

1D - 220814

- *This email chain - placed in chronological order - is one example of how time-consuming dealing with Adrian's behavior can be. The first email was sent to myself immediately after a weekly meeting with TWL. The rawness of Adrian's anger was then toned down in a diplomatic follow up attempting to appease him the next day, which led to another burst of temper when I tried to shift topics to moving our project along.*

From: WRowan <[REDACTED]>

Date: Thursday, August 11, 2022 at 11:35 AM

To: WRowan <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Notes immediately after call with Adrian Haro 220811-contemporaneous
Call with AH and [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] at The Workers' Lab started at 9.30AM PT.

Amicable first part of call – AH promised to send the (overdue) date for August partial-disbursement

Then discussing Long Beach – offer of help via mentee in Mayor's office

Moved on to Expansion cities. WR said was concerned about crammed agenda for meeting with [REDACTED - CITY] CBO's next Thursday. Danger of not getting everyone on the same page if not give time to answering their quesitons, etc.

AH: Agreed to just attend beginning of session to talk about TWL then allow WR and [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] to handle bulk of meeting. This offer withdrawn at the end of the meeting.

We discussed slide decks. I admitted my slides aren't good and I welcome feedback. AH said the TWL slidedeck isn't good either. We need a new one. AH says we need to plan new messaging. I said I have a broad idea of the messaging but very keen to hone it. TWL could be very helpful with that.

I made point I was worried about worst case scenario: a repeat of the [REDACTED - LARGE FUNDER] meeting at which AH made at least one untrue statement about WorkLB ("WorkLB is the employer of record") and suggested we were more early stage than we are on another issue while jumping in constnatly, having ditched the agreed agenda at the top of the meeting.

AH seemed angered by my point that we absolutely need a high level message agreed but people need to present in their own way. I am 62, I don't need to be given a slide deck and told what to say on a subject about which I have deep expertise. I said I didn't want to use the word "infantilizing" because it was too strong. But it was sort of right. AH took this as meaning I didn't want to partner with TWL "You just want the money and to get on with it. That's not how we work at the Workers Lab."

Quotes that then followed:

"Your communications are rubbish. People don't understand you." I asked for more details: AH said I had the wrong starting point in my deck. I tried to discuss.

“Everybody in philanthropy told me to stay away from you.”

I asked for more detail. Reply: “You need me. You present as a white man with a British (possibly colonial) accent. That won’t get you anywhere in this kind of work in America.”

AH used “f***ing” at multiple points, said I was “paraonoid”. I said personal attacks like this, and [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] yesterday calling me “Passive Aggressive” was not helpful. I was struggling to understand the conversation.

I asked if we could clarify that we had the same understanding of partnership. AH said “partnership is partnership, there’s nothing more to it”.

AH said I had insinuated I didn’t want to partner with them. He became very agitated, accused me of patronizing him. Said “I would abso-f***ing-lutely end this partnership if we can’t make it work. I don’t care about slide decks it’s about if you want to partner with us.”

AH said he had huge experience of successful partnering. Their Design Sprint with [REDACTED] last year had two decks and everyone was happy. (This was my suggestion for us on this Design Sprint.)

After about 70 minutes of which 50 had been heated discussion, I said I wanted to understand where we are now at AH said we needed to end the call. He doesn’t know if we still have a partnership. He said we need to talk again or TWL will not attend the [REDACTED - CITY] meeting on Thursday next week. I said I was absolutely not going to let anything happen that embarrassed [REDACTED, PUBLIC OFFICIAL IN CITY].

AH said the meeting in [REDACTED - CITY] would not go ahead unless I confirmed I wanted to partner with TWL. I said I did. He said I needed to think about it after this call, if I was serious I had to write him an email asking for a meeting before Thursday, but ‘we are not going to go over this again’. I pointed out AH and I had a one on one call on Friday next week that I needed to move anyway, could we fix a time to bring that earlier in the week and talk then? He said no, ‘you need to reflect on this and send an email’.

I asked that we work through the rest of the agenda for the meeting but AH said no “We may not have a partnership any longer. I don’t know if TWL is even going to go to the meeting on Thursday with [REDACTED - CITY].

I repeatedly said in the call I was mystified about why he was so angry. I said I couldn’t accept that everyone in philanthropy was bad mouthing me or all my communications had failed, we had cities primed because of my legwork.

[REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] was silent but present (on Zoom, both had their cameras off) throughout.

Opinion: AH seemed threatened by the conversation, irrational, agitated, talked several times about his achievements/value to this project. Demeaned by achievements. Ended by refusing to create

another chance to talk and clear statement I should – effectively – beg his forgiveness before he would talk again.

From: WRowan <[REDACTED]>
Date: Friday, August 12, 2022 at 6:39 AM
To: Adrian Haro <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER]
Subject: Re: Follow up

Dear Adrian,

I remain confused after our 75-minute meeting yesterday evening (my time)/ yesterday morning (your time). I know you were angry. You threatened three times to cancel our agreement to work together saying I needed to “decide if you want this partnership”. You stated TWL would pull out, starting with our session with [REDACTED] CBO’s next week, if you did not adequately receive this assurance. You then declined to cover the rest of my agenda for the weekly meeting.

I suggested we agree a time to talk when feelings would have cooled. You declined, saying I needed to email you when I had reflected on your points and decided if I wanted to continue as partners.

This is that email. But I am still groping to fully understand the causes of your sudden anger. We discussed several key points amicably and productively in the first 20-30 minutes. My instinct when confused is to lay everything out and, unpack the issues as a step to resolution. I have a hunch about the core background issue between us to offer, and confession of a blindspot of mine that only came into focus after the Zoom. There are also some recurring complexifiers in our attempts to communicate that should be surfaced.

But firstly, Yes we do want to be in partnership with TWL. We thought about this a lot before confirming last November. Restricting our independent fundraising in particular was a huge leap of trust in you and TWL’s brand. We have skin in this game.

Our partnership hasn’t always proceeded as we expected. Life rarely does. But it has deepened this month. Until now, the only person who has postponed or foregone salary to keep this ambitious project on track is me. Your sacrifice to enable a partial August disbursement creates enormous respect and a stronger bond.

From my notes, the point on which we started to diverge yesterday was slide decks. We each have a deck for this project, both are agreed that neither is as good as it could be. You said we should work together to modify the deck prepared by TWL’s communications consultant. Tenseness on that point led into discourse on messaging, then our Design Sprint more widely.

1) Background: The time issue

You clearly picked up on my reticence around further meetings to ideate messaging. That's not because I think it won't be insightful, it's the Pressure of Time. There is so much to be done at this end, in Long Beach, on the tech., on our processes, on just tedious operational admin. That problem is currently off the scale; I am firefighting City Hall demand barriers, short-term finance uncertainty, and now TWL relationship challenges. There is no equivalent of [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER], [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER], or [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] this can be passed to. At this end, so much of the work stays with me.

That problem seems to be driving two points of difference between us:

- **Iterative v. deliberative**: TWL approved this Design Sprint last November, but didn't want to start city outreach until a public statement had been prepared. That arrived on March 21. There was then a decision not to approach other cities until a new slide deck had been created. That materialized on June 29. We are used to constant incremental tweaks rather than these major strategic evaluations. As you pointed out, my deck is messy. It's a constant work in progress, evolving as people (including you) provide useful feedback.
- **Centrality of messaging**: My view is, we have messaging that could be improved (like everything else about this resource-starved operation). But is good enough for now. (*"What we know about your city's irregular workers > their problems > why a sustainable solution has to involve a platform > what it must do > how to implement."*) There are other parts of the operation that I personally would triage above further refining of this messaging.

Resolving this? I will be back in Long Beach from Aug 22 which will free up time to talk with TWL, we won't need to cram conversations - amongst everything else - into the early evening/early morning window. If messaging is vital to you, then as partners, it's vital to us. So let's get going on a revamp. **I just ask that we don't slow any outreach while waiting for the optimal message or deck.**

2) My fear

There was definite frisson yesterday around my fear of *"being told what to say"*. You interpreted this – I think – as unwillingness to toe an agreed line. I suspect this is one of those issues where we are in alignment, but just not understanding each other. But I want to test that before signing up. Here's the issue:

I have heard you and [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] talk movingly about women in your extended families striving to source multiple jobs around uncertainties of child rearing. It offers a great structure when you explain our mission through that lens. I have no equivalent experience. But I can credibly unveil a narrative revealing my growing awareness of Big Tech's venality towards millions of vulnerable work-seekers, and government's flat-footed responses so far.

In television, and I am sure, politics; authenticity is invaluable. Everyone on this team has it, but it's from different perspectives. I was afraid you were planning to submerge this below a signed-off communications strategy. I suspect, now the heat of the moment has passed, this isn't the case.

You said last year's Design Sprint with [REDACTED] had two decks. Can't we do the same? You know how important it is to me that a first convening in any city is used primarily to create space for their stakeholders to air conceptions, concerns, and insights around the broad irregular work agenda above. A deck facilitating that must never contradict a deck used – for example – to introduce TWL's and your take on this project. But it serves a very different purpose, and we should all agree on both.

3) My blindspot

My husband pointed this out after the Zoom. I have become unusually self-contained in the way I work, doing things my way, at my pace. That's a barrier to partnering which must involve letting go and letting in.

This honestly doesn't stem from some sort of "hero" complex. It's more about having been in the trenches so long, realizing ultimately all sorts of tasks will fall to me, overly trusting my own judgement over other people's valuable experience. Just getting stuff done before the next challenge hits.

I suspect some of the amorphous tension in our conversations has stemmed from this. I apologize if it has come across as brusqueness or disinterest. I am owning the issue to create a path forward.

4) Complexifiers

We communicate very differently, including with each other. That seems to be fuelling a lack of understanding. I've already owned "*whatever, let's just do it*" type brusqueness from my side, a failing I need to address.

But I ask you take on board the longstanding friendships - and similarity of backgrounds - within TWL can make it hard to know how to talk to you, particularly when it's a three-on-one, or two-on-one dynamic. Inevitably, my mind goes back to the 90-minute pile-on April 23 in which you, [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] and [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] talked through your fury at my email first raising the "Pressure of Time" issue (above). There was admission TWL could improve, but there were also a range of allegations, including the view I was "asserting white privilege". I don't enjoy these conversations.

If we're going to partner, we need to communicate sometimes while not in total agreement. So, as part of the email you suggested I send, here's my analysis of five ways our conversations can currently go south for me:

- **Personal attacks:** Yesterday you called me "paranoid" for worrying the [REDACTED] session could turn into a repeat of our joint session with [REDACTED - LARGE FUNDER] (email of May 13). The day before, [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] yet again, labelled my tendency - to air a concern, then back down when it provokes a negative reaction, only for it to resurface

weeks later – as “Passive Aggressive behavior”. Baseless allegations about someone’s mental health, rather than evidenced concerns about workstyle or organizational processes, cross an unacceptable line at this end. But they are in the repertoire for TWL’s dialogue with partners. It creates a discomfiting dynamic.

- **Blanket statements:** You said twice yesterday “*Everyone in philanthropy told me to stay away from you*”. I know I may have approached some people clumsily or explained the case insensitively. But a range of funders maintain regular calls with me to advise and connect. I have introduced you to some of them. Again, a claim denied by real-world experience undermines a conversation.
- **Blanket assessments:** As above, your statement that “*Your communications are rubbish. People don’t understand you*” is belied by the cities who have swiftly moved to work with us on this project. [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and others arrived at this readiness only after sitting through my presentations, some of them multiple times. That doesn’t mean there’s no room for improvement, when I asked for clarification, you said I start at the wrong point which is an insight to be actioned.
- **Race:** You told me yesterday “*You need me with you in meetings because you present as a white man with a British accent, possibly colonial*”. I have never knowingly experienced hostility or indifference on this point. But I will take your assertion on trust which means I am tiptoeing through a minefield of sensitivity which – as a Brit – I can’t fully understand.
- **I know what you’re thinking:** Assertions like yesterday’s “*You say you want to partner but I know it’s not what you think*” defy a response. Fundamentals of productive discourse advise on “I feel...” arguments, not “You are....” statements.

Where do we go from here?

I’m confused so I don’t know. As our meeting yesterday wrapped, I said there were many types of partnership. You said there was not, “partnership is partnership, there’s nothing more to it”.

So, I can only reiterate: Does partnering mean pragmatically pooling our complementary skills, life experiences, and enthusiasms to empower some of the most vulnerable workers in America at this critical time, while embarking on a shared learning/improvement journey because our overlapping missions are so important? If so, I am all in.

And despite it all, I remain very fond of you guys and your tangible enthusiasm for this moonshot. I am just in a total brainfog about it all as of this morning.

Bestest

Wingham

From: Adrian Haro <[REDACTED]>
Date: Sunday, August 14, 2022 at 4:14 PM
To: WRowan <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER]
Subject: Re: Follow up

Thx, wingham. Are you free tomorrow at 8:30am PT to touch base?
Sent from my iPhone

From: WRowan <[REDACTED]>
Date: Monday, August 15, 2022 at 3:12 AM
To: Adrian Haro <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER]
Subject: Re: Follow up

Sure! Do you want me to call your cell (it will be larcenous for you to call me if you're out walking) or shall we Zoom? Regards W.

From: WRowan <[REDACTED]>
Date: Tuesday, August 16, 2022 at 1:28 AM
To: Adrian Haro <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER]
Subject: Re: Follow up

Dear Adrian,

It feels like we are mid-way in a consequential discussion about our partnership. This is to record where we got to in our conversation yesterday:

We started by asking how each other was. You were worried and didn't know if our partnership should continue. I said I would feel better if we could work together on something we all felt tangibly moved our project along. I suggested outreach to Los Angeles County, which you had undertaken to do in June.

You felt I was being too "transactional". I should be more worried about our partnership not working. And you couldn't approach L.A.

County until you understood what our messaging was. You did agree that opening that dialogue would probably help build momentum and confidence among our stakeholders.

You said you wanted to apologize for two things:

For raising your voice in Thursday's meeting.

For not being more involved in this project. You stated "I am really talented. I just am. It's nothing to do with me, just a gift from above. I need to be more involved." You said we now needed to reform our messaging and you would design that process.

You again re-iterated, "The race stuff is really important". You said that I needed you to introduce me at meetings because, as a white Briton "you remind people of slavery". I again pointed out I am not qualified to assess this issue and will defer to your judgement at this time.

You told me "it's hard for you to be a partner because you think we're slow. I get that. I can appreciate your frustration". You said you thought that I believed "our processes in the Design Sprint will slow you down". You confirmed they would do so, but made the point there could be benefits to this approach. I re-confirmed readiness to understand this point, which doesn't come easily given my experience and current pressures from other stakeholders.

You said if our partnership was to continue it would be on the basis of a reset. I am no longer to send over a draft agenda for our weekly meetings. You felt "You bring things up like the autumn announcement, how come we're not making more progress". [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] will now compile those agendas and run the meetings.

You undertook to debrief with [REDACTED - TWL STAFFER] and send over a set of bullets on a new arrangement during the day. You then texted "I feel a little off so will get you the reset bullets tomorrow".

Bestest

W.