Rolling Stone Gathers Mistakes and Lessons for Your Investigations

The *Rolling Stone* debacle concerning their reporting on the UVA campus fraternity rape and resulting retraction [http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-what-went-wrong-20150405](http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/a-rape-on-campus-what-went-wrong-20150405) offers valuable lessons for those of us investigating workplace complaints. The Columbia Journalism School identified three failures in the *Rolling Stone* report that could have prevented their PR disaster:

1. Failure to identify and speak with the witnesses that the alleged victim supposedly spoke with soon after the incident, even though she made derogatory comments about them.

2. Failure to identify and interview the supposed date and orchestrator of the rape.

3. Failure to provide the details to the fraternity in order to allow them to respond to the allegations.

While the magazine allegedly avoided these basic investigation steps out of respect for the victim's concerns, tying down these witnesses would have cured the current debacle. If you are conducting a workplace investigation, avoid these traps. Allowing witnesses - and certainly the alleged perpetrator - to tell their side of the story should be a basic part of a full and fair investigation.

For a longer article about investigation mistakes and how to avoid them, please email me at: Lynne@workplacesthatwork.com.

Lynne Eisaguirre 2015. All rights reserved.

For additional information on this and many other workplace related topics go to [Workplaces That Work website](http://www.workplacesthatwork.com)