

Watchlisted:

Because most of us appearing on the Professor Watchlist have probably been targeted in similar ways by right-wing organizations—in my case it was right-wing media charging that my syllabus phrase “deferring to the experiences of people of color” represented coercion of whites—I would like to address here not the cause but the effect of that targeting. In my department, two others were similarly targeted by right-wing media, and for the same reason also appear on the Watchlist. Despite the name of the Watchlist, these two women were graduate teaching assistants, not professors, and one was a close friend whom I had been mentoring for five years. Due partly to anxieties created by the experience of racial harassment, I fell into a severe depression, from which, unintentionally, I wrote a strange, ambiguous email to the student that she, probably also depressed, badly misinterpreted. She immediately ended our friendship and our professional relationship. In our classes we teach of dominant powers’ tactic of “divide and conquer.” The right-wing media that initially harassed us exercised this tactic against us, badly dividing if not conquering us. Because of racist media, I lost more than my academic freedom. I lost a friend.

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Personal statement: 199 words