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New York Post:

We represent the Physician Assistant identified in your May 15 and May 16 story concerning the Bellevue Hospital (the “Hospital”) Employee.

Your story outrageously portrays our client as a racist, who was “trying to steal a CitiBike from a young black man.” You attempted to gain clicks by focusing on skin color instead of making any attempt to ascertain the facts or comment, in violation with professional norms of journalism. This is shameful.

First, our client is six months pregnant. She worked through the pandemic, helping the city’s most challenged and diverse populations in critical condition after recovering from COVID herself. She immediately volunteered as a medical provider in the network organized by her neighbors to triage health concerns (particularly amongst the elderly), accepting 24/7 phone calls and delivering medications from their pharmacies when they felt unsafe or too unwell to go out themselves.

At the hospital she has quite literally treated thousands of New York City residents of all backgrounds/ethnicities — a population including the un-domiciled, those admitted to psychiatric care, and those admitted while incarcerated. Simply, her entire life has been focused on helping others, irrespective of their background. It was she and her colleagues who the NY Post once hailed as heroes during the pandemic, but with *one incomplete* video, unaccompanied by facts that were readily available, the NY Post hastily cast her as a racist villain.

Here are the facts: On May 12th, my client finished her roughly 12-hour shift and approached the Citibike station so she could head home. She went to an available bike, which no individuals were on or touching, mounted it and paid for it *via* the Citibike app on her phone. She then backed it up after it was released from the docking station. During this time, a group of about five individuals approached her, saying that the bike was theirs. One or more individuals in that group physically pushed her bike (with her on it) back into the docking station, causing it to re-lock.

One of the individuals then covered the QR code on the bike (which is visible in the video), preventing her from paying for it again so she could leave. In blocking the QR code, this individual’s arm was touching my client’s pregnant stomach, a condition of which she had made them aware. Throughout this time and for the remainder of the video, roughly five individuals were telling her to get off the bike and heckling her.

Enclosed is a copy of the receipt showing the bike was checked out and checked in within one minute (ID# 560-3915). This is the bike in question, which demonstrates that she did not “steal” the bike from anyone.

In short, my client arrived to a vacant bike, mounted the bike, paid for the bike and was prevented from leaving. She was then heckled and pressured to find a new bike. The fact that anyone would treat another person like this is tragic, especially a visibly pregnant woman. The NY Post's false, incomplete, and unsubstantiated reporting of this story makes this situation all the more reprehensible and violates the norms of professional conduct.

We require the Post to take all necessary action, including, but not limited to, retracting and correcting its publication of this matter, in an effort to reduce the damages to my client.

We reserve all rights.

Very truly yours,

Justin R. Marino