Email to Alight CEO Stephan Scholl (24/08/2023)

Hi Stephan,

Please look into this.

I do not want to have to take this public any further.

Kind regards,

Stephane

Alight and @BorisVanrillaer made me commit sυicide.

Let me start by saying I did not want to publish this, all I wanted and still want is recognition for what was done to me. This is not a message of hate. This is a message of hope.

Back at work in 2020. Finally I managed to out myself as gay to my colleagues after 16years. That’s what I started doing as covid broke out.

Welcome back or okay your gay from most, not from management. Boris Vanrillaer as lead bully just pushed me around senselessly and pointlessly. Do this, wait forever, tell your line manager I need that, because he will be annoyed by this demand/request…

Line manager (Alan Anker) could empathize somewhat, complaint to HR, lead to a mediation but without the bullies present!? This was followed with a written conclusion where nothing with bad intentions ever happened and Stephane needs to do this and that to not feel discomfort at work. No mentioning of discrimination or bullying. I replied to my line manger first to try to set things straight in writing.

Next. Reached out to BU boss (Johan Bosschaert) who just told me to take a hike and get a job elsewhere.

Fine, so I submitted my resignation in the month of May.

Before this, I did actually get some work done around where the Product strategy should go: mainly a longer term vision on where to invest for the HR market so not to just catch up but to take the lead. The Product catalogue to me seemed messy, not coherent, and full of underused Products. I suggested an alternative. The everlasting optimist in me found the nerve and the guts to add this idea to my resignation letter. “Let’s do this project and if you don’t want to then please consider this my resignation” is how the letter ended. Though obviously it needed to be outside this toxic Products BU.

Then the impossible it seemed: They refused my resignation. Now what?

2 months went by and eventually, in August, they found it necessary to fire me themselves.

As if that wasn’t enough they used those couple months “well” to write a motivation for my dismissal that was so hurtful and distorted that I had to wonder which human being could write this? Which colleagues, provided input? 16 years were all reduced to insults, and worse: I was worthless at my job and I was a worthless human being.

The letter kept on going and going, so detailed and so lengthy that I wondered if they started preparing this dismissal motivation letter even before covid broke out in March?

Next I got my own lawyer but all seemed to be this well legally vetted by Alight, that all I could hope for was their mercy!?! Hell no!  
I had to fight this discrimination, this injustice, but no justice on the horizon.

I felt horrible once the anger subsided. It got to me to the point that life was now no longer worth living. The next month in September I tried to κill myself. The overdose of pills wasn’t enough. Did I now not want to die, did I not consciously or subconsciously take enough pills of the not poisoness enough kind? It took me 6 months to get out of this hole I was shoved in.

Present-day.

In 2023, I decided I wanted to take the stand and speak out: I want recognition for my suffering. Not only having been told in 2004 that I better not out myself as gay (so I didn’t) for 16 years, the year when I tried to eventually come out of the closet at work they had to torture me and discriminate me and abuse me for no reason at all but their perverse pleasure. I posted what happened to me on LinkedIn. The post that did however catch Alights attentions was this post: <https://www.linkedin.com/posts/stepvda_stephane-van-der-aa-on-twitter-activity-7061072590496227328-GDL-?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop> .

I got the idea for this post from a holocaust survivor’s testimony who decided to forgive. This combined with the little-known fact that Nazi Germany also systematically exterminated gay people in Germany. This should attract people’s attention and allow some to think: indifference leads to the worst in men. By which I also include my own indifference for not outing myself at work any sooner than I did and despite being told not to.

I got a lot of sympathy from people who no longer work at Alight. What I also got was another, now recognizably aggressive letter, from Althius, their lawyers. They accused me of slander and lying. Wow: How can the truth be slander? Is free speech no longer allowed? What can one still say and share online? A few back and forth email with the lawyers and they stopped harassing me. I suspect their “Pro-Justicia” letter was more meant to intimidate and nothing else. Meaning they already knew they had no legal ground.

Today one still has to wonder between the time that I submitted my resignation letter and the time that they fired me, 2 months went by. During this time they could have just signed my resignation letter and handed a signed copy back to me and I would be gone. Instead, they used this time to involve lawyers. Why did they not accept my resignation and saved everybody the cost and then anguish?

Still, patiently, and carefully, I explained over the emails that the only thing I want from them now is recognition for the discrimination and suffering I had to endure. (and not to be called a liar). A phone call could be enough, human to human.

Mistakes we can see, people we can forgive, this should never happen again.

Stephane

I sent this to Alight CEO Stephan Scholl on Thursday August 24th  and again on Monday 28th (from other email account in case previous email got stuck in spam) for both legal notice and hope for establishing a constructive dialog outside of courts and social media.

Reply to post for 2d later.

What happened in Manilla? How many years ago was this, maybe 2017? I heard through the grapevine Boris Vanrillaer had to fly urgently to the MNL office. A sensitive HR issue supposedly forced him (willingly or not) to go to his Dev team and set things right face to face. I never asked for details. Didn’t want to be indiscreet. You never get the full story through whispers. Starting your own story in a new relationship is the full story. Now I have to wonder, did someone else suffer a similar fate as me over there in the Philippines?

Hopefully that did not have to lead to a suicide attempt or worse back then.