Date: Mon, 26 Sept 2022

Subject: LeRoy Weekes pitch

From: Ariana Cobb

I’m working on a story for Professor Nina Alverez’s reporting course that I think might be a good piece that could show discrimination in the workplace and how it affects a worker who has been in his field for 20 years.

Here’s the story:

LeRoy Weekes, 63, has worked for the New York Transit Authority for 20 years. He came to the Transit Authority because of his love and passion for working on trains, but over time, he has noticed a shift in how his supervisor has treated him. Mr. Weekes has applied for around 60 different positions with transit to move up in his career and of the 60, he has only been interviewed twice. The Queens native feels his supervisor discriminates against him because he is White and Weekes is Black.

Mr. Weekes served as a Quality Control Specialist at the time of the complaint and requested to be promoted to Senior Quality Control Specialist from 2012 until 2019. Most of the times he has applied he has not made it past the application or pre-screening position to be interviewed. Despite having an associate's degree in the field and great experience, Weekes is constantly overlooked and non-black employees are promoted over him, some of who have been there a shorter timeframe than him.

According to the 63-year, many people experience or also feel discriminated against, but are scared to discuss it with others in fear of losing their jobs. Throughout his time at Transit, Weekes has only had two black supervisors and currently works on a team of 200 where there are only 10 black workers, including himself.

The story reveals that there may be a systemic racism problem within this organization. There are numerous court cases against the organization but there is little conversation about this in the press. Also, I have a phone interview with Mr. Weekes and information from the national EEOC hotline. The Metropolitan Transit Authority declined to comment on the case itself, but I will follow up to see if they can provide general information about their processes and policies.

Date: Mon, 26 Sept 2022

Subject: Pay Gap pitch

From: Ariana Cobb

I’m working on a story for Professor Nina Alverez’s reporting course that I think might be a good piece that could show discrimination in the workplace and how it affects black female workers at the CEO/Chief level who have a significant pay gap from their male counterparts at the same level.

Here’s the story:

According to the EEOC, The Equal Pay Act requires that men and women in the same workplace be given equal pay for equal work. The jobs need not be identical, but they must be substantially equal. However, studies show that around 38 percent of the wage gap is due to discrimination. Census data has calculated that Black women make 58 cents on each dollar earned by men.

For women in the c-suite, the same rules apply. However, only 8 percent of CEOs are black, with a small portion of that number being women. To find women who are going through common situations at this career level, women often turn to groups such as Chief to gain support from others. Pay equity is among the topics these women discuss and I believe it is important to bring this conversation more to the forefront.

The story would reveal issues that many women experience throughout their careers, even if they are at the highest point in their careers. I would reach out to women who are at the c-suite level and have them discuss their career journeys and any experiences they’ll have with pay equity. September 21st was known as Black Women’s Equal Pay Day, yet it is not as universally discussed in culture. While this date was a week ago I believe it could be nice to still highlight it somewhere in the piece.