



To our community:

We the former and current baristas of Farley's East stand firmly in support of the people of Palestine. We condemn the genocide being committed against the people of Gaza, and we stand against the continuous displacement and oppression of the West Bank by the Israeli government.

We stand against racism and antisemitism in all its forms.

As many of you may be aware, three Farley's East employees were fired and three more have resigned as a direct result of the unwillingness and refusal of both Farley's East owners' (Chris and Amy Hillyard) to protect their longtime staff after a right wing doxxing campaign targeted our fellow coworkers with violence and hatred. This occurred after a video depicting three of our coworkers blocking a customer from re-entering one of our restrooms has gone viral. The narrative is that they denied her entry because she is a Jewish woman. That is a lie.

What isn't shown in the video is the following, which happened on December 3 just before the customer began filming: A customer used the restroom and then approached a manager to complain about graffiti written in the bathroom that read "zionism = fascism." She asked if the manager was aware of the graffiti, and the manager responded that she was aware, and the cafe had no plans to remove it. (One of the owners, Chris Hillyard, had known about the graffiti for two months at this point.) The manager then gave her space to air her grievances. When staff asked her to step aside so they could continue passing out drinks, the customer refused, and she repeatedly yelled at and harassed staff about the graffiti. As the customer continued escalating the situation, she was asked to leave, but refused.

At this point, the customer began filming staff and other customers without their consent and claimed she wanted to use the restroom again. She was offered the use of another restroom both in the cafe and a neighboring business. When it became clear she would not leave until being allowed into the specific restroom with the graffiti, staff allowed her to enter. [The customer did not use the restroom](#), but instead recorded the graffiti on her phone and then left immediately.

To reiterate, at this point, *Chris Hillyard had been aware that the graffiti in the bathroom had been up for two months.*

The following day, December 4, a different set of Farley's staff experienced continued harassment from a different customer. She approached a manager asking if there were any plans to remove the same graffiti. The manager informed the customer that he was not aware of any plan by the owner, Chris Hillyard, to remove the graffiti. This customer later called the cafe and spoke to a different manager. She then began trying to bait the manager into an argument. When the manager informed her he would not argue with her on the phone, she began yelling and demanded she be given the owner's email, which the manager provided.



Staff made Chris Hillyard aware of both incidents that same day, December 4. That day, the manager asked Chris Hillyard to remove the graffiti to stop further harassment of staff. It was only when Farley's was spammed with one-star reviews that Chris Hillyard began gathering information about both incidents. Chris Hillyard did not take action until after the release of the video. He did not address or support any of the Farley's staff who were and continue to be subjected to aggressive harassment and doxxing. The harassment campaign has impacted the staff in the video and their families, the ownership of the cafe, and, now, any staff member visible on Farley's Facebook account.

The only action Chris and Amy Hillyard took was to protect their business and themselves. They did not center the safety and well-being of their staff. They simply adopted a business-as-usual approach despite their staff advising them to consider other options. They have since released multiple false statements on Farley's social media accounts. As a result, [Newsweek](#), [Fox News](#), [CBS News](#), [KRON 4](#), and [San Francisco Chronicle](#), among others, have centered the voices of the owners and the customer but failed to reflect the stories of the Farley's staff members who have been violently harassed and doxxed.

Without informing their staff and getting their consent, Chris and Amy Hillyard released a statement on December 7 that justifies the harassment of the staff in the video and places the blame entirely on staff members, despite the fact that Chris Hillyard knew of the graffiti for months and did not act. On that same day, both owners insisted that cafe operations continue and that only the staff in the video stay home. Then, on December 8, the Hillyards fired three staff members involved. They also claimed that one of the three staff members had resigned — another lie.

Three more of us have resigned, disgusted that our colleagues have unjustly been punished by the Hillyards when they are the ones bearing the brunt of harassment.

Chris and Amy Hillyard have since released two more statements, neither condemning the doxxing and harassment, nor ensuring that a plan will be made for the protection of their remaining staff. Instead, they have plainly and egregiously lied to the public, putting some of their current and former staff in danger. They have yet to reach out to the staff they fired or to current staff members to offer support.

We, as the current and former baristas of Farley's East, ask you to do the following:

- Please share our letter far and wide to fight back on the lies that have spread online and on local and national news.
- Boycott Farley's and spend your money at other neighborhood coffee shops in line with your values.

We want to be very clear, this is all a distraction from the genocide occurring in Gaza. We, the aforementioned baristas, the community, and the city of Oakland, are calling for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. We will not shy away from this moment as the Hillyards have chosen to do. They have made it clear where they stand and so have we.

In joined struggle,

Former and current baristas of Farley's East

Instagram: [@formerfarleyseastunited](#)

