown to restructure its producing model, which would be unsustainable without pay-to-play labor, immediately.

"The overall structure of how the system at WTF is set up is fundamentally classist in its 'pay-to-play' internship model, and fundamentally exploits intern labor to get the shows built."

"Interns could only accept the position if they had enough money to cover living and food costs. This is unrealistic for so many families, and is disproportionately unrealistic for families of color."

Historically, not only does Williamstown depend on pay-to-play funding from apprentices in exchange for their "learning experience," but WTF simply would not function without relying on young, mostly unpaid, untrained laborers to push their bodies through intense physical stress for an unsafe number of hours. Multiple apprentices reported being seriously injured on the "job," and then being forced to do similar labor the following day. This violates government regulations around workplace safety as well as unpaid educational experiences, and left many former apprentices feeling that their significant financial hardship was neither justified nor respected.

"Talk about paying thousands of dollars for an "acting apprenticeship" and then being forced to do physical labor as "education" and being threatened that opportunities will be taken away from you if you don't do said labor...insane."

We are glad to see that the apprenticeship program has been suspended for summer 2021, and that interns will receive \$50/week and no longer be forced to shoulder housing costs. **However, the financial burden placed on interns in the model outlined for the coming summer will still be unmanageable for people unable to pay at least part of their way.**

We call for WTF to openly and publicly recognize and accept responsibility for the problems in the past apprenticeship and internship structures. We call for WTF to clearly and specifically define how a (paid) apprenticeship or internship benefits the apprentice or intern.

We will hold the festival accountable for these metrics of success.

We call for labor practices at Williamstown to comply with federal and local regulations, including a redefinition of "internship."

WTF must ensure that those responsible for supervising, teaching, and leading interns and apprentices recognize that they are *teachers*, and act accordingly.

Part of the absurd cost, which some had even taken out a loan for due to the expectations set by marketing, included "masterclasses" to further our training - but the reality of these classes was Non-Eq Acting cohorts doing their best to teach something because WTF didn't actually reach out to their numerous contacts. A prime example was a series of Improv classes that both teachers struggled with because they weren't prepared and also had never done improv work with each other before. They did their best, but it was indicative of the lies and empty promises of the festival.

We call for a full, comprehensive, clear, and readily available process for reporting, responding to, and preventing abuses of power, racism, sexism, ableism, transphobia, and other violations of basic human decency.

"Report it to whom?"

Many survey respondents wished that they had been granted a responsible party to whom they could file a complaint, but far too many felt that there was no straightforward avenue open to them. Respondents worried that if they did file a complaint with leadership, it would not be taken seriously. Even worse, many feared retaliation from the powerful artists and leaders backed by the festival. Repeatedly, those who did bravely come forward to document discrimination or abuse saw no consequences for the offending party.

"Most incident reporting I did was face to face, as I had no idea what other outlets to go through. To my knowledge, we were never really given information for who to send reports to other than our PTP Scheduler, who then punished people depending on the report. So while I did report experiences, I did not report it through any official WTF system, as I am still unsure as to what that system is, if it exists at all."

We call for WTF to:

- Establish a chain of accountability, with clear consequences for offenders.
- Protect those who report abuses.
- Work actively to prevent retaliation and retribution, and dismantle the culture of shielding powerful abusers.
- Enforce and strengthen existing sexual harassment policies, including detailed consequences for violating these policies, that all staff and guest artists at the festivals must abide by, no exceptions.

"I reported an incident and was told it was 'funny' and to 'lighten up.' It was clear the people running the program didn't care."

We call for a no-exceptions policy that each artist involved in two or more such official complaints be barred from working for the festival.

Certain directors, actors, designers, technicians, and staff view the festival as their "playground," where rules and laws do not apply, and they can treat their non-unionized colleagues as brutally as they would like. That is not, and never was, acceptable practice. We call for you to divest from those who create hostile or unsafe work environments.

*"The biggest and most offensive event was a giant illegal bonfire in the hills outside of the Williams campus. The attendees were given printed dollar bills from the props department and encouraged to accumulate the most money by any means necessary (mostly encouraged to do sexual acts.) The one with the most dollars the next day could turn them in for a large prize.
[cont'd on next page]"*

One particular moment was when [award winning scenic designer] and his twin brother asked me and one of my fellow interns to make out, touch each other's genitals, or go even further in order to accumulate their fake dollars. The next day, it was revealed to everyone that there never was a prize, but it was really an experiment to see who would do the craziest things to get the dollars."

We call for the festival to enact a zero-tolerance policy for abusive behavior as exhibited in the following examples from the survey:

- Producers who state "I'll feed the actors, but I won't feed no motherf***ing costume crew"
- Union actors who refer to apprentices as inanimate objects
- Prohibiting lighting interns from using the elevator when hauling heavy equipment
- Groping and other forms of sexual harassment
- Heads of technical departments belittling, demeaning, and taking away 'privileges' such as breaks from interns
- An award-winning scenic designer pressuring interns to perform sexual acts for his amusement and pleasure, as detailed in the quote above.

"The department was absolutely perpetuating sexism. It felt as if women did not stand a chance of being hired back the next year because we were not the sexual objects our supervisor was interested in. In fact, a very unqualified employee was hired the following year because it was very clear he was sleeping with the supervisor."

"I was told by a designer that I probably wouldn't get hired based on my ability, but solely on the fact that I'm attractive, and it's not bad to spend 10 hours with me."

We call for adequate training, personal injury insurance, and workplace compensation insurance from the festival for every person working at WTF, in any capacity.

"For all three years I've been there it has been a common occurrence to check and see if your boss has slept that day."

"As for dangerous work environments, the entire scenic department has worked out of a series of partially condemned buildings known as the Mill, where I have witnessed first-hand the floor collapse beneath someone working there."

Survey respondents were injured or witnessed injuries countless times due to a lack of training or forced overwork; both of these factors are in Williamstown's direct power to improve. Many

feared seeking out necessary medical help because of lack of personal health insurance and/or staff retaliation.

- Some apprentice respondents reported filling out a form at the beginning of the summer that asked about production tasks that they would and would not feel safe doing. However, their responses were mostly disregarded, and they were often assigned to those unsafe tasks anyway.
- Many respondents were made fun of for getting injured, creating an unsafe workplace and further fear of speaking out.
- Production staff were told to just keep buying more bandages and wound care rather than actively training and supervising to prevent injury.

"Unsafe workplace environments were everywhere...I went to the hospital because I wasn't given protective gear for a labor job I was doing, and almost everyone else was sent to the hospital that summer for the same reason. Not to mention making untrained young adults work through the night without sleep."

We call for specific action steps, a clear timeline, and regular public reports on WTF's commitment to dismantle the harmful systems and culture that are deeply internalized within the organization and its producing model.

We commend your stated goal to recruit and hire more BIPOC for the staff and board, as well as [the recently announced partnership with Black Theatre United](#). However, WTF's history of discrimination has already deterred talented folks from these groups from staying for long, or from ever applying in the first place. Without significant changes, BIPOC recipients of the fellowship with BTU will undoubtedly encounter a hostile and exploitative environment, regardless of the fact that they are receiving stipends while at the Festival.

We call for a shift in the culture of the Festival radical enough that WTF can not only recruit, but retain BIPOC employees and board members. We call for you to create an environment for BIPOC artists and administrators not just to survive, but to thrive.

"I was told to my face by the Production Manager that I was a diversity hire."

"So many microaggressions: one incident of a patron complaining about 'all the black shows we were doing. And why did they need to throw it in the audience's faces?'"

| *"A staff member made fun of a black man stuck in a cage."*

The production model and culture that currently operate at WTF are antiquated, unjust, and built upon toxic structures. It is not just the goals of anti-racism that are important to dismantling that system. Anti-racism is also a process. **For the theatre community to trust that WTF actually stands behind their anti-racism statements, we need more transparency.** [PlayCo](#) and [Baltimore Center Stage](#) are two theatres currently modeling this kind of accountability.

In conclusion, we recognize that the work ahead for the Festival is long. However, as a long-running, prestigious, well-funded organization, WTF has the opportunity to be a model for the rest of the community: to become a progressive emblem for the future rather than an exploitative relic of the past.

Currently, alumni--particularly alumni from marginalized communities--leave WTF burnt out, traumatized, physically injured, and questioning whether the theatre industry wants their contributions at all.

If WTF is to continue to function as the theatrical equivalent of a "teaching hospital," as leadership has stated, the festival must pioneer best practices in theater-making and education and embed anti-racism at its core. Were WTF to operate this way, it would train early-career theatermakers to create powerful work that prioritizes people over product and profit. It would contribute positively to the theatre industry by sending out alumni who are prepared to be respectful, responsible leaders in the field.

Our collective's work is on display in this letter and appendix.

**It is your turn to confront the festival's past.
It is on you to make these changes.**

We are sending you this letter and appendix on February 1, 2021. We request a response thoughtfully and specifically addressing each of our points by February 22, 2021. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

The WTF, Williamstown?! Collective

Results from 2020 Survey examining White Supremacy and its intersections at Williamstown Theater Festival

The reported incidents below are incredibly emotionally draining and will likely be triggering to those who have had similar experiences.

Note that the stories have been slightly edited to protect the privacy and identities of the brave reporters due to fear of retaliation from Williamstown Theater Festival (WTF).

All of this was shared directly with WTF - specifically the Board, Associate Artistic Director, and Artistic Director. Some stories have been censored here as the reporter was comfortable with the story being shared with WTF directly but not with the public.

We recognize the majority of these stories intersect with multiple forms of discrimination and toxic workplace culture. We have categorized them in a way that we hope prevents readers from coming into contact with material that will be too intense for them.

Please, read the below at your own discretion.

page 02 • [Anti-Blackness, Racism, Classism](#) and their intersections

page 12 • [Unsafe Workplace, Labor Exploitation, and Dangerous Workplace Culture](#) and their intersections

page 21 • [Discrimination \(Ability, Gender Identity, Sexuality\), Sexual Harassment](#), and more.

Anti-Blackness, Racism, Classism and their intersections

1. I was told to my face by the Production Manager that I was a diversity hire.
2. The [current White Director of Audience Engagement]'s HIGWIA about Audience Engagement and his panel's response to actors of color asking him about diversifying the audience base: The panel expressed that they don't have to diversify the audience base because the current audience base, being old white people, very much enjoys seeing stories dissimilar to their own. When another actor asked about diversifying the workforce in Williamstown, the 3 white men facilitating the talk back became defensive and said that, though they were three straight white men, they were diverse because of their "different viewpoints and experiences."

The actor then pressed them about issues regarding race and asked if anyone in their department was of color. The facilitators offered to show her a picture of the staff if she would like to see it, though "it probably wasn't diverse enough for her." The facilitators responded again saying "no one of color applies to work at Williamstown, anyway." They, then, in front of the entire audience, asked her if she (a black woman) would like to apply.

3. In addition to having to pay an absurd amount of money to be an apprentice--something my family could not afford on their own and graciously asked for donations from friends and family so that I could attend WTF--the workload, financial restraints of young actors of color vs opportunities offered was completely unbalanced and something that negatively impacted the "benefits" and my experience as a POC at WTF. We couldn't even attend the plays produced by the festival.

The most inappropriate incident I experienced, however, was being cast in [a mainstage show]. Being Mexican, I suppose being cast as a Puerto Rican character, seemed appropriate and as an opportunity for me to be in a [mainstage] play, but seemed grounded in white supremacy when it was also my job to take and pick up food orders for the entire cast.

4. On the issue of classism - there were constantly moments of inadequacy that were amplified in front of our group department. Many of us who did not attend a university in New York were called out for it at the time. Most of us were self-funding in order to attend, with the promise that meeting the types of talent Williamstown attracts would guarantee us a successful career in New York and on Broadway.

So, those of us who could barely afford to buy ourselves groceries and could not afford to go out to bars after work or buy supplies for parties were given a bit of a slight and were kept on the outside of the group as "whiners" or "nonparticipants." I was constantly placed with the same people on teams (mostly those of us not living in NYC) and was normally given tasks that were more menial. My intern group had a variety of ages. I attended when I was 23, so I had been out

of college and working in the field, both unionized and not, for a few years.

There was a culture of "What happens at Williamstown is what happens in the real world." So, if you were not willing to party, schmooze, booze, and sometimes sleep your way to success, you wouldn't cut it in the real world, and were treated as such during work hours.

5. [REDACTED]

6. I witnessed two all black casts/crew arrive at a donor dinner by the encouragement of WTF and the promise of a (rare) free dinner only to be told by a white donor that they should really read *Uncle Tom's cabin*. It was atrocious.

7. [WTF has a] truly incomprehensible photography policy that was purely to benefit the Festival and had a negative impact on multiple BIPOC designers, leading to poor and incomplete representations of their work, potentially impacting their future employment prospects. I repeatedly raised this as an issue and there was a complete refusal by Artistic and Producing to even share this policy until a designer pulled out their camera at dress rehearsal, and a refusal to reshoot anything after design changes. My supervisor told me to stop bringing it up and that it was outside my purview.

8. [Reporter self identified as Black male] While working front of house, the intern assigned me to be door holder and it was uncomfortable because I was the only black male and every person I held the door for were white. I felt like a butler. In addition, it was uncomfortable because some guests would refuse to enter the door I held.

I also became uncomfortable by the fact that since I am dark-skinned, and the lighting is not very bright by the doors at night, I felt the need to "prove" I wasn't a threat by using certain inflections and performing the act of happiness. I asked to switch with someone else and the white female intern who oversaw us refused to allow me to seek another post because she "said so." When I asked to speak to someone above her she told me no, and that she will speak to them herself. At this point I sought out the head of front-of-house and informed them about my discomfort. I was told I would not receive door-holding again. I'm not sure if a report was filed or if this was relayed anywhere else.

9. Racial tension was created by [a White female director] during the [Fellowship show] rehearsal process. There was a very unhealthy, unsafe, and untrustworthy environment for people of color in the rehearsal room, for example: There was an improv exercise in which the actors of color had to host a Black Lives Matter meeting as their characters. [She], then, had each white actor purposefully enter and disrupt the meeting, as their characters, forcing the facilitator to start the conversation over from the beginning. [Her] goal in the exercise was to purposefully “frustrate us” and show us how and why conversations regarding race were difficult to have in the south.

The fact that a conversation is difficult does not mean we shouldn't make space to advance said conversation. [The White female director] was setting up a situation for failure and calling it the southern standard but, as a theater community, we need to be challenging those pretenses rather than settling for “an accurate portrayal of the current political climate. [She] actively silenced people of color in the rehearsal room, and refused to acknowledge her own personal blind spots due to her white privilege: When an actress voiced concerns over being portrayed as a stereotypically angry black woman, the White female director tried to silence her by “shh-ing” her on three different occasions.

At one point [The White female director] even said “I know where this is going so let me just say—” and continued to argue in defense of a text that was clearly stereotypical because she “personally knows and loves black people who speak stereotypically and wouldn't want to deny those people the opportunity to be put on stage for fear of them being a stereotype.” Simply, she has black friends who speak stereotypically, making the portrayal of black stereotypes an acceptable artistic choice. Encouraging stereotypical behavior on stage will always move the conversation backwards, and when these issues are brought to light by the people of color in a rehearsal room, they should be met with empathy.

[The White female Director] improperly facilitated conversations regarding race while tableworking and workshoping the Fellowship show: The POC in the rehearsal room were put in a position of needing to constantly explain themselves and their viewpoints on race when the play itself had little to do with the subject matter. [She] called these inappropriate conversations “part of creating Social Justice Theater,” and told me, a woman of color, that “Social Justice Theater is not for everyone,” alluding to my inability to handle the “intense subject matter.”

Every person of color involved in [the Fellowship show] spoke up about the rehearsal environment, and no changes were made. The PTP Director (a White man) told the company of the Fellowship show that there would be a company meeting regarding The White female director's behavior but that he was not ready to facilitate one, and needed more time to process. He reassured us that he was not brushing the issue under the rug, but after [his own show] opened, the issue was never discussed again.

I wonder if this would be different if there were any people of color on full time staff who could appropriately handle these situations.

10. Much of the material that the directing fellows offered for BIPOC apprentices were limited. I was one of 5 Black apprentices out of the total apprentices. If there was a role specific for a Black character, I had to fight 3 other young, Black women. There wasn't much color blind casting going the other way to allow me an opportunity to act.

When it came to assisting in productions, it was a popularity contest. At one point, I was a

dresser, but was regulated to just bringing the cart back and forth. Also, just cleaning up after the actors by myself because the head dresser didn't like me. He didn't acknowledge me at all. The professional actors were the only ones that made me feel at home and looked out for me.

[why didn't you report the incidents?] I was afraid of the repercussions. If I got that role of cart pusher because one person didn't like me, what would happen if I spoke out?

11. I was an assistant on a play written by [a prominent White male writer]. The [White male writer] let it be known both explicitly and implicitly that he would have preferred to have Asian actors in the cast and was not happy about "having to" cast a Black actor as the lead. He wrote the other two Black actors out of the play over the course of rehearsals to the point where by tech, one only came onstage to talk about porn and masturbation.

12. On some level I sensed (accurately) that I'd be smeared for falling out of line. I was reprimanded for intervening in a rehearsal I attended and punished for speaking to a concerned actor on our own time. I was told by several people that my suspicions about the treatment of Black actors were a delusion born of white guilt.

13. I worked in the costume shop, and there were two people of color in the costume shop. When I brought [the lack of diversity] up, the supervisor was very amiable to talk about it. We both agreed that a large part of it was the fact that interns are expected to pay and support themselves, which makes it harder for POC to join and receive opportunities at Williamstown.

For a Raisin in the Sun, the Costume Designer and the Design Assistant were very nice and were genuinely open to dialogue, yet I believe that they were not informed enough to costume the Black Bodies in the show. They were never disrespectful, yet I believe that costumes were purchased from brands that are historically made for white bodies, and weren't ideal for the more full figured curvier women and men in A Raisin in the Sun. In some ways we made it work, but I believe that it's important that designers understand how different bodies can be.

14. I remember working at the shop and a carpenter refusing to say my name correctly, kept saying something about how my name was hard to say and whatnot. Honestly I don't remember the details very clearly because we we're halfway through the summer and the exhaustion was starting to set in. I remember going back to the dorm and crying and then attempting to erase that memory so I could get through the summer. It was incredibly disrespectful, and clearly it happened because of this culture at WTF that we have to be working 24/7, no one there gets any basic rest to simply be human. I reported the incident to PTP and honestly cannot remember what happened.

15. [REDACTED]

16. PM office was overwhelmingly white. Budgeting "strategy" from FTYR staff (i.e. - virtually equivalent from show to show in that theater) was wholly inappropriate for culturally specific shows.

17. Throughout my years working for this company I have always been one of the only two POC working in any department at best. Despite being a relatively welcoming place on a surface level, WTF runs mostly on unpaid labor, both through the acting apprentices and interns in any given department, and since classism is inherently tied to racism in this country, there ends up being a huge racial disparity in every department because of it.

 The administration has more than enough money to pay for the interns housing and food, seeing as how they can bring in talent like Uma Thurman and Matthew Broderick or casually afford to lose over \$20,000 on a random indoor pool scene that never made it past tech.

 Making the internships and jobs accessible to people who can't afford the pay-to-work (what's best for the fest) mentality that WTF is currently pedaling will in turn diversify the workplace. The administration has never cared about this however, which is why the culture has not changed despite the best efforts of the staff and upper management pushing for otherwise.

18. *[Reporter self identified as a Black male]* I did not realize how many work shifts I worked in comparison to others until I saw a spreadsheet that logs crew work and workshops. I had some of the most work shifts while others did not. I did not understand how these were distributed.

19. So many microaggressions: one incident of a patron complaining about 'all the black shows we were doing. And why did they need to throw it in the audience's faces?' A staff member made fun of a black man stuck in a cage.

20. I was present for some conversations about another seasonal employee that felt resentful of their health needs and work habits - the employee was a person of color, and "laziness" is a common, and often really subtle, expression of racial bias. It also made me worry that I was discussed in a similar way when my work started slipping, and thus not heard if I brought up concerns.

21. While working at the mill, another apprentice was approached by an employee (who name I sadly forget). This apprentice, who came from a Latinx family, was repeatedly asked "where are you from?" He said Philadelphia. The fellow apprentices and I stepped in to pressure why this employee kept asking, pointing out how racist that was, and it somehow turned into a small argument. I don't believe that situation was ever truly addressed.

22. While not having enough representation at Williamstown, it also put a divide through the POC community because it seemed like tokenism was being promoted. That's not only within the Apprenticeship, but with the Non-Equity Actors, Equity Actors, Creative Teams, and Playwrights as well. We should be included in any story that doesn't specify a specific race.
23. There were many microaggressions that I witnessed as a costume crew member for "The Closet" during the summer of 2018.
24. *[Reporter self identified as Asian-American]* Racism: WTF has a work in development that has now been included in the 2020 season. It was titled Chonburi in the audition phase. It was a play based on real experiences of trans women going to Thailand for their transitional surgeries, written by a white trans woman and directed by a white cis woman. In 2019, they asked Asian female-identifying apprenti to audition for a role for the festival's reading - a young Thai girl working at the hotel. We heard that this was not the first reading of this play.

The script was quite offensive in its portrayal of its Asian characters - having them either at the brunt of some of the trans women's jokes, speaking "Engrish", and having stereotypical ambitions (the role we read for, she was shy and her dream was to play piano). Having a white writer and director, I felt it added to a white gaze and perpetuated the colorism/classism of working classes in Asian societies, especially in combination with the "Engrish."

I felt disappointed in WTF, having believed them to be one of the more progressive companies producing new works. Many of the members of PTP expressed their sympathies. I know that many individual members at WTF want to do better, but these ideals don't seem to reach the higher ups who choose the season. I believe in uplifting other marginalized communities and was happy for so many trans women in one play, but I don't agree with pushing another down in the process.

25. What I witnessed was a constant and pervasive lack of acknowledgement among the nearly all white costume shop of our whiteness, the fact that we were not a welcome space for anyone who was not white, and the fact that much of the reason we did not have a diverse department is the ridiculous amount of privilege it requires to work at WTF. We did several shows with all black casts, and neither had a black designer. This was hardly discussed. Several times I tried to broach conversations about race among my coworkers, but people seemed uninterested in having a deeper dialogue, or the conversation would get derailed/misdirected by a specific person or two. It was deeply disappointing and frustrating.
26. There was a controversial play that cast black actresses and it appeared to be that of black women not liking their skin color, and it was to be directed by a white male intern. It caused a lot of problems until the play was changed.
27. There wasn't much diversity with the interns. I was the only black male and there were only about 3 or 4 black females out of 70 apprentices. All Apprentices are required to perform a monologue in front of each other. I prepared a 'black' monologue weeks prior, and after seeing the

predominantly white crowd, I panicked and immediately switched the monologue into a comedy that day because oddly, I felt people wouldn't get it and I was concerned I would be viewed as too black.

Also, a fellow apprentice made an inappropriate race joke/stereotype with me. Never thought much of it until now.

28. Endless microaggressions in conversations at work and outside of work.
29. The Closet was extremely offensive to members of the LGBT community and to POC. As a member of the WTF community, I was embarrassed to associate myself with that kind of art. Members of the artistic community in the cast, crew and audience were deeply haunted by the sad truth when older, white audience members would rave about the show. Was the show a contemporary minstrel act for these white theatre goers?
30. One of the interns in my department was from China and English was their second language. While they were an able technician and competent designer, there was a trend of giving them solo projects to avoid having to communicate verbally. There were also instances where I overheard frustrated managers complain that next year's crop of interns had better speak English.
31. I was an apprentice, at the bottom rung of the hierarchical ladder at the festival. Apprentices were often treated as lesser than, or as if we were incompetent; sometimes it felt as if we were a burden. Some other apprentices and I approached the leadership of the professional training program with our grievances. I'm not sure what, if anything, was done in response to this.

It did not get better. I experienced, at all levels of the festival, classism and discrimination based on origin of place. When I told people I'm from rural Kentucky, demeanors would change, some would don southern American accents, and one person suggested I was born in a coal mine.

The discrimination that people of color experienced at the festival runs deep, from hair and makeup to the conversations that take place on a daily basis. It runs as deep as anywhere else in the country. It's in the festival's DNA. It's institutional racism. Classism and, consequently, racism also exists in the demographics of the patrons of the theatre. Most of the patrons were wealthy and white: indicative of the populace in the surrounding area.
32. I was there the summer that they decided to produce the Closet and was a crew member of that show, so I'll let that speak for itself. The fact that they even considered producing that show told me that they care only about pleasing their upper-class white audiences and not about the people who put their time and effort into the festival.
33. [REDACTED]

34. [I witnessed] different attitudes and changes in behavior from others based on racial background and class.

35. Racism happened at all stages of the production process (on various shows) to the point where the playwright's promotion of racist behaviors in his characters were not essential to the action of the play (or character development) and therefore even more insulting; no one was allowed to speak up.

[how did this affect you?] I kept to myself. Didn't socialize.

36. I know from speaking to one of my black/POC friends that they did not feel Williamstown was an inclusive place and that there were things that happened consistently that made them feel unwelcome and unsafe in the environment.

37. As many have probably cited, the festival's production of and defense of "The Closet" by [prominent white, openly gay playwright]. It portrayed every single stereotype in the book and created completely unsafe environments for those that had to work on the show. I, along with other apprentices, watched it during a final dress and many of us left at intermission. This was recently discussed via a facebook thread, but I don't believe WTF has officially addressed this specific event.

38. WTF seemed to walk a fine line between uplifting black voices and fetishizing black stories last season.

39. I performed a monologue that I wrote in front of fellow apprentices. We were to write a monologue of a character we could never play and I wrote a monologue of a white woman calling the police on black children. The room was full of laughter and after reading it, one of the black females in the class came to me said that they understood. And we discussed how many that laughed throughout this monologue never "got it."

40. I was overhire at WTF for a summer in the production department. I heard of a number of things that I did not like, I witnessed others. Class-Divide: The entire system of unpaid internships at WTF is disgusting. Unpaid internships are educational experiences. You should be able to do your show just like normal if you removed every unpaid intern - if you can't then you know where you need to pay staff or pay your interns and acknowledge the fruits of their labor are worth money. I was never able to accept an internship at WTF, it's an internship only children of privilege can take - I always needed to work in hourly-paying jobs in order to afford my college degree. I have no doubt that if I was able to accept an unpaid internship there I would be working consistently on Broadway today - designers think these kids sacrifice so much to work there, without considering the fact that only the most privileged can work there for free. End unpaid

internships!

41. I was one of the only apprentices that had graduated theatre school and wanted to reap a few of the benefits that were for the Non-equity members, and despite being promised to be kept in the loop about certain workshops and opportunities that would help me book work after Williamstown, information was not relayed to me by those staff members. I was later informed that benefits for Non-Equity members were exclusive, even though some of the members did not take advantage of all opportunities offered, like showcase.
42. The first time I was asked to go to Williamstown when I was in undergrad I very much wanted to, but could not afford it. I was pushed to go the next summer and through a small acting scholarship I had received and debt I found the way to make it work, although the amount it actually cost with food, housing and everything else was never up front or clear. I returned back to WTF two summers later as a directing intern, on a housing scholarship. The scholarship only meant I did not have to pay the housing fee, but I did not get paid or receive any food compensation, so I still racked up debt to be there that summer which ended up meaning I had to turn down other arts job when I got back to the city to pay down my debt from WTF. I had a better experience that second summer, although the economics inequities of the workshop program have consistently bothered me and it was very clear it caused large racial inequities due to the makeup of the entire workshop program.
43. The apprenticeship as a whole is entirely classist and an exploitation of labor. Part of the absurd cost, which some had even taken out a loan for due to the expectations set by marketing, included "masterclasses" to further our training - but the reality of these classes was Non-Eq Acting cohorts doing their best to teach something because WTF didn't actually reach out to their numerous contacts. A prime example was a series of Improv classes that both teachers struggled with because they weren't prepared and also had never done improv work with each other before. They did their best, but it was indicative of the lies and empty promises of the festival.
44. Classism was the most prominent to me; I was required to pay for housing (\$650) and meals (average \$15/meal). Events such as portfolio reviews also came at a cost, having to reimburse the supervisor for printing out materials. Even working on shows and being in tech I had to reimburse my supervisor for picking up my meals. All costs fell on me and my family. If I did not come from an upper-middle class family, I would NEVER be able to afford this internship.
45. Interns could only accept the position if they had enough money to cover living and food costs. This is unrealistic for so many families, and is disproportionately unrealistic for families of color. I reported to my supervisor that this was unrealistic and took a 20% pay cut to help buffer costs for interns and staff. I don't know if that money was applied to my team directly.

Unsafe Workplace, Labor Exploitation, and Dangerous Workplace Culture

1. Talk about paying thousands of dollars for an "acting apprenticeship" and then being forced to do physical labor as "education" and being threatened that opportunities will be taken away from you if you don't do said labor...insane.

[on why this wasn't reported] It was widely accepted as "normal" even though everyone complained. We would've been shut up really quickly and opportunities would've been taken away if we had complained. You didn't want to be the "lazy" apprentice.

2. I was asked to bake a cake nightly for the production of a show but was not given oven mitts because they were supposedly "not in the budget," and I got a second-degree burn from this.
3. Unsafe workplace environments were everywhere...I went to the hospital because I wasn't given protective gear for a labor job I was doing, and almost everyone else was sent to the hospital that summer for the same reason. Not to mention making untrained young adults work through the night without sleep.
4. While working in the Mill I was told to sweep up as fast as possible and in doing so the broom broke and I got 9 stitches on my hand. They threw sand in the wound to stop the bleeding and I was taken to the ER.

Everyone laughed it off. "Hahaha you spilled your apprentice lifeblood." It's so ingrained in the culture of WTF to not give a fuck about your own safety. Apprentices especially are treated as expendable. The very next day I was in a lighting shift and made to carry around lights and climb ladders. There is extremely little care for human well-being.

5. I was paid overhire and was told specifically when I was hired to keep the fact that I was paid quiet.

I witnessed Lighting Heads demeaning interns constantly. The two weeks I was there I was buying interns lunches and several noted that it was the first time anyone in power had shown them any respect. I watched the heads of lighting revoke breaks away from interns constantly if they felt like the interns weren't working fast enough or hard enough. You think taking a break away from them is going to give them the desire to work better? They work 20 hour days, that's insane and inhumane!

6. As voiced last summer, the apprentices and non-eqs involved in Community Works were exploited as a labor force and their concerns were not heard or addressed appropriately by the

director. While rehearsing, members of the company were inaccurately referred to by incorrect pronouns, even after numerous requests/reminders to amend such behavior.

7. In cleaning out the prop house at The Mill towards the end of summer, we were all (employees included) made to rummage through a large storage facility filled with dust and mold and more without masks or eye protection. All we had were ill-fitted latex gloves that continued to break. This alone caused numerous issues with asthma, skin irritation, and more for a large group of people.

The Apprentice Scheduler at the time very clearly showed preferential treatment to certain groups of apprentices. If you were to go to him with questions, complaints, or anything he deemed as "negative," then the following day or week would be rough for you. This escalated until at one point, he had a certain group of about 25-35 apprentices working almost 32 hours straight. Overnight, followed by morning, afternoon, and/or evening shifts that would be followed by an overnight. This happened multiple days in a row and once a group was able to get to the PTP Coordinator, he intervened and made the PTP office, non-union actors, and directing interns all take our places for the last overnight. While it was appreciated, that scheduler's behavior had been occurring for almost 2 months with no known consequences.

Most incident reporting I did was face to face, as I had no idea what other outlets to go through. To my knowledge, we were never really given information for who to send reports to other than our PTP Scheduler, who then punished people depending on the report. So while I did report experiences, I did not report it through any official WTF system, as I am still unsure as to what that system is, if it exists at all.

8. Everyone joked (accurately) about the festival's dismissive and authoritarian leadership. When I did try to speak with the artistic director, she brushed me off, shirking responsibility to an almost cartoonish degree. I recently learned that others from the creative team had also tried to speak to higher-ups. During the process as well as the fallout, the artistic director left the most structurally vulnerable artists to pick up her slack and to weather the life-altering consequences of her negligence.
9. My average day was 8am-12am with two 1-hour meal breaks (staff members sometimes took minutes off those breaks to penalize the interns for not working enough). That much work for NO pay (let alone losing money) is so wrong and I have nothing more to say about it.

I experienced targeted bullying by staff members for unknown reasons. Getting yelled at and belittled was frequent.

10. *[on not reporting incidents]* I did not feel I had a proper outlet to do so. I was an unpaid intern.
11. Unsafe working conditions actively hurt multiple apprentices.

When I got sick with the flu, I was forced to go to the hospital by staff, even though I knew there was nothing a hospital could do for me. I was then burdened with a several hundred dollar bill because my insurance wasn't accepted.

The culture of WTF made it seem like it was a rite of passage to burn out or get hurt.

12. For all three years I've been there it has been a common occurrence to check and see if your boss has slept that day.

As for dangerous work environments, the entire scenic department has worked out of a series of partially condemned buildings known as the Mill, where I have witnessed first-hand the floor collapse beneath someone working there.

13. I was hired for a position that I was not sufficiently qualified for, and that maybe should have been two people anyway, due to the sheer quantity of work.

I had 1 full day off and 2 half days for the entire summer, plus I guess some late starts. I worked many very, very long days, like probably 10-14 hours usually, I think. I overnight[ed] a number of times, due to the sheer scale and expectations of the production I worked on. I received often conflicting feedback and instructions from different people I reported to.

14. My memory for details is really hazy and subjective, due to stress and exhaustion, but I felt as though I was receiving a large amount of direct, very personal critique that other employees did not appear to receive, because I couldn't get this massive amount of work done fast enough or well enough.

Overwork and low pay keeps out people without the financial, cultural, physical/health, etc. resources to allow them to take these "resume-building" or "educational" positions, and it burns people out. It's another form of pay-to-play. I ended the summer physically exhausted, depressed, worried about my perceptions, my memory, my hearing, and that I might need knee surgery; certain my time at WTF had damaged my career prospects, not improved them.

15. As an intern, I was the wardrobe head and leading a crew of apprentices. One of the crew members had a learning/mental disability, and the disability wasn't disclosed by festival leadership. In fact, I didn't know about it until other apprentices told me. I was forced to create alternate paperwork for the show for this apprentice without the proper knowledge (I was literally guessing what his disability was so I could better help him and looking stuff up online). I wanted to create an inclusive environment but it really shouldn't have been all on me. I relayed this info to my supervisor but was basically told "Oh, yeah, nothing we can do about it."

16. This culture at WTF that we have to be working 24/7, no one there gets any basic rest to simply be human.

17. The festival runs on unpaid labor from almost every department (while still demanding housing payments and not providing food), so the fact that WTF is exploiting its workers is a given. Whether they are paid or not, nearly everyone working at the festival does the amount of work of a staff member, and even then, all staff members and upper management are overworked, pulling a laughably unreasonable amount of hours each in order for the festival to function.

18. As an Apprentice, I was told I would be taking workshops and classes to improve as an actor and train with the top industry professionals. Instead, I was over-worked as a crew member to foot ladders and sweep floors. And when I had class, I was told by the Apprentice Director that doing this behind-the-scenes work took priority over my classes.

I had raised over \$4,000 to be able to come to WTF to do the work of an intern and if I did make it to classes, it was rare. And because it was the Director of the program telling me this, I didn't feel I could go to anyone else; otherwise, I would be risking my reputation as an actor.

Even when I would work front of house and sweat profusely by opening the front doors to patrons, Mandy Greenfield would walk by and not even acknowledge me or any of my fellow Apprenti. We would get a look as if to say, "Are you people donors or celebrity actors? No. I'll ignore you." At the closing night toast backstage, Mandy would look at members of the cast and director / choreographer but would glaze over the hundreds of crew members who should have been as equally valued.

19. Repeated rehiring of directors against whom complaints had been raised by staff was one of many indicators from FTYR Artistic that they were not interested in having conversations about abuse of power, or in speaking with me at all.

I was offered a promotion for the subsequent season and rejected it because of the abhorrent practices at WTF.

20. All the interns, staff and upper management at Williamstown care deeply about the work they do there and I think the administration takes advantage of that fact. I have made my views very clear at every exit interview but nothing has changed since I've worked there.

21. I didn't report soon enough because I thought the best course of action to protect those involved in the project was to try to be kind, empathetic and remain friends. I was in denial. I also knew I would be smeared and ostracized for raising any disagreement with [the director] (I was right). I was also completely broke and in a vulnerable moment in my life and career. [The director] emphasized their influence, their ties to the artistic director and to celebrities with more power and influence than I was used to seeing. I had also been gaslit into believing I deserved the abusive and exploitative treatment.

I also believed I owed these people because I'd gotten the chance to write (for very little money)... I was being pressured to write about the most painful and private topics in my life under extremely abusive conditions I am still recovering from. There is no overstating how much this cost me financially and emotionally.

22. The entire apprentice program was an exploitation of labor. I mean, one girl broke her foot or something like that during a scenic shift and then got scheduled for scenic the next day, that's unacceptable.

23. - Pushing people to do work that their bodies couldn't.
 - Asking them why they couldn't lift or do a task.
 - Talking about apprentices and their abilities when they weren't around.
 - Working for 24 hours straight and a culture of being proud of that.
 - Pushing people to work on no sleep.
 - Not enough training on lifts and ladders.
 - High stakes rigging without properly training the crew.

24. I don't think I reported anything that happened to me BECAUSE of my experience working on The Closet. I figured if this was allowed to exist in this space, they wouldn't care about any other harmful incidents occurring at the festival.

25. Because we receive no money, major credits, or other benefit, the only major thing I had to gain by being there was making connections with people who could "help me" in the future, based exclusively on how warmly they felt towards me when our time together ended. There was zero safety net for someone who rocked the boat.

26. No discussion was had regarding the larger safety concern. I reported some health/safety issues to the Director of Production, but was told, "I can't tell someone [in production] not to come in for a changeover (even if they haven't slept and have already made three trips to the ER this summer)."

I was asked to arrange for first aid kits to be restocked multiple times a day during a changeover by the mainstage production manager, as supplies were going out that fast.

27. I was often assigned risky technical tasks that I had no previous experience in during shifts. Several Apprentices in 2018 were assigned multiple overnight shifts, and were exhausted to the point of injury.

28. An apprentice was told to drive to NYC to pick up a rug. That's HOURS for a rug!

29. Supervisor looked up labor laws to find loopholes re: meals and breaks.

Producing director standing in PM office shouting, "I'll feed the actors but I won't feed no motherfucking (costumes) crew," doubling down when challenged, and later in the summer Producing proceeded to inform the Costumes department via email during the matinee that they

would not be feeding them between shows on that two show day; Producing had decided it was unnecessary"

[I] did what I could re: health/safety measures for the processes I oversaw (e.g. made unapproved purchases for necessary PPE/first aid supplies), and shared experiences with others during/since my time there to encourage them not to work at WTF.

30. The majority of the apprentice program is exploited labor.
31. In addition to assisting with a large mainstage show, I also worked on Community Works. Some interns and staff were also openly scornful of the CW project. I would frequently start the day with intern support assigned and then have them pulled to work on other projects, and have to conduct a two or three person task alone, and this was physically taxing for me and also seemed to reinforce the disrespect issues. It felt tied into classism, elitism, and potentially ableism - it wasn't a "prestige" project.
32. Apprentices were put directly into many work situations that they clearly marked as "uncomfortable with" or "unsafe" due to health reasons on their entrance surveys. Oftentimes this ended in injuries and hospitalization.
33. The entire labor foundation of the internship program is exploitative. Also, on-the-job injuries were almost always due to working too quickly.
34. I do not believe reporting labor violations to WTF would change their practices. I did, however, write an anonymous report to the Massachusetts Dept. of Labor.
35. Apprentices were often treated as lesser than, or as if we were incompetent; sometimes it felt as if we were a burden. That first summer as an apprentice the labor was intense, at times unsafe, and the whole apprentice system was incredibly exploitative. I was hurt while working and was shamed by my superiors to continue to work or that it was a massive inconvenience to move me to another position due to my injury.
36. WTF has a system that can only exist because of unpaid labor, which my department heads freely admitted.
37. - Working hours have always been 12-14 hours a day, unpaid for the interns, and underpaid for lower staff on a weekly stipend.
 - Guest designers have unfairly treated staff and interns while working on productions.
 - Injuries are not tended to if the person's life is not at risk.
 - Many productions have sensitive subject matter that has never been discussed with staff or interns as to whether or not anything might trigger a delicate emotional situation - allowing

themselves to be removed from the project.

38. The acting apprentices have the shit abused out of their labor. They pay a lot of money to learn a trade, and in the end they are just a small army of free exploitable labor for the producers. It's not right, I routinely had acting apprentices helping me with tasks that they just didn't have the knowledge to execute safely.

The producers assume a lot of people can overcome any task, but sometimes you need 1 really smart person and not 100 warm bodies to overcome a problem. The number of depressed acting apprentices I saw, or the ones openly talking about how that summer had killed their drive to pursue a career in the arts was insane. WTF could pay for more overhire, but why do that when you have actors who will pay money to show up?

39. WTF was my first summer-stock experience, and I've been told this is typical of all of them, but the one huge party on the quad that had a stripper pole and overflowing alcohol just didn't sit right with me. I get it's "tradition" but it's just sketchy and weird. Every party there reeked of weirdness with staff getting the interns hammered.

Great, buy your interns a keg of beer, but don't get drunk with them, or throw some drink-ticket event where you can have a few beers and then go your own separate ways. It just sets up a weird environment where staff preys on their insubordinates - I've never seen this in any professional theater and it was disgusting.

The Heads of Lighting preached constantly about how they were so mean because they needed to teach respect between management and general labor, but at the end of the day the facade is thrown out the window the moment a keg is cracked.

40. *[Did you report these incidents?]* No. Nothing would have happened. No one would have cared.

41. *[At WTF]* the basic pay structures, calendar structures, hiring structures, all set up for a fragile working environment at best, and a catastrophic outcome at worst.

These are all based on boys' club models, and models where people are wealthy enough that they A) don't need to make a living from their work on a production, and B) have fairly low stakes for any individual project. And I discussed all this with Mandy, specifically saying "The festival does NOT have to function this way." And further underscored that I had ZERO nostalgia for the kind of crucible of WTF in theory has been for a lot of emerging artists over the years.

I nearly had a nervous breakdown while directing [a mainstage production] trying to protect this beautiful show and get it through it's first major hoop on a long march to Broadway.

42. A major instance regarding the exploitation of labor came on the one single "day off" scheduled for my department. We had been promised one day to ourselves, but were ambushed with a mandatory camping trip wherein we were given sleeping bags and made to sleep in the open air

in the middle of the woods. No one was asked consent or whether they had allergies, phobias, etc. We slept side by side to keep warm. If we had not participated, I can guarantee the rest of our time at the festival and on the job site would have been made difficult.

43. The overall structure of how the system at WTF is set up is fundamentally classist in its "pay-to-play" internship model, and fundamentally exploits intern labor to get the shows built.

44. [REDACTED]

45. We were forced to cook an overnight meal in an unsafe, flooding structure (The Mill), during a hurricane until we were forced to leave because the floor we were on and the road exiting the mill were starting to flood.

For 'overnights', we worked shifts 8am-10pm to take a nap and go back to work from 12am-6am to take a nap and be back in the office at 8am to wash rinse repeat...

46. During my first week [as an Acting Apprentice], I had to go on an 8 hour drive to New York City to pick up equipment.

47. There was a series of days (2 or 3 - don't recall) where I did overnights in a row. That was in addition to many other overnights I had to do. When working with the carps off site we would usually be trained in what we needed to do (Which is great. Because of the experience of being an apprentice, I have tech skills that I use for my survival jobs), but on the overnights, I don't recall being fully trained. The more important thing is that I don't remember being supervised, which as someone who has competency but [I] am not formally trained in carp work specifically, is problematic.

One of those overnights, I almost sliced the side of my index finger completely off. I still have a faint scar. I don't remember why (overall atmosphere and the "need to turn over overnight," or the mentality/atmosphere that I'm unpaid and grateful to be there so shut up and don't be a burden) that I didn't report it to the TD on duty, and I asked the apprentice who got me bandaids to not report it. I probably needed to get stitches.

48. Lots of exploitation of labor by apprentices (falling asleep next to heavy machinery), who could only receive opportunities if they paid to be there.

[on not reporting] It all felt like part of the culture, part of the "gift" of being there.

49. While the costume shop did tell workers to take breaks, particularly for meals, they did not create an environment in which that felt acceptable. The general feeling was that we should all be

working, constantly, and never complain. The leadership did not seem at all receptive to making changes, in part because they themselves were so overworked/abused by the festival system.

Working as an intern at WTF was degrading and embarrassing and I would not recommend it to any theater artist going forward.

50. The theater needs people working at all times, so it's a rough summer. The Mill was a bad place to have college students working for free. Apprentices should be paid - it's the unpaid internship problem. But I also want to share that I find WTF to be an incredible inclusive place and I hope that this survey comes from a place of love to better an already progressive and impactful theater community.

51. [My] first summer as an apprentice the labor was intense, at times unsafe, and the whole apprentice system was incredibly exploitative. I was hurt while working and was shamed by my superiors to continue to work or that it was a massive inconvenience to move me to another position due to my injury.

52. *[on not reporting incidents]* I reported an incident and was told it was "funny" and to "lighten up". It was clear the people running the program didn't care.

53. I was told at the very end of the summer that the WTF showcase, which was my main reason for doing the non-eq company in the first place, was postponed a year due to there not being enough actors who weren't currently in grad school in the company. The possibility of there not being a showcase was not mentioned at any point during the casting process, or reflected in the materials disseminated to describe the training program.

I felt exploited, since I had spent a summer without pay (and I had to crowdfund to be able to afford doing the non-eq company), only to be told that I wouldn't be able to leverage my time at WTF to professional work in a timely fashion.

54. The fact that the apprentices are treated the way they are, alone, is pretty bad - the program is deeply exploitative. I didn't really recognize it when I was there, but the more time that passes the more frustrated I am at the absolutely blatant disregard for safety (why were we in the shop? we were brought on as actors) and the continued references to apprentices as "toys" or "entertainment" for the acting company and other visiting artists.

WTF functions by benefiting from exploitation of labor and "pay to play" dynamics. Added to the fact that artists were paying to be put in unsafe workplace environments, especially in regards to labor.

55. *[on why incidents weren't reported]* Report it to whom?

Discrimination (Ability, Gender Identity, Sexuality), Sexual Harassment, and more.

1. Lighting Interns not being allowed to use the elevator in the Mainstage - what ableist bullshit is this? Apparently it's been going on for years because I've brought it up with folks in NYC and they felt this was normal. The official reason is that the elevator "takes too long" but I watched too many young interns - male and female - be forced to carry up hundreds of pounds of cable from the basement to the grid. I would secretly take things into the elevators for them, they always refused the ride up in fear of getting in trouble, but come on! You're going to hurt these kids backs, it's some macho male-centric bullshit. Work safe, not stupid.
2. The biggest and most offensive event was a giant illegal bonfire in the hills outside of the Williams campus. The attendees were given printed dollar bills from the props department and encouraged to accumulate the most money by any means necessary (mostly encouraged to do sexual acts.) The one with the most dollars the next day could turn them in for a large prize.

One particular moment was when [award winning Scenic Designer] and his twin brother asked me and one of my fellow interns to make out, touch each other's genitals, or go even further in order to accumulate their fake dollars. We were disgusted and removed ourselves from the conversation. The next day, it was revealed to everyone that there never was a prize, but it was really an experiment to see who would do the craziest things to get the dollars.

3. I was groped by someone much older than me, about five positions of power above me, at a party.

I reported the sexual misconduct to the director of PTP. I asked not to be put on any work shifts with the man who groped me in the future. I asked for the incident to remain confidential because I was worried that something bad would happen to me since the perpetrator was so above me in the WTF rankings.

I ended up being placed on two shifts with the perpetrator despite my requests. Also, the only "support" I received when I reported this incident was that the man who violated me "always gets blackout drunk at the anti-galas, so he probably won't remember what he did."

4. My coworker was shamed and felt uncomfortable identifying as Christian. This same person was constantly propositioned by men goading her to cheat on her husband.
5. The department was absolutely perpetuating sexism. It felt as if women did not stand a chance of being hired back the next year because we were not the sexual objects our supervisor was interested in. In fact, a very unqualified employee was hired the following year because it was

very clear he was sleeping with the supervisor. This was disgusting for everyone in a position of power.

6. We were taught a class, as part of our paid education experience, with a grad student from NYU who was at the festival as a non-eq who was abusive, sexist, and unqualified to lead classes for the apprentices. I spoke to my superior and expressed this and was told I could leave the class if I wanted, but nothing else would be done.

I was not the only apprentice to express this about this non-eq and his teaching style which included asking deep personal information about an apprentice in front of a group and then humiliating and shaming students till most of them cried, which he saw as a sign he was doing good work. He especially focused on female apprentices and their appearances.

7. I was sexually pursued by a much older well known equity actor aggressively during my back stage duties on a mainstage. I asked him to stop repeatedly including in writing and he continued to message and harass me backstage while I was a dresser for the female lead. The entire equity company was aware of his advances and encouraged it because they thought he was handsome and I was lucky he was interested.
8. Frequent jokey/sarcastic/casual use of "triggered" in the shop by a number of employees and interns. It became very prevalent very rapidly, and I did not feel I could bring up why that's a harmful joke to make, because I didn't feel my concerns would be taken seriously. "Triggering" is technical terminology used by mental illness professionals who deal with PTSD and related conditions.

Sexual assault is really common in our field and often results in PTSD. I have seen people I care about get triggered and it is a real thing, a visible physical and emotional reaction that takes a toll on a person. That, along with my own mental illness and history of abuse, created a vague, draining sense of hostility throughout my working environment that I think my collaborators were unaware of.

I know at least a few other people in that space were struggling with mental and emotional health that summer, and I regret I didn't say anything about it early on when it might have been heard and accomplished something. I think many people don't realize how isolating that kind of joking can be for people around them.

9. My first summer, there were auditions held for the main stage show for the apprentices to be cast in small roles. You had to be asked to audition. My friend did not get called in, however was cast as "Fat Betty" without having asked her permission or an audition. She was an apprentice who desired to be an actor and the festival not only completely disrespected those dreams, they took advantage of them asking her to be onstage and repeatedly made fun of for her appearance. I sometimes have difficulty hearing, especially if I am tired, stressed, or in a space with a lot of similar noises. I try to be up front about it and reduce the circumstances that cause it as much as possible, but I felt there was frequently open frustration with me based around my hearing problems.

10. A student from my university applied the year I worked and didn't get it. He's a legally blind actor.... it seems they only were interested in hiring differently abled persons who were still able to do the free manual labor required of them.
11. My direct supervisor was treated differently constantly by her direct supervisor. He questioned her judgment and she was undermined in front of her staff and interns by male coworkers and supervisors. Also, I was personally undermined and abused by several male designers. [Despite reporting], nothing happened because the issues were again our male bosses or designers.
12. If you're not able bodied, WTF would be an impossible place to work.
13. There was an intern in the costume shop who was partially deaf. The costume shop leadership did not provide reasonable accommodations for her. In one standout instance, they wanted her to use a walkie talkie during tech, which she obviously couldn't, and she had to borrow another intern's Apple Watch so she could get vibration alerts. She should not have had to come up with this solution herself, the shop should have accommodated her.
14. Watching "The Closet" was a terrible experience. Being in an audience of mostly cis straight white people laughing at homophobic jokes made me feel like I was in middle school again. I feel so bad for the people forced to work on it.
15. The Closet was extremely offensive to members of the LGBT community and to POC. As a member of the WTF community, I was embarrassed to associate myself with that kind of art. Members of the artistic community in the cast, crew and audience were deeply haunted by the sad truth when older, white audience members would rave about the show.
16. [There was] offensive humor and jokes pertaining to anything from sexuality, gender, race, etc. Poor actions and advances on interns and apprentices from higher ups.
17. I was at WTF the year [famous white male] directed a Tennessee Williams play starring [famous actress]. The director had an idea to stage a transition (not in the script) which entailed the actress encountering young schoolgirls walking home from school and having a fever dream fantasy sequence of them pouring milk all over their naked breasts to show her unfulfilled sexual desires, in the wake of her grief about her husband's death. My problem with this artistic choice is with the fact that he "auditioned" female apprentices. If you are a professional actor getting paid a fair wage to play a part in a show, who has informed consent about what the role entails, it would be different. But I think it is highly, highly inappropriate and problematic that the festival let a famous director hand pick these roles from the VERY YOUNG WOMEN of the apprentice company, which is exploitative. To me, it's exactly like how you can't actually consent to a sexual

relationship with a teacher or boss because there is a power imbalance in place.

18. I heard several complaints about male employees going out of their way to find other men to do jobs that anyone could have done, when several women were ready and able.
19. In terms of gender discrimination and ableism, there were many instances I noticed where people would repeatably be given certain tasks or treated differently based on their physical ability and/or gender, whether they were apprentices, interns, or paid technicians. Some of these include but are not limited to; female acting apprentices getting less work-intensive tasks than their male counterparts, female carpenters being treated as though they don't know what they are doing (by upper staff, designers, directors, and fellow carpenters), and carpenters being treated poorly because of an injury preventing them from completing an otherwise dangerous task.

I have heard that WTF was much worse in terms of sexism and ableism before I started working there (both of the department heads I have worked under have been women which was really cool) but it still has a long way to go.
20. While rehearsing, members of the company were inaccurately referred to by incorrect pronouns, even after numerous requests/reminders to amend such behavior.
21. I witnessed a friend of mine get discriminated against for the way they chose to express their gender identity, and while everyone applauded the work they produced themselves, people rarely considered casting this person for roles in apprentice shows.
22. *[was there a consequence to your reporting]* Yes, I think that I was not given more money or a better title when I returned the next year with the same male boss.
23. Men chose to make comments about women's abilities based on gender. Male apprentices chose to ignore women's suggestions in subjects [the women] were more knowledgeable about and this led to injury.
24. Interns were critiqued on clothing choices for working hours (not safe shoes, but clothing meant to help them identify their gender).
25. We had a non binary coworker who was called by their dead name, and there was nothing done by supervisors (in fact supervisors were the ones doing it most).
26. *[reported identified as a woman]* On the gender front, I found the Managing Director to be consistently insulting and patronizing. This impacted every discussion he and I had, including ones where he repeatedly lied to me about budgets. There was even a face-off about the fact that

they didn't have a female voice, or a voice of color, recorded as a version for the pre-show announcement.

27. There were very few women on our team and whenever they'd be placed on a difficult task, they would be asked repeatedly if they thought they could handle it.
28. There were a few instances of repeated misuse of pronouns by regular Williamstown employees. It felt off.
29. I realized a lot of the women involved with Williamstown were given the short-end of the stick. They were given work that was beneath their skill set.
30. People regularly misgendered other people who used they / them pronouns, calling them by the wrong pronouns, etc.
31. I was denied a request to leave for religious obligations (i.e. a Jewish holiday)
32. There was a lighting intern during my summer at WTF that became known for sexually harassing female acting apprentices, which I was unaware of until we were all addressed by our department supervisor who told us that we were all responsible for making the apprentices work with us uncomfortable. I never directly witnessed this, as I believe that most of the interactions happened over text, but I had several female identifying acting apprentices tell me that working with him made them feel extremely uncomfortable.
33. I was told by a designer that I probably wouldn't get hired based on my ability, but solely on the fact that I'm attractive and it's not bad to spend 10 hours with me.
34. There was a culture of sleeping with people with more power to "earn" your way to opportunities.

WILLIAMSTOWN THEATRE FESTIVAL

Thank you for contacting us and communicating your survey results and recommendations. Certainly, the emotional and physical wellbeing – as well as the equitable treatment – of the entire Williamstown Theatre Festival community is of utmost importance to us. We take the information shared with us very seriously, and we have hired an outside law firm to conduct a thorough and independent investigation. Our goal is to fully examine the issues raised and, where needed, implement meaningful solutions. If you or any of the respondents of the survey are willing to speak to the investigator about the information shared in the survey, please contact Jennifer Barna at jbarna@ebglaw.com.

As you point out in your letter, we have made meaningful progress to ensure Williamstown Theatre Festival is a place where everyone feels safe, welcome and valued. We want you to know that we are committed to not only working to do right, but to lead.

We have been and will continue to work conscientiously to create and sustain an environment and culture defined by the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and access. The Williamstown Theatre Festival does not tolerate harassment, discrimination, or retaliation of any kind, and we are committed to providing safe working conditions. And we are more dedicated than ever before to ensuring all members of the Festival community know they are valued for their skills, experience, and unique perspectives.

Over the decades, the Williamstown Theatre Festival has created opportunities for thousands of early-career theatre professionals and aspirant theatre students, and we remain committed to this endeavor. The recent actions we have taken with regard to our [anti-racism commitment](#), [workplace and Professional Training Program](#), and [Early Career BIPOC Theatre-Makers Program](#), which you recognized in your note, reflect this deep dedication. Detailed information on these can be found at wtfestival.org/about and wtfestival.org/work-learn.

The work continues, as we manifest in every corner of the Festival the change your letter advocates. We hope, as you do, that the major cultural shift toward the values we share – Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Access – continues, ahead.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

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