



To Whom It May Concern

I, the undersigned, Ioana-Alina Cristea, Associate professor at the Department of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy, Babeș-Bolyai University, Romania, offer this description of my interactions with James Coyne in support of Dr. Eiko Fried and the unfair and delusional accusations that are being leveraged against him by James Coyne. In what follows, I will present a brief history of my acquittance and interactions with James Coyne, to provide some context, and subsequently describe how he attempted to denigrate and bully me as well.

I met James Coyne at a European Health Psychology Society Conference in 2009 in Pisa where he gave a lecture. I was a Ph.D. student at the time, also working at the institution organizing the conference in Pisa. As I had a growing interest in research synthesis, I subsequently started collaborating with James Coyne. The following year, the EHPS Conference was in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, where he also visited my department. Our collaboration consisted of a few projects mainly materialized in conference presentations and manuscript submissions that did not get published. Our collaboration gradually dwindled around 2013-2014, after I finished my Ph.D., and started to collaborate more with other people active in the same field as James Coyne and get more involved in other projects. My last collaborations with James Coyne were: (1) my participation, at his invitation but with my own funding, at a symposium organized by him at the EHPS conference in Bordeaux in 2013 and (2) (1) my invitation addressed to him to publish an article in a journal I had just started editing (*Journal of Evidence-Based Psychotherapy*), an invitation which resulted into an article published (Coyne, J. C., & Kok, R. N. (2014). SALVAGING PSYCHOTHERAPY RESEARCH: A MANIFESTO. *Journal of Evidence-Based Psychotherapies*, 14(2), 105-124).

I mention I was also connected with James Coyne on the social media, at the time mostly facebook, where I sometimes commented on his posts, as he also did on mine. We were occasionally in contact by e-mail and I considered him a person I could turn to for things like recommendations and advice, albeit sporadically. In the spring of 2015 I asked if it was possible to include him in the list of professors that could, if asked, provide recommendations for my application as Associate Professor in Romania. This process does not imply actually writing a recommendation. He accepted to be named and from what I am aware he was not further contacted. In October 2015, I once again contacted him for a recommendation for an application I was preparing for a Fulbright Visiting Scholar grant. This information provides important context for the events that followed, so I will provide slightly more detail. I am also providing copies of the e-mails demonstrating this. I would not have asked James Coyne, as at the time we were not in close contact, but he had been helpful in the past and I believed at the time having also an US academic providing a recommendation would have helped my application. Moreover, between 2010 and 2014 I had worked quite intensively on various projects with James Coyne (none, unfortunately, materialized in actual peer-reviewed articles) and I believed he would be able to provide an useful assessment. I contacted James Coyne on October the



13th 2015 with a one-page sketch of my Fulbright research proposal (the entire application had to be 5 pages). Getting no reply, I contacted James Coyne again on October 19th. He eventually responded on October 22nd and declined the invitation. I thanked him for letting me know and told him there was no problem. By then I had already contacted another academic for my letter of recommendation.

From this point on, Jim's interactions with me have taken a consistently negative and demeaning turn, which first caused me shock, but was then followed by anger and resolve not to be intimidated by such bullying behavior. At the beginning of 2016 I commented on one of his facebook posts about the PACE trial. As I recall, the point I was making was that activists might not be the most objective judges of evidence. An aggressive response from James followed, including wild accusations such as I was sold to the "establishment" and that this was proven by the fact I had not posted enough on my own private facebook profile about the American Psychological Association torture scandal. When I defended myself from these ludicrous accusations, he deleted my comment and blocked me on facebook. Subsequently, he proceeded to describing me on his page as basically "revengeful" and lashing out at him because he would not give me a recommendation. He would continue this pattern of humiliating and demeaning me every time I would disagree with him. He also blocked me on Twitter. I resolved not to be in contact with him and to avoid any interaction as much as possible.

However, as I was building my own social media profile mostly around the same topics where James Coyne was active and as I was still naïve enough to believe that his past behavior toward me had been a fluke, I asked him to unblock me on Twitter. He did not reply, but did unblock me. But even as I did my best for a while not to engage with him directly and certainly not in a dissenting way, he continued the pattern of insults and attempted intimidation whenever he would disagree with something I said or wrote. I blogged for the platform the Mental Elf, where he made, both at the blog and on Twitter, derogatory comments about my work (<https://www.nationalelfservice.net/treatment/cbt/behavioural-activation-not-inferior-to-cbt-for-depression-the-cobra-rct/>). Enclosed some random examples (all direct quotes) of how James Coyne would address or respond to me on Twitter:

- "Please read up on clinical trials for depression before embarrassing yourself with further tweets" (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/769439839192317952)
- "Another inside job" (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/728564812968505344)

Sometimes, as seen by the printscreen involving all our private messages on Twitter, he would take to contacting me directly, in private, in an evident attempt to intimidate. In August 2017 after one of the rare events when I publicly contradicted what I thought were incredibly unfair accusations about David Healy, he called me a "troll".



The apex of James Coyne's derogatory and intimidating behavior towards me was reached in May 2018 when following a comment I had made on Twitter contradicting something he had said (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/995732175189434375), he took to messaging me directly (see printscreens) on Twitter, basically attempting to blackmail me with an imagined and unsubstantiated accusation of plagiarism. His exact message was *"I think you should back off or be prepared for a public discussion of your plagiarism of me"*. I had absolutely no idea what he was referring to and, as mentioned, am far from getting intimidated by such bullying techniques, so I laughed off his threat and assured him I would make it public, which I promptly did (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/995762692957843458). Moreover, James Coyne also threatened me in another private message that aside from making his ludicrous accusations public, he *"I will give a heads up to Pim whom you involved and then let John Ioannidis know."* (Pim refers to prof. Pim Cuijpers). Both prof. Cuijpers and prof. Ioannidis are close collaborators and mentors, and James Coyne was well-aware of this, having introduced me to prof. Cuijpers in 2013 and also having been informed that prof. Ioannidis was my Fulbright mentor (I had informed him about this both personally when asking for a recommendation, and it was also on my public Twitter profile).

I retain this to be a low-level, cowardly and really malicious technique to put pressure to me so that I presume I would feel frightened about his attempt to undermine my professional collaborations or to maybe feeling compelled to avoid the humiliation of contacting senior researchers to try to explain. This behavior cannot be labeled in any other way than blackmail and intimidation. Moreover, at the time James Coyne had not even revealed the source of the so-called plagiarism. I contacted prof. Cuijpers and prof. Ioannidis that very evening, informed them of the situation, and as expected, received positive and supportive replies. The following day, James Coyne continued his twitter crusade against me, leveraging ludicrous and delusional accusations about how an article where I was not even the senior author had taken without giving credit ideas from a powerpoint presentation he had made at a conference (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/995932646588010496). All these ideas were very general things, already well-known in the field as was pointed to him both by myself and several others (https://twitter.com/Research_Tim/status/995933984487084032). I stood my ground, posted the full-text of the paper in question so that anyone could judge whether or not the accusations had any standing (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/995932646588010496), and called him out for intimidation and bullying, particularly noting the contradiction that if he really did think the paper was plagiarized why did he accuse the secondary author instead of the primary (first and corresponding) and senior one- prof. Pim Cuijpers (https://twitter.com/loanaA_Cristea/status/995935788868210689). I suggested and stand by this suggestion to this day that this behavior was part of a calculated attempt to bully and intimidate those he retains as "weak", while at the same time trying not to antagonize those he retains as powerful. I believe this is exactly what is happening in his lawsuit against Dr. Eiko Fried. I am proud to say that I had very supportive responses from the research community, junior and senior alike,



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both in private and in public. Dr. Eiko Fried was one of the people that offered support, and described his similar experiences with James Coyne.

In conclusion, based on my own interactions with James Coyne, I believe he consciously and calculatingly trades in bullying, intimidation, harassment and attempts to denigrate and humiliate, and that he increases the doses for those he retains as more vulnerable and less resourceful. The other name by which to call this is cowardice and abuse of power and all of these aspects make James Coyne toxic for our research community. I am dismayed Dr. Eiko Fried is a victim of this and offer him my full support.

I remain at your disposition should you need further information.

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