

The Vaushcord Manifesto

My name is Giles Corey. I'm sure most of you know me by now as the resident shit-stirrer doomerposter. This is true, I won't deny it. There's a decent to high chance that this doc won't see the light of day because I just don't feel like finishing it, and that's okay too, but I need to get all of my grievances out in the open air. Mia and her document about misogyny on the server inspired me. Inspired isn't the right word, now that I think about it. To be completely transparent here, I noticed that her issues with the server were going pretty unnoticed by the broader community until it was put into a comprehensive list and posted onto the subreddit with a, and I say this in the most respectful and literal way possible, ragebait title. The thought hit me then; why not do the same thing?

Now, as of the time of me typing this, I am currently banned for discussing a banned topic. I do not dispute this ban, nor will I give much context, but a short version is that general chat was discussing an infamous Youtuber and their misdeeds without mentioning the elephant in the room, and I posted it without even thinking. It wouldn't be very hard at all to get an alt in the server to get some screencaps for context, but my goal here isn't to burn bridges, and even if I went back during my ban just to get those pictures, posted nothing, and left immediately after, I do not trust the moderators to see that as good faith. I don't see myself waiting for the unban just to get pictures, so this will likely be only text.

As you have probably already surmised, this will be essentially a somewhat focused stream of consciousness sort of thing. Unmedicated ADHD is a bitch and if I try too hard to organize it I will just burn out and delete the doc. Apologies, I will try to make this comprehensible enough to understand. Without further ado, as the young'ns like to say nowadays, **LET'S FUCKING GO.**

General Attitude

Now, I feel I should start this off with my biggest problem. Vaushcord is structured around being a positive community for leftists, and offering a chance for former right wingers to change for the better. This is indisputable, and is pretty much the foundation for the server. This concept is great, and I wholeheartedly back it. How the server *currently* is in practice, is another story.

Let's start with something that I have been very clear that I dislike. Naturally, with pages full of rules, people forget them sometimes. That is very natural, I think we all know this. And as such, warnings are fine too. The entire system in place, for the most part, is fine. However, I have noticed something that I can't imagine other people haven't. It seems to me from experience that once someone does something that breaks the rules, no matter how minor, the expectation of civility magically evaporates in regards to that person. Some of the time, the culprits only gently rib the offender, and that's expected. You break the rules in a very public setting, it's natural to get pushback from the people watching. A lot of the time, however, this is not the case. I have probably witnessed a dozen instances of a member breaking a pretty minor rule, and being lambasted with essentially all non-moderators outright insulting them.

When I brought this up with moderation, I was told this was essentially self-policing. Let me ask you, dear reader, to put yourself in this situation. You just broke a rule and instead of being warned and then being told why what you did was wrong, two dozen people in the chat call you a fascist or not-so-subtly imply it, or just flat out insult you. Are you going to want to change? Are you going to take the warning to heart? Or are you going to get angry? Maybe you want to defend yourself against the brigade of attackers. Nope. A mod will tell you to drop it or risk another warning, but will let the people shitting on you continue for a bit longer.

How is this conducive to positive change? How many people do you know that will engage in self-reflection after that? When has that ever worked?

The truth, as I see it, and as I've experienced it, is that if you aren't already an established member of the community, you're viewed through a lens of intense suspicion and assumptions of bad faith. You have to walk on eggshells with every single post you make to try to not start a shitstorm from people who will assume the worst of you. Who the fuck wants to live like that? Who the fuck wants to be in a community like that? It's constant stress and self-doubt, and that is far from healthy.

Moderation

Please take a moment to notice the title of this section. It's "Moderation" and not "Moderators" for a reason. I haven't been around long enough to have qualms with any moderator in specific, nor is this my version of seething about "MODS BAD". Moderators are needed in any community, and especially one this size. Hopefully I've cleared this up.

As I mentioned in the last section, moderation almost always happens in a highly populated chat, in plain view of dozens of people, and often not in a respectful way. The recipient of said moderation is shamed in front of this audience, and prohibited by the rules to defend themselves or argue their case in front of the audience that saw everything happen. You are not allowed to explain yourself. You are not allowed to respond with anything other than acceptance, or you risk a further warning and further ridicule by the community. I've mostly covered this part in the previous section, so I'll move on to my biggest gripe.

Selective rule enforcement. I have seen, on at least three occasions, users get verbal warnings from the same moderators that gave official ones for less severe offenses. "Why is that?", I wondered. Then I thought about it a bit, and it hit me. The people that got the official warnings were already under suspicion by the community of being a bad actor. No proof other than a few fuckups with the rules, which, keep in mind, those that received verbal warnings also had.

So let's add this all together. Moderators are free to enforce rules with official warnings, or just *not* enforce based on the mods' personal feelings towards the user in question. You are **not allowed** to point this out in the channels that witnessed the entire ordeal, and must keep it behind closed doors by messaging one upper moderator, with **no guarantees** that you will be taken seriously. If you *do* decide to break the rules and point this out in the chat, you will be insulted, responded to with nothing but sarcasm, and treated like someone with a victim complex.

Moderators are chosen by moderators already in place based on their feelings towards the candidate, and they choose whether or not to enforce the rules based on their feelings towards the user in question. Rehabbed users are not allowed back into the public until a moderator *feels* like they've changed. Where is the objectivism here? Where is the unbiased regulation of the community? Because it truly seems like moderators are allowed to do whatever the fuck they feel like as long as it doesn't upset the other moderators.

Closing

I've realized that without access to pictures or the ability to do further research for the next week, I can't really put much more in here without just bloating the doc like a college essay.

Yes, I am angry. But that is not the only reason I am writing this. I'm writing this because I want this shit out in the open so people will talk about it and actually consider what I'm saying without being brushed off. I hope you all actually take the time to think about what I'm saying and act accordingly, and reach out to the council with concerns.

Thank you.