

On Fri, Nov 9, 2018 at 4:33 PM Evgenia Peretz <evgenia.peretz@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Coyle,

I'm a writer at Vanity Fair and I'm working on a piece about Brett Kavanaugh's social milieu in the early 1980s, and how alumni of Georgetown Prep and other schools, as well as others in the community at large, are looking back at the culture 35 years later.

Now that the media circus has died down a bit, I'm hoping to present a clear-eyed, nuanced view of the situation. Not surprisingly, Georgetown Prep has been mentioned in several of my conversations with people. There's been some criticism, but also much support, even among those who disagreed with the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh. I'd like my article to be as fair, and as complete, as possible. With that in mind, I'm hoping to speak with someone at the school. My reporting deadline is Friday, Nov. 16.

Many thanks for considering this request.

All best,

Evgenia Peretz

On Mon, Nov 12, 2018 at 12:51 PM Patrick Coyle <pcoyl@gprep.org> wrote:

Evgenia,

I have received your note and will certainly try to provide you feedback as best we can on behalf of Georgetown Preparatory School.

I'm hoping that you could lend us a little more detail so that we can understand what you would like us to convey. For example, you indicate that Georgetown Prep has been mentioned in several of your conversations with sources and that some have criticized us. If you could give me some specifics on what they have said about us and their vantage point, I'll do all I can to get you a response.

I'm also not sure what you mean by "looking back at the culture." Can you give me some guidance on what that entails and how you aim to characterize it?

As you point out, our School has endured some very rough treatment by the press in recent weeks. One of the more troubling aspects of that ordeal is that many media outlets withheld key information from us, which then gave readers the false impression that we had nothing to say about those particulars when they appeared in print. Allow me to clear the air and ask here up front, can you assure me that we will have the opportunity to hear any assertions that are being made about our School or its practices so that we can have a full and fair opportunity to respond?

Of course, if you also have specific questions, please feel free to email them to me and I'll give them my quickest attention, keeping your Friday deadline in mind.

Best,
Patrick

On Mon, Nov 12, 2018 at 1:28 PM Evgenia Peretz <evgenia.peretz@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Patrick,

Thanks for your email. You will certainly have an opportunity to the assertions made about the school. In a few days, I will get back to you with specific questions. Do you prefer a phone call or by email? I actually have into next week so that gives us a bit more time.

Thanks again for your attention to this.

Best,

Evgenia

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[...]

On November 16, 2018 at 5:29 PM Evgenia Peretz wrote: <evgenia.peretz@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi Patrick,

Sorry for the delay in getting you these questions. I won't finish the piece until next week, and after that there's still a week of fact-checking so changes can be made. I'm cognizant of the fact that much of my article pertains to the 80s, when many of the members of the administration were not around. But if anyone was, I wanted to give you/them an opportunity to address these questions and assertions:

The 1983 yearbook struck many people as offensive, particularly in regards to women. What sort of oversight, if any, was there of the yearbook at that time? Have those practices changed in terms of what students can include?

A couple of alums from the 80s and 90s mentioned hazing that went on during football camp, which included seniors hitting underclassmen with socks filled with coins, and "butting." I know that one student was expelled for the latter, but do you think these incidents were met with sufficient consequence? Has that culture changed?

Two alums from the 80s said that during football camp, some of the priests drank with the students. One alum told me that one of the coaches invited seniors to his bachelor party where they was drinking and strippers. Is this accurate and were there any consequence?

I'd like to get a sense of how the school has processed the ordeal surrounding Kavanaugh's confirmation. Clearly, there was a tremendous amount of support at the school for Kavanaugh. Was there any disagreement within the community on the matter?

Have there been any discussions since about how the students can better navigate their social lives and relationships with young women?

Thanks for addressing these. There may be a few more questions down the line. Please know that there are also positive things said about the schools and about particular teachers.

Best,

Evgenia

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On Mon, Nov 19, 2018 at 4:10 PM Patrick Coyle <pcoyle@gprep.org> wrote:

Evgenia,

It is Georgetown Prep's policy to have all media responses come from my office. Rev. James R. Van Dyke, S.J., the School's president, and I will be the only representatives from Georgetown Prep that should be contacted by any media outlets.

Here are the responses to your specific questions. I did my best to keep the answers concise. I do have some follow-up questions regarding some of your questions. I have included those follow-up questions below:

Vanity Fair: The 1983 yearbook struck many people as offensive, particularly in regards to women. What sort of oversight, if any, was there of the yearbook at that time? Have those practices changed in terms of what students can include?

I would encourage you to read Fr. Van Dyke's op-ed in [America Magazine](#), a Jesuit sponsored multimedia publication, from October 3, which presents his thoughts on the both the yearbook and the context of how our School tries to guide the students. We think it would serve your readers well to include the hyperlink to the full article in *America*.

On the protocol and oversight of the yearbook, I can speak to my time at Georgetown Prep in my position as Director of Marketing and Communications. We have a dedicated faculty committee, and have for several years, that reviews all content related to the yearbook.

Vanity Fair: A couple of alums from the 80s and 90s mentioned hazing that went on during football camp, which included seniors hitting underclassmen with socks filled with coins, and "butting." I know that one student was expelled for the latter, but do you think these incidents were met with sufficient consequence? Has that culture changed?

Vanity Fair: Two alums from the 80s said that during football camp, some of the priests drank with the students. One alum told me that one of the coaches invited seniors to his bachelor party where they was drinking and strippers. Is this accurate and were there any consequence?

You are raising a number of allegations about specific incidents of misconduct, but I don't understand who is making these claims. Could you please provide me some guidance on the nature of this sourcing and how it is being corroborated?

Also, with respect to the culture question, are you insinuating that Georgetown Prep does not take allegations seriously? Georgetown Prep takes all allegations seriously and takes appropriate disciplinary actions when it is founded.

Vanity Fair: I'd like to get a sense of how the school has processed the ordeal surrounding Kavanaugh's confirmation. Clearly, there was a tremendous amount of support at the school for Kavanaugh. Was there any disagreement within the community on the matter?

As a 501-C3, Georgetown Prep does not get involved in political conversation or political action. We have endured much media attention, most highly negative, since the initial allegations against Justice Kavanaugh surfaced in September. We have, and will continue, to defend our school against mischaracterizations and misconstrued notions against Georgetown Prep made by many national media outlets.

We must take responsibility for our shortcomings, but not at the expense of defending the guiding mission of our School. Yes, we have labored for years to protect students from a broader culture chockablock with degrading influences. And yes, we are painfully aware that all our students, and indeed everyone in our community, sometimes fall short. Human failing, and the effort to reconcile our lives with the teachings of Christ, are at the very heart of our School. We are not indifferent to sin and temptation. Indeed, we have built our lives around confronting them through faith and service.

That's why we returned the phone calls and the emails from reporters. Fr. Van Dyke penned not one but three separate public statements and essays reflecting on where we could have done more while setting the record straight on the falsehoods told about us.

Here are some specifics ignored in the all the media's coverage: Every Georgetown Prep student takes rigorous classes in Christian ethics, personal and social. They all learn Catholic social thought, to understand the demands of a faith that does justice. The students themselves run what's called the Arrupe Society, a service program that runs food drives and blood-donation initiatives, serves the "Best Buddies Program" (founded by an alumnus), volunteers care at an assisted-living facility for elderly women, and tutors in impoverished sections of our community.

Vanity Fair: Have there been any discussions since about how the students can better navigate their social lives and relationships with young women?

Our entire curriculum and our guiding *ethos* as a community is grounded in Christian teachings of interpersonal morality. There is nothing we take more seriously and that includes of course the manner in which our students interact and socialize with women, regardless of their age or station in life. We have always worked in close coordination with other schools in our vicinity and especially our sister school at the Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart. Part of the challenge is that our students must confront a wider world of degrading influences and temptations.

It is no small irony that this "perspective piece on the culture of the 1980s and Georgetown Prep" and the critique of our commitment to our mission is being questioned by a publication that routinely parades and promotes the promiscuity of American society.

I do not expect your essay will include any self-reflection about that, but I would certainly encourage it.

You indicated in your previous note that we would have a full and fair chance to hear any specifics criticisms aimed at Georgetown Prep. Do I understand correctly that this latest note represents all those particulars? I have a sense it is somehow less than that.

Please let me know if you have any follow-up questions. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,
Patrick

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[...]

On Mon, Dec 3, 2018 at 8:44 AM Patrick Coyle <pcoyl@gprep.org> wrote:

Evgenia,

I am writing to follow up with you regarding your full list of questions.

As I recall, we left off awaiting further information/details/particulars from you. Since this is likely to require time for us to research and prepare input to meet your requests, I'm concerned that the longer the delay, the less time we'll have for a full and fair response.

Our sense is that you are aiming to present aspects or criticisms of Georgetown Prep that go beyond what you have presented to us so far. Is that in fact the case?

Thank you.

Patrick

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[...]

On Thu, Dec 6, 2018 at 4:29 PM Patrick Coyle <pcoyle@gprep.org> wrote:

Evgenia:

Allow me to recap our interaction with you and the magazine because I think it will shed light for both readers and our stakeholders about our good faith effort to provide you with a fulsome and principled response.

Your first overture to us, on November 9, indicated you were preparing an article on “how alumni of Georgetown Prep...are looking back” at what you called “the social milieu in the early 1980s.” That note said you are “hoping to present a clear-eyed, nuanced view of the situation” including “much support” you had heard for our school so that the piece would be “as fair and as complete as possible.”

Yet in our dialogue that has ensued, I have become increasingly skeptical about your stated intent. We asked you for a chance to hear any criticizing quotes or characterizations specifically made about us by sources and you have presented only paraphrased allegations almost entirely from unnamed sources. In our response to your set of questions about several reported incidents from years ago and school procedures, we asked if that represented the full range of points aimed at Georgetown Prep. But, although we have repeated that question to you several times now, you have ignored it, despite your promise we “would certainly have an opportunity to [hear] the assertions made about the school.”

It seemed to us more likely that your piece will resemble the anthology of Vanity Fair articles you recently took part in called “Schools for Scandal: The Inside Dramas at 16 of America’s Most Elite Campuses – Plus Oxford!” [Exclamation yours]. It’s also hard to imagine we’ll receive objectivity from your editor, Claire Howorth, who spent recent weeks on social media denigrating our alumnus, Brett Kavanaugh ’83, during his Senate confirmation hearings with pronouncements like “This sh*t is totally unfair and f**ked up.” [Elided for profanity].

Then, on December 3, you said your piece would include a recounting of a legal case involving a former faculty member and a former student that occurred some 15 years ago. When we asked you (again, repeatedly) for explanation on what that had to do with the stated premise of your piece, you disregarded us and insisted we had only until the end of that week to respond. Many aspects of what you presented us on that matter, however, were demonstrably false (a list of which I have attached).

Contrary to the implication in your questions and the material you pointed to, our school handled that matter with the utmost diligence and seriousness. From the moment it was brought to our attention, Georgetown Prep took swift steps to engage with that student and his family and immediately reported the incident to law enforcement and the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus. We cooperated fully with those investigations while also informing our school community and facilitating any further information that could be found. I have attached those key pieces of communications also.

In that same spirit of candor our president, Rev. James R. Van Dyke, S.J., sent a separate letter to the full school community in early September to convey our school's view on the issue of sexual abuse by clergy and to reiterate our focused attention and care on that issue.

You wrote us that you want your article to be distinct from what you called the "media circus" that has been visited on our school in recent weeks. But the actual premise of your piece, just like the rest of the fevered media theatrics, is the warped assumption that institutions like Georgetown Prep indulge the human sin you highlight and even create a so-called culture that enables it. But in reality our society itself has become a world where all those malign influences assault each of us with troubling regularity. After all, Vanity Fair magazine has long made a neat profit by showcasing and often glamorizing those same dark impulses found in drugs, lurid sexuality, and the headlong pursuit of pleasure for its own sake. Among countless examples, an article just this month faulted a new film about a rock star because it didn't include enough sex and drug use.

Schools like Georgetown Prep exist for the explicit purpose of giving young people the tools and moral education to confront sin in the world by building personal character in a life of service to others. We do that through rigorous education in Christian ethics both personal and social so that they can understand the demands of putting faith into action. Those values are reflected in the lives of our alumni who serve society in elected office, the diplomatic corps, the military, the judiciary, and countless charitable groups such as Somos Amigos Medical Missions, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, the Special Olympics, and Save the Children.

In our 230th year of forming men for and with others, Georgetown Prep remains committed to guiding and safeguarding young men in a world where they will face distorted values and moral compromise but where they have the obligation and opportunity to work for good across a whole sphere of human endeavor. This is our abiding mission, Georgetown Prep's very reason for being, and the essential fabric of our whole school community.

Best,
Patrick

P.S. As a postscript to one particular question, you asked about students mistreating one another during football training camp. All of our athletic programs, both then and now, include specific and strict terms of personal conduct which forbid drinking, violence, or bullying of any kind. In every instance when the school has become aware of any transgression of those rules, we have taken disciplinary action which sometimes included expulsion.

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On Thu, Dec 13, 2018 at 2:01 PM Patrick Coyle <pcoyle@gprep.org> wrote:

Evgenia:

We have shown how many of the ever-shifting claims you have made to us over the last month have proven false and yet you haven't acknowledged that. We have also asked repeatedly for you to present a full set of the assertions about us and yet you have ignored your earlier promise to do just that — while shifting to new topics when the previous ones are refuted. This unprofessional method has now extended to nearly two dozen emails over more than a month.

But where is the documentation on your point about a supposed investigation of our IP addresses? What hard basis is there for the assertion that some school official impersonated Eric Ruyak or that faculty orchestrated a nefarious campaign of disparagement? How do you back up the notion that faculty had some kind of influence with the administration or the Province and tried to steer their actions? How do you justify the manifestly false allegation that the school never contacted authorities?

Below are our further points for the record. On the several points you raise:

§ In the court documented labeled “Court Proceeding One,” there is an assertion that Dr. Ochs and Ms. Collins mentioned “boundary issues” as it relates to Garrett Orr. That is quoted from the prosecutor, Ms. Fenton.

The School has no record of Dr. Ochs or Ms. Collins making any claims or communicating any concerns about Orr to school administration.

§ In the summer of 2003, Orr left Georgetown Prep to go on sabbatical and departed the School for St. Louis. The School was informed in December, 2003 by the Maryland Province that Orr would not return to Prep. Again, the School does not have the authority to reassign Jesuits- that is a function of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus.

§ The email you present from Orr, dated December 17, 2003 was not sent with the school's knowledge or approval as you suggest. Instead it was apparently sent to people whom Orr calls “friends” and alludes to two (2) investigations “completed” by the School that “cleared his name.” But the School has no record of any investigation involving Orr before Eric Ruyak's allegation against Orr on October 8, 2003. In fact, there was no investigation prior to him leaving Georgetown Prep in the summer of 2003 and certainly he had no authority to call for a School investigation into what he called “rumors.” And this “letter” was not a school-sponsored email. It was not written as an official school letter. Orr was not a member of the Prep community at that point and he would have no authority to do so, nor did he have any ability to direct the administration as the letter falsely suggests.

It is crucial to note that during his time at Georgetown Prep, Orr concealed his wrongdoing and misled the School, as both law enforcement authorities and the Provincial affirmed in their respective investigations.

§ You assert that Dr. Relic “dismissed the allegations as untrue.” But in fact, throughout the investigatory process beginning in October, 2003, Dr. Relic, the interim Headmaster, and Fr. George, the president at the time, worked closely with the Ruyak family, with great sensitivity towards Eric. The School has contemporaneous notes of that inquiry, and heeded the Ruyak's own wishes that a full fact-gathering take place, and later shared all those facts with law enforcement. All those actions are entirely at odds with the baseless idea that Dr. Relic somehow “dismissed the allegations as untrue.” The Province also was still conducting their investigation that began on October 8, 2003 and, as I indicated in an earlier response, found the allegation “substantially true” when the Province concluded their report in April 2006.

If the interim timeframe seems lengthy in retrospect, that diligence took place in an abundance of pastoral concern for Eric and respect for the Ruyak family's wishes, the Montgomery County Police

were not called immediately. As news outlets reported at the time, the Ruyak family was reluctant to involve law enforcement during that period.

Nothing in the School's records indicates that Dr. Relic formally informed Orr that "he had been cleared."

§ Orr's priestly faculties were suspended by the Provincial in May, 2004. Because there was an ongoing criminal investigation being conducted by the Montgomery County Police and an independent investigation being done by the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus, the School had an obligation to refrain from any public comment on Orr or the investigations.

I have already sent you a copy of the letter from April, 2006 in which the School conveyed the findings of the Provincial of the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus' investigation. I assume you have read that?

§ So far as we can tell, there was no formal statement to inhibit the Ruyaks from contacting the School, and indeed that's at odds with the close engagement the School maintained with them throughout the overall course of events. That of course included during Mr. Ruyak's tenure on the Board of Trustees and during the years when their younger son was a student. In fact, Bob and Eric Ruyak attended as welcomed guests at the memorial Mass on campus for Jeff Jones (who was Dean of Students during Eric's time at school and later Headmaster) in September, 2016, five (5) years after Orr pled guilty.

Best,
Patrick