

INFLUENCERS & CREATORS

One Minute Briefs Founder Nick Entwistle Accused of Assault by Former Contract Employee

Others report Entwistle's behavior towards them has been inappropriate



Nick Entwistle, founder of UK-based One Minute Briefs, is shown in one of the organization's Instagram videos. @OneMinuteBriefs on Instagram

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By **Emmy Liederman & Olivia Morley**

JUNE 7, 2022

[Sensitive content: This article includes description of an alleged physical assault.]

A former contract employee of U.K.-based company One Minute Briefs says the organization's founder and creative director, Nick Entwistle, physically assaulted her during a trip to Portugal in 2021.

The woman said she worked with Entwistle for approximately nine months and managed the company's social media accounts, brought on new clients and helped develop creative. She provided Adweek with copies of records documenting that she had been a paid contract employee of One Minute Briefs.

The former contractor spoke to Adweek on the condition her name not be published, saying she feared retaliation from Entwistle.

or in writing, Entwistle's lawyer said the One Minute Briefs founder declined to discuss details of any allegations in this article on the record.

However, Entwistle on May 31 sent Adweek a statement denying the allegations.

"These allegations are categorically false," Entwistle said in his emailed statement. "This person has consistently used emotional blackmail, controlling and coercive tactics to stay closely involved with me and my business over the past two years. This has been reported to Greater Manchester Police. The completely untrue claims made to Adweek are part of a co-ordinated effort to defame my character and damage my business. The effects have caused significant harm to my own mental health and well-being."

The woman said she decided to go public with the allegations months after the alleged assault because she felt she "could no longer keep [her] mouth shut."

"It has not been easy to speak out," she said, "but it has been much harder to stay silent."

Details of the allegation

The former One Minute Briefs contract worker said she was assaulted during an argument with Entwistle on June 5, 2021, while the two were staying at the NH Collection Lisboa Liberdade hotel together in Lisbon, Portugal. She described the incident as the only time Entwistle allegedly assaulted her.

She said she had previously dated Entwistle and that the two ended their romantic involvement in early 2020 before she accepted the contract role at One Minute Briefs in March 2021. At the time of the alleged assault, she said, the two were not romantically involved.

After she had made plans to vacation in Lisbon, the woman said, Entwistle informed her he would be on vacation in Porto, Portugal, around the same time. Entwistle then requested to extend his stay and join her in Lisbon, she recalled.

"He was like: 'You mind if I come and join you? And we can just kind of work together?'" she told Adweek.

She said Entwistle stayed with her in a hotel room that she had paid for. She provided Adweek a screenshot of a receipt showing that she had paid for the room in Lisbon.

She and Entwistle met a group of other guests on June 5 while swimming at the hotel pool, she said. Entwistle, she recalled, learned that one of the guests had an employer who could be a potential One Minute Briefs client, and she said he hoped to turn the conversation into a business opportunity.

"It wasn't initially a client meeting," she said. "It was friends that we had made while we were there."

She said she returned to the hotel room inebriated and went to sleep. Upon waking later, she said, she got into an argument with Entwistle over her drinking. She said Entwistle accused her of disrupting a potential client deal with her behavior.

"I was packing in anger. So I was throwing stuff in my bag. And then he had pushed me off to stop packing. And when I continued to fight to pack, that's when he grabbed me by the throat and pushed me back."

—Former One Minute Briefs contract worker

She said the argument escalated to what she described as physical violence against her when she began packing her suitcase to leave the hotel room and remove herself from the situation. Entwistle, she told Adweek, attempted to forcibly stop her.

"I went to go pack, to leave," she recalled. "And he said: 'Why are you being so crazy? Why are you being ridiculous? Sit your fucking ass down.' Stuff like that. And I continued to pack, and obviously, I was packing in anger. So I was throwing stuff in my bag. And then he had pushed me off to stop

packing. And when I continued to fight to pack, that's when he grabbed me by the throat and pushed me back."

She said Entwistle then "calmed down," stopped yelling at her and acted as if nothing had happened.

The day before the alleged assault, Portugal had been designated a high-risk country to visit during the pandemic, she said, and the two had to book a flight back to the U.K. The two took the same flight back to the U.K., and she provided a receipt to Adweek showing she paid for both

Adweek has reached out to the NH Collection Lisboa Liberdade to confirm that the woman and Entwistle stayed at the hotel and to ask whether any guests or staff reported hearing an altercation. The hotel confirmed receiving Adweek's questions but has not responded.

The contractor told Adweek that she did not go to police at the time. "The entire way from the hotel, through the airport, flights, etc., I did not say a word to him. After the physical assault, I shut down," she said.

Adweek's attempts to contact Entwistle

Since March 11, Adweek has been attempting to speak to Entwistle about the allegations made by One Minute Briefs' former contract worker.

On March 14, Entwistle's lawyer responded to Adweek but declined to offer any response for publication. Adweek sent a March 25 email to Entwistle's lawyer outlining specific questions for Entwistle to answer on the record, either by phone or in writing, and on March 29 his lawyer again declined to provide any response for publication.

After a March 31 request by Adweek, again asking Entwistle to go on the record for this article, his lawyer on April 8 declined to provide any comment or response for publication. On May 31, when told Adweek was preparing to publish this article, Entwistle issued a statement denying the woman's allegations without addressing any specifics of her claims.

The woman accusing Entwistle of assault spoke with Adweek multiple times and offered a range of documentation, such as emails, WhatsApp screenshots and receipts confirming details of her version of events.

'I was asking too many questions'

The former contractor said she typically worked remotely for One Minute Briefs—a crowdsourced creative incubator with an international audience—and interacted in-person with Entwistle only sporadically, typically when the two collaborated at coffee shops.

But during another in-person work experience in November 2021, she said, she left a meeting at Chapter One Books, a coffee shop in Manchester's northern quarter, after he was allegedly verbally abusive to her.

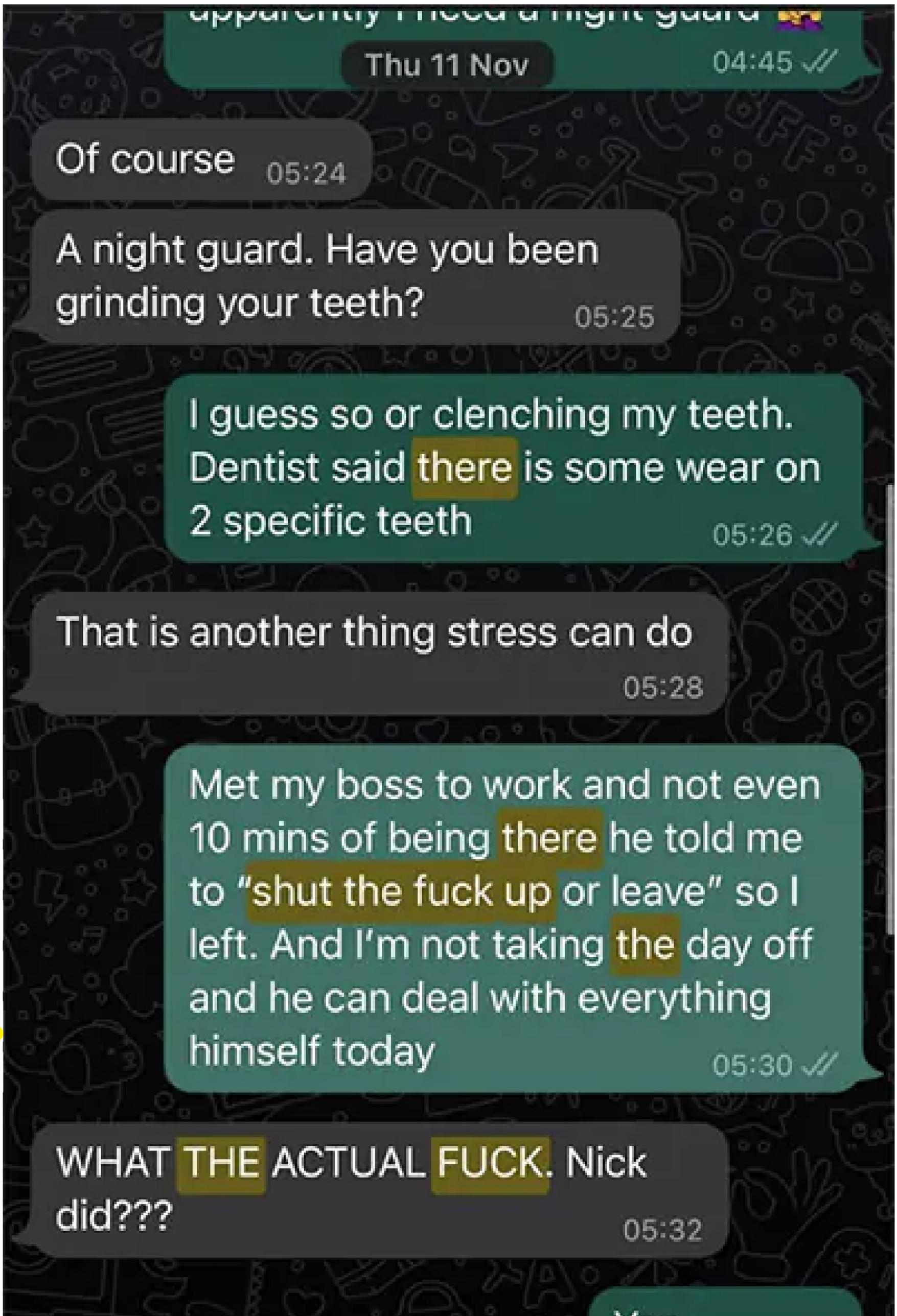
The two had met, she told Adweek, to discuss plans for OMB Live, an annual event honoring the One Minute Briefs community's creative efforts.

"We were planning it well in advance, obviously. He wanted me to do certain things, and I was like, 'OK, well just tell me what you need me to do,'" she recalled. "And then he'd be like: 'Oh, well, I'll just take care of it. Don't worry about it.' And because I was asking too many questions about what I needed to do, and he doesn't like when you ask questions, he literally got angry with me."

After asking Entwistle in the meeting for more details, "He literally said, 'Shut the fuck up or leave.' So I didn't say another word," she told Adweek. "I just packed up my stuff, and I left."

She provided a screenshot to Adweek of a Whatsapp conversation with a friend on the day of the meeting at Chapter One Books to show how she described it at the time.





A Whatsapp conversation summarizes the contractor's alleged experience at a coffee shop with Nick Entwistle.

The former contractor said she did end up attending OMB Live, which took place on Nov. 26, and received an "Employee of the Year" award from One Minute Briefs that night. She shared an image of the award with Adweek.

She said she resigned from her position at One Minute Briefs in December 2021 but that Entwistle has contacted her numerous times since. She provided screenshots to Adweek showing Entwistle asking her to meet for coffee in February or to go for a walk together in March.

An engaged community built on spec

One Minute Briefs has become a popular hub of crowdsourced creative experiments since making its Twitter debut in 2012. One Minute Briefs has 38,800 followers, who often create unofficial ads based on prompts posted by the organization.

On the organization's website, it describes its role as promoting brands and social causes "by challenging our creative community on Twitter to respond with instinctive ideas to daily advertising briefs and reward the best entries."

Entwistle, a well-known figure in the U.K. ad community, **founded One Minute Briefs** in 2010 as a university student. Two years later, he took the idea to Twitter, where the account now challenges its followers to respond to a brief with a creative concept in one minute or less.

The spec work developed via One Minute Briefs sometimes achieves viral acclaim, such as **a 2020 concept for Guinness** about staying at home to avoid spreading Covid-19 and **a 2021 outdoor concept for Kit Kat** about squeezing in a snack between Zoom calls.

But One Minute Briefs has also fielded occasional criticism for prompting and retweeting sexist or otherwise offensive work generated by its creative community.

In 2018, One Minute Briefs published a call for creatives to advertise a "pearl necklace," a phrase with a well-known sexual connotation. The prompt generated backlash among some in the creative community who felt it perpetuated sexism in advertising.

This wasn't the first incident where Entwistle had been accused of prompting sexualized content: in 2014, he issued **a brief for nipple tassels**, and in 2013 a prompt about milk led to what One Minute Briefs described as **"some naughty ones too which we like!"** Other polarizing briefs covered **bum implants** and **breast reductions**.

Copywriter Vikki Ross, who in 2012 founded Agency Quotes alongside Entwistle as a community for creatives to share their experiences at agencies, left Agency Quotes and stopped communicating with Entwistle after One Minute Briefs' "pearl necklace" prompt.



I created **#thingsyouhearinagencies** but today I walk away from **@AgencyQuotes pic.twitter.com/TWQFN1rCtG**



— Vikki Ross (@VikkiRossWrites) **June 5, 2018**



Diane Young, co-founder of marketing news outlet The Drum, **defended One Minute Briefs in an op-ed for the publication** and said she felt Entwistle had responded appropriately to the community's concerns.



"We are in agreement that we are deeply uncomfortable about the manner in which those holding the banner for females in the industry have conducted themselves over this issue," Young wrote in the 2018 piece. "Nick has been attacked and vilified in a way that seems way out of proportion, especially as he has responded and acted."



Creative Equals, an equality advocacy group for the creative industry, withdrew support from One Minute Briefs after the "pearl necklace" prompt and has not collaborated with the organization since.

"99.9% of the time the content shared is positive, potentially award-winning or fun," **Entwistle told Campaign magazine** at the time. "A very small amount do push the boundaries of subjectivity and can cause offense as we have seen."

'I can no longer take part in OMBs'

one of her submissions for an award.

In a screenshot of a private message shared with Adweek, Entwistle is seen telling her she should use the prize money to take a train to his home city of Manchester, ending his note with a fire emoji.

She declined and has since stopped participating with One Minute Briefs.

"I can no longer take part in OMBs," she told Adweek, "because I feel like he will message me, and although he does anyway, I would like to avoid that uncomfortableness."



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