

Milwaukee meteorologist fired for criticizing Elon Musk's Nazi salute

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Meteorologist Sam Kuffel was fired last week by Milwaukee's CBS58 station one day after making Instagram posts critical of Elon Musk, the world's richest person and close confidant of President Donald Trump. News of the firing came via staffers at the station, who shared a memo from station manager Jesse Garcia with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*.

On January 21, Kuffel made two Instagram posts calling out Musk's Nazi salute at the presidential inauguration rally the previous day. Despite denials by Musk himself, as well as numerous excuses made on behalf of the world's richest man, Musk's gesture was unmistakable.

In response to Musk's Nazi salute, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) quickly leapt to his defense. Just two days later, however, even the ADL could not ignore Musk's antisemitism and was forced to rebuke him after he posted jokes downplaying the crimes of the Nazis on his X/Twitter platform.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has extensively documented Musk's fascist politics. Musk is a notorious promulgator of antisemitic conspiracy theories, claiming that Jews control the media and society in general.

Musk's previous feud with the ADL led to an "apology tour," during which he visited Israel, met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and toured the Auschwitz death camp in Poland. These visits restored Musk to the good graces of the ADL, explaining why the organization initially defended him over his Nazi salute.

No one from CBS58 or its parent company, Weigel Communications, would comment on why Kuffel had been fired rather than suspended, although even that would have represented a gross violation of her First Amendment rights. Kuffel made her posts on her

personal Instagram account, not on a CBS58 account.

In a statement to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Kuffel said, "First, I just want to thank everyone for the tremendous support I've received. I was just voicing my personal opinion on a private social media account that was not accessible to the general public."

Christopher Benson, an attorney and associate professor of journalism at Northwestern University, commented, "From my experience as in-house counsel ... it's not likely that we would have terminated. We would have disciplined, maybe a suspension."

Kuffel's firing is the latest in a long string of corporate genuflections before the Trump administration and its close-knit billionaires' club, which includes Musk, *Washington Post* CEO Jeff Bezos, and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

Now another large media corporation has acted swiftly and severely to remove a television personality for expressing the truth on a personal, non-public social media. This dramatically illustrates how obsequious corporate America is to Trump's openly fascist administration. They have signaled that they will act as Trump's enforcement arm against any dissent expressed by their own employees.

Nevertheless, there is broad support for Kuffel and opposition to her firing. A *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* poll showed that 90 percent of its readers who responded disagreed with the decision. The general tenor of comments on social media has expressed anger at both Musk and his Nazi salute, as well as at CBS58 for the firing.

The broad support for Kuffel is an expression of the deeply entrenched democratic sentiments of the working class in the United States. However, such sentiments must take a political form if they are to become a bulwark against fascism. The only way for

the working class to resist fascism, antisemitism and corporate censorship is to organize politically on its own independent program and join the Socialist Equality Party today.



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