



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on July 24, 2018

Texas Waiter Admits Inventing Racist Note Story

A Texas waiter whose allegations of racist treatment by a customer became big news has confessed to fabricating the entire incident.

“I did lie to you,” Khalil Cavil, 20, told the [Odessa American](#) Monday.

Cavil was employed as a waiter at the Odessa Saltgrass Steak House on July 14 when, he claimed, a customer who ran up a \$109 bill refused to give him a tip. Instead, the customer circled his name on the receipt and wrote “We don’t tip terrorist” at the top. Cavil is half black and half white and was, he said, named for a military buddy of his father’s who was killed in an accident.



According to the [Washington Post](#), Cavil said the incident “left him speechless and ‘sick to my stomach.’” The next day he posted an image of the note on Facebook, where it has since been shared 19,000 times and garnered nearly 8,000 comments, most of which were positive.”

“I share this because I want people to understand that this racism, and this hatred still exists,” Cavil wrote. “Although, this is nothing new, it is still something that will test your faith.”

Because Cavil’s accusations fit the mainstream media’s narrative of racism in America, they received widespread media coverage. Besides the *Post*, other outlets credulously reporting the initial story included [Newsweek](#), [HuffPost](#), [McClatchy](#), and even [Fox News](#).

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The coverage prompted Saltgrass Steak House COO Terry Turney to issue a statement: “We stand by and support our employee. Racism of any form is unacceptable and we have banned this customer from returning to our establishment.”

Cavil’s plight even induced some people to send him money — about \$1,000, Cavil told the *American*. Expressing his gratitude in a follow-up post, Cavil, a professing Christian who wants to pursue a theology degree at Dallas Baptist University, said, “I want to make it very clear that this was never about the tip nor the money. It was about shedding a light on racism and sharing the love of Jesus. It was about igniting conversations because I believe real change happens when we start talking about the issue and acknowledging it’s there.”

Within a week, however, the jig was up. The restaurant apparently had delved more deeply into Cavil’s tale and had come to the conclusion that it was a fraud. On Monday, Turney issued another statement: “After further investigation, we have learned that our employee fabricated the entire story. The customer has been contacted and invited back to our restaurant to dine on us. Racism of any form is intolerable, and we will always act swiftly should it occur in any of our establishments. Falsely accusing someone of racism is equaling [sic] disturbing.”



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Saltgrass officials aren't saying how they determined that Cavil's story was false, but they have confirmed that he is no longer in their employ.

Cavil told the *American* he confessed to the lie on Sunday, saying it was "the first step into making it right."

"I did write [the note]" Cavil said. "I don't have an explanation. I made a mistake. There is no excuse for what I did."

Cavil said all donations are being returned and apologized for his actions. "I'm sorry," he said. "I deeply made a huge, big mistake. And I'm in the process of getting the help that I need."

Cavil's story is just the latest in a long line of phony accusations of racism in recent years, many of them garnering attention far beyond that which they deserved and, in some cases, harming innocent people in the process.

Such hoaxes also have the unfortunate effect of numbing people to genuine injustices, as former waiter Dekwann Wynn explained in an interview with Odessa's [KOSA](#). "It's like the boy who cried wolf," Wynn said. "When stuff like this actually happens out here, it's hard for people to take it seriously when you've got things out here like this."



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