

This letter details how Clifford Ludeña/Meyer was fired from BICAS in 2021 due to retaliation against reports of sexual harassment. I share it with hopes of helping keep community members safe. The following contains my experience working with Clifford at BICAS for two years and why I resigned due to his actions and the protection of his behavior.

To survivors of Cliff's abuse: Words will never justify or return what was taken from you. I have the utmost respect for your bravery. I hope this account can connect a few pieces for others in the wide circle of harm.

I moved to Tucson and became a BICAS collective member in early 2020. There were only a few collective members who had worked there for 5 or more years and Clifford was one of them. For my first weeks on staff, I was star-struck by Clifford. My first impressions were that he was kind, gentle, and passionate about queer community. Then, in my first month at BICAS a femme coworker pulled me aside. They warned me to 'be careful' and said that Clifford had a history of getting involved with skinny, femme-presenting people at BICAS.

After this conversation, I began to feel uncomfortable with Clifford's intense staring at me as I moved around BICAS learning to do my job. I could feel his eyes on my skin if I wore certain clothing. I noticed how he treated conventionally attractive femmes differently than other people. His voice became softer, he expressed keen, subtle interest, and his body would lean in to get closer to the other person. This happened with me and with customers who came to BICAS seeking transportation assistance. I learned that other staff members were aware of this behavior to some extent. One day, a young (either high school or undergrad) femme came into the shop who often attended the BICAS Women, Trans, Femme*+ workshop. Clifford, then in his 30s, was infatuated with the young femme, leaning in, laughing, and joking. The person was extremely flattered by his attention. It reminded me of a younger version of me. I wanted to say something about the behavior but I didn't know enough at the time.

Another time in 2020, one of Clifford's partners came into the shop while he was working. Clifford didn't leave their side the entire time they worked on their bike, he made flirtatious doodles on their list of purchases and wrote romantic notes in their customer profile in the shop computer. I now realize that he was coming off as possessive over his partner, while at the same time giving most other seemingly attractive, femme folks in the shop a comparable amount of attention.

I was aware of the friendships Clifford held with many staff members at BICAS who had been there the longest, and of the various community organizations he was involved with. He was friends with some of my friends outside of BICAS too, all of whom I had known before moving to Tucson. It seemed wrong to say anything negative about him due to his social standing. I even asked some friends outside work about the situation and they were surprised to hear about the behavior. Nearly everyone in and outside of work seemed to get along with him, so I tried to too - until around Spring 2020, when it was announced that Clifford was going to join the Human Resources (HR) committee. He would be one of a small group of staff and board members who handled employee handbook violations. Something felt wrong about this person in this role. I

didn't feel comfortable talking to Clifford about my concerns, so I shared my concerns in confidence with a board member on the HR committee. The board member said what I described was not ok. They used the term 'sexual harassment' when I had never used or considered this description. They asked me to file an incident report with HR so that appropriate action could be taken.

I filed a report in May 2020 detailing consistent unwanted flirtatious behavior towards myself while on shift and the instance with the school-age femme. I asked if current members of HR, Clifford and myself could meet as soon as possible. I wanted a chance to tell Clifford that I wasn't out to get him and just wanted to bring up these concerns so that we could work in peace together. That meeting didn't end up happening for over two months, during which I was extremely anxious going into work unsure of when he would find out.

One day in July 2020, I opened my email at work to find that Clifford had finally been notified of the reports. Nearly three years later, my stomach still hurts to recall HR's recap: They said that Clifford was very sensitive and cried upon receiving the reports. He was bewildered by my claims and shared personal trauma regarding his life and his queer POC identity. He said he no longer felt comfortable working with me because he felt as if he was being judged. And lastly, what came up most was his adamant refusal of being interested in dating me (which was not a concern outlined in the reports).

I didn't have time to react to HR's message because I received it minutes before Clifford arrived at work. I was scared and confused. I didn't know how Clifford was going to treat me after finding out, and being the newest member on staff, I didn't know if he would tell others I was crazy or out to get him. I also didn't know if I was still permitted to be working with him and was unable to reach HR to find out. When Clifford arrived to work that day, his personality toward me was so different from before that it was like interacting with a different person. He was cold, avoided looking in my direction, and interacted with every staff member except me for jokes, banter, asking to go on lunch breaks, etc. He made it impossible to approach him with questions about bicycles or workings of the shop. When I tried to ask Clifford for clarity on the report situation, he refused to speak to me without HR present.

When HR responded to my email asking if I was still allowed to work shifts with him (which I needed for income) or be at the shop at the same time as him, they advised me to 'just give him time.' In a follow-up meeting with me and HR, HR advised me 'try not to take my work home with me so much.'

HR met with me and Clifford about six weeks after he was notified of the reports. I was extremely angry and shaken at this point and just wanted to get it over with so I could continue doing my job. Clifford and HR members laughed and joked throughout the meeting. HR asked what I wanted from the situation and I said to be able to trust one another enough to work together. Clifford said he was sorry I felt the way I did but that I had to earn his trust. For the next twelve months that I worked at BICAS with him, he never took ownership or apologized for any of his actions. He joined the HR committee after this, so I never filed a report with HR again.

I felt fearful and dreaded going into work when he was there. During Zoom calls, I covered his face with a Post-it to make meetings more bearable. I was scared to be alone in the shop with him because I didn't know if he would ever confront me or do something to further punish me for what I did. I avoided community organizations and activities he was involved in even when I wanted to participate. I still have a gut reaction whenever I see his truck around town.

In Fall 2020, a new round of employees were hired. I felt guilty welcoming women trans and femme+* folks to the BICAS staff knowing it was a potentially unsafe work environment. Still, I signed up to mentor one of the new hires, and so did Clifford. His inappropriate behavior toward femmes continued with one of the new hires in particular. His treatment toward female-presenting customers also continued.

In Summer 2021, Clifford's flirtatious behavior was called out in an all-collective meeting. He acted nonchalant and concerned and said he hadn't received any feedback like this in the past year (my reports were in the past year). He said he didn't want to treat people robotically and that the people he appeared to be flirting with were just his friends. No further action was taken by the collective that I know of.

By July 2021, I felt at a breaking point with the situation. I really wanted to stay at BICAS to finish a project I was working on, but a high-stress situation with a sick family member felt compounded by my workplace struggles with Clifford. My family, friends, and therapist advised me it wasn't worth it to stay. I resigned and wrote a report outlining the ways Clifford had retaliated against my reports since May 2020. I shared my report with a few staff members before sharing it with the whole collective.

Alongside this report, a group of staff members also submitted reports outlining ways Clifford had displayed a pattern of flirtatious behavior with customers. Some of them documented seeing Clifford's behavior toward me change before and after the reports I filed. Clifford was let go from BICAS due to retaliation for reports of sexual harassment the same week that I left. Roughly half the staff, including some of the most senior staff members, left throughout the next year. The board members who handled my initial report also left. I have not heard that HR at BICAS has significantly changed since this took place. I did hear that Clifford's housemates were unaware that he was fired, and that he took a public-facing job at the nearby Raging Sage. Clifford and I never interacted after leaving BICAS. In the words of a former coworker, Clifford's "behavior undermined the purpose of BICAS." That purpose was to be "a safe space for femmes to [repair their bicycles] without the stress of misogyny and [the] unwanted sexualization or romanticization of their bodies or self while being mechanics." I hope no one has to go through the emotional manipulation that myself and others did during our time working at BICAS.