

## ▲ Accepted and ghosted: interviewing for a leadership position at Stripe

1501 points by danrocks 17 hours ago | hide | past | favorite | 570 comments

Recently I interviewed with Stripe for an engineering MoM (Manager of Managers) for one of their teams. I interview regularly, so I am used to many types of processes, feedback mechanisms, and so on. I won't go into details about the questions because there's nothing special about them, but I wanted to share some details of my experience for people thinking of interviewing there.

- 1) About 35-40% of the interviewers started their questioning by saying "I will only need 20 minutes for this", while emphasizing it is an important leadership position that they are hiring for. So 20 minutes is all needed to identify "important, critical leaders"? What a strange thing to say - also a GREAT way to make candidates feel important and wanted!
- 2) There is significant shuffling of interviewers and schedules. One almost has to be on-call to be able to react quickly.
- 3) For an engineering manager position, I only interviewed with only technical person. To me it hints that Engineering MoM is not a very technical position.
- 4) Of all the people I spoke to, the hiring manager was the one I spoke the least with. The phone screen was one of the "I only need 20 minutes for this" calls. The other one was quite amusing, and is described below.
- 5) After the loop was done, the recruiter called me to congratulate me on passing, and started discussing details of the offer, including sending me a document described the equity program. Recruiter mentioned that the hiring manager would be calling me to discuss the position next.
- 6) SURPRISE INTERVIEW! I get a call from the hiring manager, he congratulates me on passing the loop, then as I prepare to ask questions about the role, he again says "I need to ask you two questions and need 20 minutes for this". Then proceeds to ask two random questions about platforms and process enforcement, then hangs up the call after I answer. Tells me he'd be calling in a week to discuss the position.
- 7) I get asked for references.
- 8) After passing the loop, have the recruiter discuss some details of the offer, have the hiring manager tell me they'd be calling me after a week, I get ghosted for about 3.5 weeks. References are contacted and feedback is confirmed positive.
- 9) I ping the recruiter to see when the offer is coming - it's not coming. They chose another candidate. I am fine with it, even after being offered verbally, but the ghosting part after wasting so much of my time seems almost intentional.
- 10) I call up a senior leader in the office I applied to, an acquaintance of mine. His answer: "don't come. It's a mess and a revolving door of people". I was shocked with the response.
- 11) I get called by the recruiter saying that another director saw my feedback and is very interested in talking to me and do an interview loop.

Guess I'm not joining, then.

I am ok with passing loops, being rejected, I've seen it all. But being ghosted after acceptance is a first. What a bizarre place this is.

add comment

temp7536 15 hours ago | next [-]

For those who have worked around and at Stripe for the past decade, this is not a surprise. Stripe, and especially the founders, have a quite a poor reputation for screwing over people in and around their orbit.

Almost every fintech startup has the story of Patrick reaching out about an acquisition, mining them for information playing along and then ghosting - same thing for candidates. Their leadership team, specifically Patrick and Will Gaybrick are extremely smart but have screwed over a ton of people - be very careful about trusting.

You don't hear anything about this online, they're incredibly effective at squashing hit pieces and have a huge amount of reporters and power brokers under their control. On HN and silicon valley Stripe and Patrick are a PR machine. Patrick has almost direct control over YC and HN, you'll notice that every single Stripe post automatically has pc as the first comment, regardless of anything else. Everything negative gets buried.

With Patrick now living in Woodside, Will on permanent vacation in Malibu and John permanently in Ireland the company is definitely a bit in chaos mode internally. Their entire people team has turned over and they're having major retention issues - so I'm not super surprised that stuff like this is starting to leak out.

I run a \$XB fintech, and am afraid to use my name given the backlash.

[reply](#)

▲ barmstrong 13 hours ago | parent | next [-]

I'm also a founder of an \$xB fintech (Coinbase!) and I have to say, this does not ring true to me at all.

I've known Patrick since 2013 or so, and I have found him to be nothing but the highest integrity. Same for John. We are semi-competitors (not a ton of overlap) so you might find it strange for me to stick up for him like this, but I just think this description is wildly inaccurate. As one small example, Patrick has proactively told me when wanting to build competitive products, even when he didn't have to (very positive sum thinking).

He has direct control over reporters and YC? I'm sorry but this sounds like conspiracy theory.

People are living all over due to covid - so what. Remote is the future of work.

There are plenty of more reasonable Occam's razor explanations for some of what is being reported in this thread (and from the OP). You always have to assume ignorance over malice first. For example:

- companies often look at startups they may want to acquire, and decide to pass for various reasons (saying no more than yes is a good process), they then launch their own products (this is why they were looking at acquisitions in the first place), pretty normal

- any time you have thousand of interviews going on, you are bound to get some bad candidate experiences, I know for instance these happen in Coinbase periodically, and we try to minimize it for sure, but you will not get it to zero (especially when growing quickly)

- most rational explanation for OPs issue is that references were checked and came back luke warm/negative, so more were done which delayed it etc (they may not tell you this was the reason to protect sources btw), this is one of many potential reasons, i'm guessing, but benign explanations are more likely

- also, "discussing details of an offer" is not the same as receiving an offer

Anyway - if people had negative experiences, then feedback is great. I just hate to see HN jumping into tear downs and wild conjecture like this. Patrick and John are great founders we can all learn from, and yes human like all of us (not perfect). Let's all help each other improve here, and assume positive intent.

[reply](#)

▲ kortilla 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

This is the first time I've seen a post with anything negative about Patrick and having a Coinbase founder come out of the woodwork to make a post like this defending all of this with nothing more than conjecture sends a completely different message than you think.

[reply](#)

▲ hasmolo 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

this is such a key thing people in immense power forget, once you're on the inside things start looking really different and you can't see it

[reply](#)

▲ howdydoo 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I bet Patrick will never have to deal with his Coinbase support tickets going unanswered for months. It was nice of Brian to take time out of his day to come here and defend his buddy, but I wish he'd invest some of that \$xB into building a support team for his paying customers.

[reply](#)

▲ danlugo92 2 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

#BitcoinFixesThis

Bitcoin will never lock your funds, suspend your account, and since it works perfectly, you don't need support at all.

[reply](#)

▲ schleck8 55 minutes ago | root | parent | next [-]

How will financial crime be prevented?

Seriously. I am a fan of some crypto coins because in contrast to bitcoin there is actually future-proof concepts, but this "you will never face any consequences" advertising is delusional and would only work in a perfect alternative reality where everyone acts in the interest of society.

Also <https://xrpl.org/carbon-calculator.html>

[reply](#)

▲ jsc1986 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Did Patrick message you to ask you to post this?

The point is not that they have direct control over YC or HN, it's that they have massive indirect control over the organization and have done a wizard's job of making themselves untouchable in the media.

Some context: I'm a former (early) YC founder, and during my batch the YC team recommended that we spend time with the HN team. The HN team gave us edits on our posts, recommended the best times of day to submit, emailed us when stories about our companies hit the front page, and explained how the ranking algorithms worked (and thus we learned how to game them). And we are not the most valuable YC company ever -- so it's possible more was done for Stripe.

It's not direct influence, but rather indirect impact. So again I ask -- Did Patrick request that you write this post?

[reply](#)

▲ dang 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

That sounds weird to me. There was no "HN team" before I started working on HN in October 2012 - just pg, and no one would have referred to him as "the HN team".

The HN team originates in April 2014, when I became public as a mod. (That's not early in YC btw.) In that case you're talking about me (and possibly Scott), and while I guess it's dangerous to make strong claims about some meeting I don't remember, there's no way we would have "explained how the ranking algorithms worked" in such a way that you could game HN. That's precisely what we would not have done. I've worked way too hard on that shit to blab about it and see all that sand run through my fingers.

I also doubt that we'd have told you "the best times of day to submit"—people ask us that all the time and the stock answer is we have no idea, there are all sorts of dodgy analyses out there, and you can take your pick.

As for helping you by editing text, or emailing people when their stuff shows up on HN's front page, yes—I do that frequently for YC founders, non-YC founders, and non-founders.

[reply](#)

▲ ellottinvent 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I can confirm that dang is a massive help to non-YC founders posting on HN.

He's helped me a couple of times to make my posts more appealing to readers, providing great insight into what HN readers are looking for.

[reply](#)

▲ lukeqsee 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Same here.

I launched a company that has grown into a mild success *because* of dang giving it another chance and it making the front page.

[reply](#)

▲ DonHopkins 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Me too -- dang has given me valuable feedback about what kinds of things to post, and how to focus and frame posts so people will find them useful and interesting, how to save and respect people's time, and how not to overwhelm or tire people out so much. Much of that advice applies to writing and life in general, not just posting to HN! And he's even done kind favors like correcting an embarrassing typo I made in quote of a transcript that accidentally inverted the meaning of what the person was trying to say, when I only noticed it after the paint dried.

[reply](#)

▲ staccatomeasure 6 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

+1000 same here

dang rules

[reply](#)

▲ jsc1986 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Perhaps it was just our batch, but there was a long discussion about how the algo worked amongst founders. Admittedly, you + Scott were not there. Some partners were and the discussion was seeded by them, but I don't remember how much they contributed vs. others in the group.

Edit: Apologies if this came off as accusatory. Was trying to make the point that they don't have control of the media, but instead are just flawless in their use of it.

[reply](#)

▲ dang 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

In that case it was the blind leading the blind. The advice that founders give each other about how to game HN routinely backfires. Unfortunately, people are so conditioned to conflate "feels like it should work" with "actually works", that no matter how much we repeat the contrary it seems to have little effect.

Thanks for the reply - you had me wondering for a minute what the hell I wasn't remembering.

[reply](#)

▲ IgorPartola 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

This is interesting. I have not done a launch or a Show HN post in some time but back in the day HN was pretty easy to game: three rapid upvotes from unrelated accounts and IPs got you to the bottom of the front page (I did not use sock puppets ever, instead just asking geographically diverse friends to upvote the post immediately after posting it). If the content was mildly interesting you got to see it spend some time at the top. Posting when the New page had a longer delta T between the top and bottom post was also helpful. I definitely got a lot of front page time for what I now consider fairly mediocre content.

[reply](#)

▲ shkkmo 2 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Voting rings aren't allowed any more than sock puppets are.

[reply](#)

▲ kingcharles 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> Unfortunately, people are so conditioned to conflate "feels like it should work" with "actually works", that no matter how much we repeat the contrary it seems to have little effect.

Thank you for this. This sentiment applies to so much online, especially in the field of online content, social media posting and conversion rates.

What feels like it should work is not the same as what actually works.

This site was posted on here at some point and it made me mad because everything the guy recommends *sounds* awesome, but where is any proof that it actually improves sales? <https://examples.roastmylandingpage.com/>

Humans are complex beasts and sometimes the exact opposite of the obvious is the right solution: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-11573666>

[reply](#)

▲ metagame 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

That's not really the "HN team," though. What you're describing that the partners did is scummy, but makes sense when you realize that partners and dang have effectively an adversarial relationship when it comes to the quality of HN. People invested in you have strong reason to try and ensure your popularity here; they very well could have just tried throwing tips at you to get you to manipulate the site better.

Most people can't stare at the News source for an hour straight without getting a headache, let alone a rich investor type. They wouldn't find much of value in what's been publicly released of it, anyway (the released source is ancient and includes little as far as quality control goes).

If what you're saying is based in truth, you were probably just getting tips from someone with a strong financial incentive to have brute forced their way into understanding the site

the manual way (throwing posts at it) rather than someone who had any genuine inside knowledge.

[reply](#)

▲ [eganist](#) 12 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [prev](#) | [next](#) [-]

> As for helping you by editing text, or emailing people when their stuff shows up on HN's front page, I do that frequently for YC founders, non-YC founders, and non-founders.

Fact: dang's helped me a few times with this when I've goofed with my own comments, and as best as I can tell, I'm not a founder of any kind.

[reply](#)

▲ [hef19898](#) 10 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

dang offered me to do the same thing for my, now closed, start-up.

[reply](#)

▲ [LegitShady](#) 11 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [prev](#) | [next](#) [-]

that only makes it more likely they're helping more important people more frequently and to a greater degree.

[reply](#)

▲ [pvg](#) 10 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

By that logic, there's really nothing generous dang can do that isn't further proof of his perfidy.

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▲ [LegitShady](#) 10 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

Indeed once you understand that the moderators are helping people with brand management and suggestions at the very least, and the extent to which this occurs is hidden, they lose the ability to claim neutrality and open themselves up to lots of questions about what else they're doing

That's a result of actions taken not some kind of theoretical argument.

[reply](#)

▲ [afarrell](#) 9 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

> open themselves up to lots of questions about what else they are doing

Is there a name for this pattern?

1. Observe that a human is taking some action to more effectively do their jobs... but in a way that has some risk of being unevenly applied or also self-beneficial.

2. Conclude that this action is itself malfeasance.

3. Conclude that this person merits generalized distrust.

I see this all the time in comments on (for example) youtube. I struggle to see how social cohesion could survive in a world where more people do this: If you lose trust by doing your job well, then its harder to motivate yourself to maintain others' trust that you'll do your job.

[reply](#)

▲ [cutemonster](#) 7 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

> Is there a name for this pattern?

What about "assume bad intentions"?

[reply](#)

▲ [9wzYQbTYsAIc](#) 4 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [prev](#) | [next](#) [-]

> Is there a name for this pattern?

See "Fundamental Attribution Error"

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental\\_attribution\\_error](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_attribution_error)

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▲ [LegitShady](#) 1 hour ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [prev](#) | [next](#) [-]

It depends what you think their job is I guess. I never imagined that forum moderation would include helping brand management for forum users - in fact I'd say those two behaviours are in direct conflict with each other.

If your job is forum moderation and you do that well great. But if the same people use those same accesses to give some forum users help over other forum users without any transparency then there is no illusion of neutral moderation and this whole forum just may be undisclosed pr/ brand management whole people are discussing companies/jobs/tech in a way that might bias others.

I haven't read anything on the site providing brand management to some users. Was that disclosed somewhere? How could you trust any post talking about a new company or having to do with companies in general if some are getting assistance to boost their reception and others aren't?

[reply](#)

▲ pvg 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires! When Reverend Hale comes, you will proceed to look for signs of witchcraft here.

[reply](#)

▲ rlonn 8 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

You mean he ought to spend his limited time picking random comments from unimportant people that noone wants to read and help edit those comments, so that the world becomes more fair and just?

Sounds like a recipe for a successful forum.

[reply](#)

▲ grugq 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

FWIW dang was extremely helpful when I had an issue. He worked with me to resolve it, rather than take arbitrary executive action. I don't credit any accusation of dang playing favourites to YC founders. Basically, there is no level of assistance higher than what I received, therefore there is no way someone is getting preferential treatment. There's simply no more that could've been done.

Note: I wasn't completely happy with the outcome at the time, but I respected the decision. I hindsight I agree with it too.

[reply](#)

▲ ourdramadotnet 1 hour ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Are you planning to sell your Stripe equity at IPO next year, or wait a week for the IPO pop? I think I might actually wait a couple months

[reply](#)

▲ austenallred 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'm also a YC founder of a (smaller, but top ~100 in terms of valuation) YC company. I don't know what your experience was like with Stripe, but the notion that Patrick has some unduly amount of power to exercise over HN and YC immediately flags to me as untrue. I've been on the receiving end of a *lot* of HN criticism, and I can assure you the HN mods and all of YC go above and beyond to *not* tip the scale in YC founders' favor.

Edits on your posts, recommending the best times of day to submit, explaining how HN algorithms work broadly, are accessible to everyone; these are discussed frequently on HN, and were all accessible to me even before I was a YC founder. I'm also certain the HN team wouldn't need to email Patrick about something like this being on the front page; when my company (~150 employees) is on the front page I get a bunch of messages about it from all sorts of different angles; certainly many of the thousands of Stripe employees use HN and would be capable of sending a Slack or text.

To me it seems the notion that Patrick has "indirect control" over parts of HN is a longer way of saying he has respect. I think Patrick *may* be the most universally respected founder in Silicon Valley, and perhaps doubly so amongst engineers. I am not surprised at all that people upvoted his comments, as he's both the person speaking from authority, and they're usually well reasoned - I use them as a model for how to respond well (something I have not always done).

I'm not saying you're being untrue about your experience (and I don't think OP was being untrue about theirs), but the notion that Patrick as at the helm of an evil empire stealing from companies and

manipulating folks to keep it quiet just feels farcically different from reality across the dozens of Stripe and YC/HN touch points I have.

[reply](#)

▲ latch 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> I can assure you the HN mods and all of YC go above and beyond to not tip the scale in YC founders' favor.

Consider [1] which was flagged dead. It was ~10 years ago, so I could be wrong, but I believe there was a follow-up meta "Ask HN" where someone asked why it was flagged (I can't find it), and I \_\_believe\_\_ PG said something along the lines that he didn't find the original constructive, hence flagging it dead. Top comment on the non-constructive OP was from spolsky with some insightful information on job postings...

Definitely seemed like going above and beyond to tip the scale in YC founder's favor.

Edit: found the followup/meta [2] (I was wrong, no official explanation was given, sorry about that).

[1] <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=2703771>

[2] <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=2707385>

[reply](#)

▲ dan-robertson 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I think hn moderation has probably changed in the last 10 years. For one thing, the set of moderators has entirely changed since then.

[reply](#)

▲ rossmohax 8 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> I can assure you the HN mods and all of YC go above and beyond to not tip the scale in YC founders' favor.

This [0] story criticising Gitlab resurfaced on a day of Gitlab IPO and quickly disappeared from the frontpage within an hour or so.

[0] <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=28857073>

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm assuming this occurred because HN's "flame detector" triggered (Think it has something to do with upvotes vs comments).

[reply](#)

▲ boringg 3 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I think you might be getting conspiratorial about this. Here's my take on reading the comment thread. I am an outsider peering in - no connection to the companies etc.

1. Your single experience doesn't represent a pattern of behavior - and dang comment's certainly corrected some of your original inaccuracies in your comments. If you can attribute many cases of this happening then maybe it represents a pattern of behavior.

2. Patrick might have different relationships depending where you are on the power curve of importance to them (competitor, investor, partner, etc) - which could explain the discrepancy between your experience + barmstrong. There are also a host of other possibilities.

3. In terms of barmstrong's positive comments does he have an investment in square either personally or through his company, any partnership with the organization, or is personally friends with Patrick. Any of those would bias his comments in favor. He might have a great relationship with Patrick.

At the end of the day - I'm not sure where this goes. It comes across like a strong personal attack from a bad situation that is getting a lot of response on HN.

[reply](#)

▲ barmstrong 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

No he did not. We didn't even discuss it.

[reply](#)

▲ jongorer 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I've personally conducted business with Patrick, and integrity isn't a term I'd associate with him. Most polite term I can think of would be "shrewd".

[reply](#)

▲ rvnx 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I don't think integrity fits into any of the metrics that you have to report to YC.

[reply](#)

▲ ignoramous 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

At least they ask founders to be not *mean* [0] and specifically be *nice* [1] but do ask them to be *relentless* [2] and *formidable* [3], which may come off as shrewd?

[0] <http://paulgraham.com/mean.html>

[1] <http://paulgraham.com/safe.html>

[2] <http://paulgraham.com/relres.html>

[3] <http://paulgraham.com/earnest.html>

[reply](#)

▲ guiriduro 8 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Then its a pity, and an opportunity to improve or move aside for an organisation that does (and stronger ethics reputation for graduates thereof.)

[reply](#)

▲ lostlogin 8 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Ouch.

[reply](#)

▲ eganist 13 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Props for attaching your name to your comment, something I wish the throwaway OP also did, though in the spirit of believing the victim, I can understand why they didn't.

That said, with threads like this, there's also value in letting people come forward with their experiences (positive or otherwise) to see if there's any sort of pattern; any such patterns can then inform future interactions with the people or companies involved.

My own personal experience over the last year as a manager of managers that may be relevant to both pc and barmstrong: seeing a surprising number of security resumes on the market from current Stripe talent suggests there may be a bit of impending brain drain (for reasons I can't put a finger on as I'm not inside). I've seen less of this with Coinbase talent.

[reply](#)

▲ leephillips 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

"in the spirit of believing the victim"

The only kind of sense this could make is as a tautology. If the commenter is a "victim" then you've already decided to believe him or her. But what evidence do you have to support this belief?

[reply](#)

▲ eganist 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

worth noting that the parent comment was flagged to death 4 minutes after posting and vouched what, a half hour later?

Anyway, I sent this to the comment author via email, but the best I can do in public is link to <https://www.blackburncenter.org/post/on-believing-victims>

Context: I run r/Relationship Advice.

[reply](#)

▲ rightbyte 8 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Oh. I thought "hey, why are you not greyed out then?" but that would explain it.

[reply](#)

▲ Gene\_Parmesan 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I don't see the tautology. The point is, when someone claims they are a "victim" (I would agree the term is only a loose fit here), we believe them. The whole point of the statement is to not demand evidence.

Obviously we're not talking about the legal system here.

I do think this whole idea has minimal relevance to the thread as I really don't think the PC qualifies as a victim. Just wanted to clarify the idea of "believe the victim" as it's extremely important in potential cases of sexual assault (which, again, not relevant here).

[reply](#)



▲ throwbigdata 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

And abused as well

[reply](#)

▲ luckydata 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

there ABSOLUTELY is a pattern of Stripe doing this stuff.

[reply](#)

▲ jbluepolarbear 2 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

This is biased because they are your acquaintance. Because they act a certain way in your circle doesn't mean they aren't being a bad actor in others.

Your post makes it clear you're very out of touch with the reality of interviewing. I've had this same stuff pulled on me at Google, Amazon, and multiple other companies. Being offered a position and then getting surprise interview and then ghosted. It's draining and demoralizing, and a major waste of my time.

[reply](#)

▲ momento 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I know so many people who have been screwed over by Coinbase, it's complete lack of customer support, and dark business practices (it's borderline criminal at this point). The fact that you're associated directly with Coinbase does not benefit your reputation nor does it add any weight to what you're saying - it in fact does the opposite.

[reply](#)

▲ hemloc\_io 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Not to fuel the fire here, but from the startups perspective I'm not sure there's much functional difference between a company attempting to acquire a startup and then deciding to go it alone, and using the acquisition process for research on their future products other than intent.

No matter what if you do the DD process on an acquisition you'll certainly apply those learnings to your future efforts.

There's even a PG blogpost about it. <http://www.paulgraham.com/corpdev.html>

Side Note: I'm always amazed to find people that run large companies posting on hackernews. Doubly amazed that two companies I'm interviewing for are mentioned in the same post (about interviews no less.) :D

Small world.

[reply](#)

▲ ng12 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Sure, but you run Coinbase. It wouldn't surprise me if people with less soft power than you had negative interactions.

[reply](#)

▲ spottybanana 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Yeah, it is no wonder that a founder-CEO of a 70 billion dollar company is having very little negative interactions with about anyone.

Personally I have become from poor ass bootstrapping startup founder to rich and successful retired entrepreneur (now investor) and it is ridiculous how people will treat you wildly differently as you get wealthier. And at times the exactly same people.

[reply](#)

▲ nowherebeen 8 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> And at times the exactly same people.

I have seen this type of behavior before even though I am not rich or successful. These people act like they never behaved the way they did or simply pretend it never happened, while they continue to do it to others. Its disgusting how people can be so fake.

[reply](#)

▲ Radim 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'd guess this is Prisoner's Dilemma in practice:

If you don't expect repeat interactions with an agent, or expect the agent won't remember / weigh these past interactions strongly, you do what's best for you in the moment.

Which happens to be taking the counterparty's current situation into account - including their wealth/power, AKA how much they can do for you. Entirely pragmatic, if selfish ("disgusting" in your words).

The way to combat this fake behaviour is to increase its cost, forcing the "fake" person to interact differently.

But I wouldn't hold my breath:

1) To "increase the cost" you need something of value in the first place. If you're poor and powerless, you are... powerless. Your only strength is in numbers: social pressure, `Σ little\_power \* lots\_of\_people`.

2) This "fake" personality is likely something learned in early childhood. A person would probably need to experience lots of negative feedback to readjust later in life.

3) Have you considered that their strategy ("fakeness", taking into account extrinsic factors like wealth or fame) may be superior to yours ("integrity", interacting based solely on a someone's intrinsic traits)? You know, it is not a physical law that being nice and consistent to people pays off. It's a pretty wild social dynamic, evolved only recently.

[reply](#)

▲ tovej 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Regarding 3), how well someone's social strategies pay off is completely separate from their morality. It's irrelevant.

Just as a thought experiment: if there was little social cost to it, killing your competitors would probably be a very successful strategy. Would you go: "sure, he kills people, but it makes him very successful and we should give him kudos for that"?

Regarding your last statement, that "being nice and consistent" is a recent social norm, I call bullshit and citation needed.

[reply](#)

▲ Radim 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Morality certainly has its merits – after all, it's omnipresent across nearly all human groups (that survived to this day). So it has undoubtedly played a central role in advancing humankind.

But please note morality is an evolved collective strategy as well, a survivor in an extremely competitive landscape. It's not "above" evolution (unless you're into religious metaphysical arguments).

If all its proponents "were killed" – your words; an unlikely proposition in my estimation – then yes, that would be it for morality. Something else would take its / our place, but the world would still go round.

[reply](#)

▲ mrtranscendence 1 hour ago | root | parent | next [-]

> But please note morality is an evolved collective strategy as well, a survivor in an extremely competitive landscape. It's not "above" evolution (unless you're into religious metaphysical arguments).

I don't fancy a debate right now, but I feel I should point out for observers that this is a minority position in the philosophy of ethics (for atheists and religious philosophers alike). At the very least it is possible (and common) to be a moral realist without making "religious" arguments.

[reply](#)

▲ repomies69 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Yes, psychopaths can be wildly successful people, I will start to act psychopath right away, sir. Thanks for your advice.

[reply](#)

▲ Radim 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I have not revealed my preference, one way or another (I'm personally not a fan of fakeness, if you must know; which is precisely the reason why I think about such things and take time to reply on HN).

But seeing your visceral response, I'll offer one advice now: don't let your biases blind-side you.

[reply](#)

▲ repomies69 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> I have not revealed my preference, one way or another

You have revealed your preference of evaluating morality as a choice.

I think morality is a basic assumption for pretty much all human interaction. If someone chooses to be immoral, then why would I want to interact at all with that person? If being fake and untruthful is a choice for that person, I don't see how any interaction made sense. Just the only sensible choice is to run away from that person and if you have business going on just try to close them as quickly as possible. Even online discussions like these would be totally pointless with a person who has selected to be immoral/fake.

[reply](#)

▲ repomies69 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Thanks for your generous advice, sir. Greatly appreciated.

[reply](#)

▲ rightbyte 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Well some people are just not so nice until you know each other. Not like "you start to appreciate them" but "they get friendly".

[reply](#)

▲ xwolfi 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Hello Sir, I adore your comment, could you swing a bit of dough my way?

[reply](#)

▲ deltaonefour 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'm too am also a founder of an \$xB fintech, and I have to say I disagree with your assessment. The initial poster was right on all counts.

[reply](#)

▲ DonHopkins 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm working on my SECOND \$billion!

...I gave up on my first.

[reply](#)

▲ mrtranscendence 1 hour ago | root | parent | next [-]

I figure at this point my easiest path to becoming a billionaire would be to develop a time machine, go back to when you could buy a bitcoin for a dollar, and plo down \$20K or so. That feels more realistic than me actually building a valuable company.

[reply](#)

▲ vertis 6 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> Patrick has proactively told me when wanting to build competitive products, even when he didn't have to (very positive sum thinking).

I used to get very frustrated at a previous job (realestate.com.au) that they would treat their main competitor in such a venomous way.

If the features looked similar then they 'copied' if they launched a feature first then denigrate it until you can launch the same feature. There are only so many ways you can do a real estate (car, job) ad portal. Especially if you're following best practice UI/UX guidelines.

I get being competitive, but you can be competitive and still be civil. Making the other company to be an arch-villain is such small-minded zero-sum thinking.

Sadly there were also many things where they could have worked on collaboratively to make everyone's lives better (e.g. Rental standards and processes), but this is impossible when you frame the competitor in such a negative way.

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

If the market isn't growing, it *is* a zero-sum game so this behaviour isn't surprising.

[reply](#)

▲ danrocks 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> most rational explanation for OPs issue is that references were checked and came back luke warm/negative, so more were done which delayed it etc (they may not tell you this was the reason to protect sources btw), this is one of many potential reasons, i'm guessing, but benign explanations are more likely

> also, "discussing details of an offer" is not the same as receiving an offer

All reasonable things to happen, for sure. Would other HMs in the same building show interest after bad references? Debatable.

I accept all outcomes - all except ghosting.

[reply](#)

▲ csomar 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I don't think Coinbase and Stripe are in the same business but...

> As one small example, Patrick has proactively told me when wanting to build competitive products, even when he didn't have to (very positive sum thinking).

I'm not sure why this is positive or signals a high-integrity person. If he doesn't have to tell you, he probably shouldn't. He runs a private company and that's what he should care about.

Or maybe he did that, so that in the future you can kick back and write this comment?

[reply](#)

▲ noisy\_boy 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Sometime one does favors in the hopes of being treated likewise in future. It is an investment, even though not guaranteed to pay-off; but when done to powerful people, that off-hand chance can pay-off handsomely and be worth it.

[reply](#)

▲ ludamad 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

"I'm an \$xB ceo and everyone you mentioned have been lovely to me" is a data point, but being successful means even your true friends are networking with you (because it's logical, not implying sneaky intentions)

[reply](#)

▲ metagame 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Have you considered that he might just avoid sharking out on people he considers friends, or people with too large a platform?

Genuine question.

[reply](#)

▲ edpichler 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I agree with you but after being an employee of a dozen of companies and founded some, I started the Stripe's application processe and after a waterfall or red flags I decided myself to do not continue. I couldn't ignore my gut feeling clearly saying me that there is the place to have a good salary in a very miserable, unhealthy and unstable job.

PS: I don't know how they are managing to have such a good product.

[reply](#)

▲ ignoramous 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> *any time you have thousand of interviews going on, you are bound to get some bad candidate experiences... and we try to minimize it for sure, but you will not get it to zero (especially when growing quickly)*

Spot on. Nor should anyone expend disproportionate energy in bringing down *common causes* of quality issues to zero. <https://apenwarr.ca/log/20161226>

> *I just hate to see HN jumping into tear downs and wild conjecture like this.*

You must be new here.

[reply](#)

▲ jonpurdy 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I have never interviewed at Stripe, but I did interview at Coinbase in mid-2020 and it was among the best interviewing experiences I've had. The hiring manager for a TPM role (NM) was awesome, as was the entire loop. I didn't end up with an offer (I suspect that I flubbed one of the interviews) but left with a mostly positive experience (aside from what seemed like an implied offer from the recruiter, which I consider to just be miscommunication).

As opposed to K (another SF-based exchange), which took a month to set up the loop in the first place, had one-way video during interviews (candidates on, interviewers off), and took 3 weeks after the interview loop to send an offer which I declined for another company (65% of CB's pre-offer, not that it mattered based on the other stuff).

These experiences make a difference and really help sell the organization to a potential hire.

[reply](#)

▲ latexr 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> There are plenty of more reasonable Occam's razor explanations (...). You always have to assume ignorance over malice first.

That's Hanlon's razor: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanlon's\\_razor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanlon's_razor)

[reply](#)

▲ fabiandesimone 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Funny that you think your endorsement works in their favor. Coinbase is not entirely kosher in the crypto industry so there's that.

[reply](#)

▲ mempko 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Japan has a long tradition in cooperation. SV has adopted many Japanese traditions. Unfortunately some people seem to take competition too seriously, ruining the culture. It seems some are suggesting Patrick and John take competition too seriously. Whether the allegations are true or not, it can unfortunately be damaging.

Adam Smith, on his work on competition, took many ideas from the Muslim Caliphate. Where markets can only work on trust. That nobody will do business with someone they don't trust.

Trust is what underlies communities like this, even if people are competitors.

[reply](#)

▲ thendrill 2 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Well now we know who is your master.

[reply](#)

▲ xwolfi 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

You know the best you could have done is say nothing. People like this, best way to prove them wrong is to show there's nothing. Even a "oh it's true but we'll try to change" helps more than doing exactly what the OP did with his catch-22: if you defend here, he's proven right.

[reply](#)

▲ xmly 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

You TWO could be the same person? Just a wild guess...

[reply](#)

▲ temp3728 14 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

+1. Also a founder of an \$XB fintech. Exact same story. Patrick + John dangled an acquisition to get a look inside, and ended up re-trading on the terms. Then proceeded to target 2 of our team members to recruit. Fast forward a few years, and now they have deployed a team to directly copy one of our products.

Amongst their L2 team, Patrick and Will are described as the "killers". I guess maybe a bit of duplicity is required to build a company of that size...

[reply](#)

▲ spitfire 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

You were brain raped. Bill Gates was famous for this. There was even a Silicon Valley episode about the practice.

[reply](#)

▲ danrocks 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

This sounds painful.

[reply](#)

▲ sneak 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Good thing ideas aren't property. What a lame business landscape that world would have!

[reply](#)

▲ wgharding 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

As much as the parent comment strained credibility, this double-down (posted exactly 10 minutes after the original) breaks it. Seriously, how many \$XB fintech founders are out there, waiting to tell their salacious tales about one of the most transparent and accountable individuals on HN?

It's OK, come out \$XB fintech founders, it's safe for your temp accounts here...at least until the moderators get here and start checking the IP addresses.

[reply](#)

▲ donkleberry2 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I mean considering blockchain I think it's a safe bet there's a lot more \$XB fintechs than you seem to think. Technically X can be 1, mind you

Note that I did not say whether this was a good or bad thing, I just think you're overthinking billion dollar fintech startup scarcity given a single bitcoin is basically a billion dollars. Those folks are also more likely to identify themselves as fintech during an introduction in my experience, and Stripe undoubtedly plays in the crypto pool, so it fits

[reply](#)

▲ bryan0 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> Technically X can be 1

Why restrict ourselves to positive integers here? Hell everyone can be an \$XB fintech founder!

[reply](#)

▲ zibzab 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I have always wanted to ask this: Is zero a positive number? And do we always round up?

- Possible owner of a mildly successful \$xT company.

[reply](#)

▲ OJFord 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Usage varies, there are a few notations for specifying whether the set of natural numbers/positive integers includes zero when it matters.

'Always round up' sounds more like the ceiling function (or  $\text{ceil} \cdot \text{abs}$ ) - usually rounding means to the nearest integer, or whatever we're rounding to.

[reply](#)

▲ hardliantion 6 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

It's certainly non-negative. Enjoy your status.

[reply](#)

▲ Grustaf 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Exactly, x tends to be a real number, if it were an integer or a natural number you'd use n.

[reply](#)

▲ blitzar 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I am the founder if an \$ / T startup.

[reply](#)

▲ high\_byte 2 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

better than \$  $i^2$  T so dream on...

[reply](#)

▲ mellavora 8 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

or even restrict to integers?

Then we can all be in the club!

[reply](#)

▲ hardliantion 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

We can be in the club with integers. Consider 0 for example.

[reply](#)

▲ davidwritesbugs 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Let's not get us integers into your fight, we're just watching, OK?

[reply](#)

▲ evan\_ 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> Technically X can be 1, mind you

or 0.00001

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

It's not that surprising there are many founders lurking on HN. Many people who are famous in the tech world comment here once in a while. It's not a stretch to imagine that a lot of people from that demographic are active but silent users/consumers.

[reply](#)

▲ darawk 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Two unrelated co-founders of multi-billion dollar fintech making anonymous accounts to comment here within 10 minutes of each other seems extremely unlikely to happen organically. Consider that the second one is a reply comment to the first. What would have to be true for this to be organic is:

1. The first person arrives organically, which is plausible.
2. The second person sees their comment within 10 minutes of it being posted.
3. Decides that they are going to respond, and respond anonymously.
4. Makes an anonymous account.
5. Writes the comment

All within 10 minutes. Consider further that if this were legit, and you were the founder of a multi billion dollar tech company, would you write *any* comment like this that quickly? Wouldn't you spend a while reading exactly what it was you were saying to make sure you couldn't be identified, or didn't say the wrong thing? I certainly would.

It's not necessarily implausible that Patrick is secretly an asshole. But it is pretty implausible that these two comments were organic and independent.

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 7 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I find it unlikely, but not extremely so given the environment (HN). It's very plausible to me that these comments are organic and independent.

We have already had Patrick Collison and Brian Armstrong comment on this post (That I know of). I'm sure that many other high profile people in tech have since seen it as well.

The timeframe is somewhat suss, but I don't find it unbelievable.

E: other people also corroborate somewhat similar stories

- <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=29389177>

- <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=29389191>

- <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=29389509>

[reply](#)

▲ Macha 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

To be fair the others are also very low activity anonymous accounts created within the last 12 months.

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

This is not at all surprising given the dynamics of the internet:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1%25\\_rule\\_\(Internet\\_culture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1%25_rule_(Internet_culture)).

Longstanding, commenting users are incredibly rare in the scheme of things.

E: active <-> commenting

[reply](#)

▲ Macha 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Active users are disproportionately represented amongst people actively commenting, however

[reply](#)

▲ ZephyrBlu 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I don't understand your point here... Active users being disproportionately represented by people commenting is probably correct, but it doesn't provide any useful information about the minority of users who don't comment often.

I'm saying that an account being mostly inactive (In terms of commenting) is not at all surprising.

Someone could have been actively browsing HN for months/years without commenting, so I don't think comment activity is a good indicator of credibility when lurking is the default behaviour for almost all users.

I wouldn't be surprised if the number of comments per user followed a power law distribution.

[reply](#)

▲ fossuser 1 hour ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

It's not that unlikely - a lot of us in SV are on HN all of the time. It's the default 'waiting for something' site to check (along with Twitter). If you saw a negative story about a friend you'd be more likely to comment.

[reply](#)

▲ dd36 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

They may know each other? And have asked for support. If you run a large company, you know others.

[reply](#)

▲ datavirtue 3 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

If I get even remotely busy I forget all about HN. I can't imagine anyone trying to run a company wasting time here.

[reply](#)

▲ InvertedRhodium 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

By that logic, couldn't you just undermine the credibility of all temp accounts by creating your own temp accounts to enthusiastically agree with them?

[reply](#)

▲ webmaven 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> *By that logic, couldn't you just undermine the credibility of all temp accounts by creating your own temp accounts to enthusiastically agree with them?*

False-flag sock-puppetry seems like an interesting combination. I'll have to remember that one.

[reply](#)

▲ kortilla 5 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

That was one of the tricks used by Russian trolls throughout the 2016 election and Trump presidency.

Sock puppets obviously sock puppets agreeing with "the other side" so you would convince yourself whatever "side" you were on was obviously correct if the other side needed sock puppets.

[reply](#)

▲ devops000 2 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I do think it's a competitor too. Just screwing up Stripe.

[reply](#)

▲ TeeMassive 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Fintech is worth trillions. A trillion is a thousand billions. HN/YC is the de facto hub for those. These comments are doubtful (given the money and the strong emotions involved I wouldn't trust a single one of them, positive or otherwise), but this isn't the best arguments against them.

[reply](#)

▲ datavirtue 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I have always wondered why nothing humorous or fun appears/happens on HN in the comments. This post and subsequent comments are very telling.

[reply](#)

▲ kingcharles 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'm the real Satoshi, so I have you all beat.

[reply](#)

▲ vrzucchini 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Hi Craig!



[reply](#)

▲ s5300 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Lovely to know. \$XB fintech founders, swimming in the money, yet they still end up on social media towards the middle of the night (US based at least)

Hahaha. Or something like that.

[reply](#)

▲ ivalm 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Eh, founders of coin base and lambda school both posted, people legit post around midnight, even founders of \$xb startups.

[reply](#)

▲ bluepirate 14 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

That's sad. Sorry that happened to you. I hope you guys are still moving forward and building.

[reply](#)

▲ kadomony 14 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

This sounds like typical tech infighting, sadly. We shouldn't normalize this stuff, but we do. I really hope more companies hold their leaders to a governing, conscious culture that they actually follow themselves.

[reply](#)

▲ quaesitor 14 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> typical tech infighting

> We shouldn't normalize this stuff

You literally normalized it in your comment.

[reply](#)

▲ djbusby 14 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Maybe they saying it's already the pattern and want to *not* continue it? (Like, if we read the comment in best light like guidelines say). And, Stripe has lied to me as well but it was a small issue.

[reply](#)

▲ kadomony 13 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

You read the correct message here. Thank you.

[reply](#)

▲ kadomony 14 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Umm.. No? I think you're inferring one thing when I meant another. I'm saying that this SHOULD NOT be "the typical". Read the entire sentence, please: "We shouldn't normalize this stuff, but we do."

And please don't write condescending, inflammatory remarks. It offers nothing.

[reply](#)

▲ JohnHaugeland 13 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Saying "typical" does not normalize something.

By example, if I walk through a maximum security prison with no power, holding ten pounds of cocaine, typically I will get murdered. This doesn't mean that murder is a thing we should consider to be normal.

Typical is about commonality. Normal is about evaluation of decency.

Consider most topics in a theater of war to see the stark difference between what is common and what is decent.

[reply](#)

▲ sjtindell 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

There are so many founders of \$XB fintechs in this thread, I want to start one! Thanks for sharing.

[reply](#)

▲ davidwritesbugs 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

X = 0.000001B\$ Your side gig qualifies.

[reply](#)

▲ richcollins 5 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

He tricked me into working for a month without a contract and then wouldn't answer my calls when I asked him to sign the terms we agreed upon. I had to show up and sit on their couch until he showed up to write me a check to go away. He's a slippery character.

[reply](#)

▲ stevedekorte 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I was also on that contract and can verify this. Here's an odd wrinkle: just prior to that contract, Patrick wanted to purchase bitcoin from me (this was back in 2013) remotely, with me sending him the bitcoin first and him paying when he had time. He also wanted the terms to be that if the USD price of bitcoin went down before he paid me, that he would pay the lower price(!) and he would choose the time of repayment. I declined to do anything other than an in-person cash transaction. Later, I heard he had previously purchased some from another friend and then ghosted him for many (>6?) months despite persistent requests for payment.

[reply](#)

▲ pc 13 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I don't think some of the claims in this comment are true or in good faith. (We obviously don't control HN or YC or journalists. If or when my comments on HN are ever ranked highly, it's because they're upvoted. The internal claims about Stripe are also inconsistent with the data around things like retention. Etc.)

All of that said, I'd appreciate hearing from any founders who feel mistreated as part of an acquisition process. We make a fairly significant number of acquisitions and have never heard this directly before.

[reply](#)

▲ temp7536 13 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm sorry but no. Patrick, we met with you once, Gaybrick and Claire multiple times and opened up a data room to you all. I then emailed you (and the others) three followups over a couple weeks only to see them opened but never replied. Your team then sent targeted cold emails to multiple people on our team. I've validated this experience with multiple founders.

You also had Moritz and Sequoia renege on Finix's term sheet after they already had it signed and wired (I guess props to Sequoia for branding it as "giving it away")[1]. You've also had your team get diligence materials from Sequoia and nuke deals.

You've clearly crushed it in the business and developer brand space, hats off to you. You want feedback - I (and the broader founder community) just wish you stop the dance of pretending and just admit you all are sharks, and it works for you! Just own it.

But I will admit, the HN comment was a bit trolly and written in frustration. But you have to admit - you are documented as proofreading every one of PGs posts, are a huge LP in YC and are friends with a lot of people there. You can't believe that the conspiracy theories are purely in "bad faith"....

And yes - this is out of place in HN comments, I'm sorry. But sadly there aren't very many other options.

[1] - <https://techcrunch.com/2020/03/09/sequoia-is-giving-away-21-...>

[reply](#)

▲ pc 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I genuinely have no idea what situation you're talking about (not saying we didn't screw up, though — I preemptively apologize assuming we did!), and a bunch of the narrow claims above aren't true (we aren't YC LPs, Sequoia made its own decisions without any suggestions from us on Finix, etc.), but I really would appreciate an email so I can figure out what happened.

[reply](#)

▲ danr4 2 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

From the TC article: "A spokesperson for Stripe who was asked whether Stripe and Sequoia discussed its investment in Finix at any point, also declined to comment."

Your comment about Finix seems deliberately crafted to convey you did not speak with Sequoia but at the same time not denying that you spoke (made decision without suggestions).

So to clarify, are you saying that Stripe did not speak with Sequoia about Finix?

Or that Sequoia "made their own decision", while they have spoken with Stripe about Finix?

[reply](#)

▲ simonebrunozzi 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Irrespective of whether you behaved badly or not (not for me to say, and unlikely to clearly emerge on a simple HN thread), I have always lauded your search for transparency here on HN.

Also, we I like to always keep in mind that sometimes resentment dominates the desire to share a certain story, and without knowing anything about the transaction referred above, I'd say it's quite

clear that temp7536 has at least some resentment or envy over Stripe's success.

Final thought (not referring to Stripe nor Sequoia in particular): yes, most companies, and most VCs, are sharks. I was recently reminded of that twice, and probably lost large sums of money in the process (again: nothing to do with Stripe nor with Sequoia). I think it's a rule that have always applied to life, in general, and it won't stop being applied just because we have the internet.

I simply hope that things like the Panama Papers, Wikileaks, and such, will eventually bring more financial transparency to the world, and make it harder for these sharks to keep feasting on their prey.

[reply](#)

▲ BrianOnHN 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

This seems like a good place to plug "The Billion Dollar Code ©"

Same SV story, different decade.

[reply](#)

▲ austenallred 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> You also had Moritz and Sequoia renege on Finix's term sheet after they already had it signed and wired (I guess props to Sequoia for branding it as "giving it away")[1].

How is it reneging on a term sheet if they wire the money? That's fulfilling the terms of the term sheet (despite the fact that term sheets aren't binding), no?

[reply](#)

▲ donkleberry 13 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

When you're in top position on a Stripe-related post, that has nothing to do with your karma score. It's because dang has a pin button that he usually uses for himself, but very often is used for exactly the situation you describe when it comes to YC portfolio or celebrities showing up or something (without visual feedback of such a pin, as every single other website with the capability provides). It's pretty obvious if you keep an eye out for it

This can undoubtedly be spun as "HN just trying to bring the right voice to the top of the discussion" but the alternative take is just as valid. It's not bad faith feedback, it's HN UX and practices confusing readers as usual

[reply](#)

▲ dang 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

You got me curious to look at the data. pc has had the top comment in 41 threads since Sept 2007 (<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=50377>). Of those, one was pinned to the top: <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=25073749>. I vaguely recall that had to do with wanting to correct the misleading impression left by an inaccurate headline. All the other cases got there via the usual ranking algorithm. I guess you guys can decide whether 1/41 is moderator overreach or not.

We mostly use that mechanism for tedious moderation announcements ("All: please don't bash each other with clubs, even if you feel strongly about \$topic") and for cases where project creators/authors show up belatedly in threads to discuss their work—those are extremely high-value comments that would otherwise get overlooked. Occasionally I use it if a thread is mostly aflame about some controversy and some commenter points out how the whole thing is inaccurate. We don't use it to systematically privilege high-karma users or YC founders relative to other users—that wouldn't be in the spirit of the site guidelines at all, and we take those pretty seriously.

[reply](#)

▲ eganist 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> You got me curious to look at the data. pc has had the top comment in 41 threads since Sept 2007 (<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=50377>). Of those, one was pinned to the top: <https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=25073749>. I vaguely recall that had to do with wanting to correct the misleading impression left by an inaccurate headline. All the other cases got there via the usual ranking algorithm.

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Do you have the denominator (with root-level comments) for the 41 top comments by any chance?

Thanks for the edit with added context. Any chance of an indicator that a comment is pinned so that people can transparently see when this is done? It's predictable that your moderation comments would be pinned, but even pinning a founder's comment to apparently contextualize a potentially misleading headline adds substantial mass to the claim that certain moderation actions might be done for the benefit of the company or companies involved in the thread.

Framed another way: if PC's context for the article was relevant, it would've achieved critical mass on its own. Helping it with a pin could be perceived as moving the needle for gain.

A simple "pin" icon (or emoji, or however you feel is best) may not resolve whether this is a "proper" use of moderation tools, but it will at least make it transparent when it happens, which adds credibility to the HN platform.

[reply](#)

▲ sp332 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Denominator: 638 comments <https://hn.algolia.com/?dateRange=all&page=0&prefix=false&qu...>

[reply](#)

▲ eganist 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

root-level?

[reply](#)

▲ dang 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Looks like 102 root level comments.

[reply](#)

▲ eganist 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

interesting, that's better than 40% assuming that the 41 figure represents root level comments as well.

Thanks for digging into it; you didn't have to.

[reply](#)

▲ toyg 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> *A simple "pin" icon*

That would be theatre - they can then add a new secret-pinning feature, afaik HN code is not open anyway.

Trust is hard to achieve and very easy to lose.

[reply](#)

▲ choppaface 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

This is a great example of HN moderation fanning a flamewar.

[reply](#)

▲ bovermyer 3 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

It objectively is not. I'm baffled at how you arrive at that conclusion.

[reply](#)

▲ Aeolun 5 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Chances are these founders are just permanently behind their computers and have an alert set up for whenever someone mentions the company/domain on HN.

That allows you to get in first on an awful amount of threads.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Are you talking about posts, or comments? Do HN celebs get comment boosted by virtue of that fact too? I would've thought it's only for posts.

[reply](#)

▲ dang 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

They're talking about comments. I'm not sure what you mean by HN celebs but no, they don't get comment boosted.

[reply](#)

▲ neom 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Technically, you're a HN celeb who gets their comments boosted Daniel!

[reply](#)

▲ dang 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I downweight them sometimes too.

[reply](#)

▲ vasco 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

It's common to assume the masses are dumb and hiding moderation can make people do the right thing without being influenced by it. For example I imagine if the pin icon was visible there would be comments about it on every story it'd be used in, which you may want to avoid to focus on the topics at hand. With that put I think transparency beats this and a transparent system is more trustworthy and better understood by the users. Just 2c but keep doing the good work.

[reply](#)

▲ onion2k 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

*I'm not sure what you mean by HN celebs*

I hope he means me.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 13 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

> We make a fairly significant number of acquisitions and have never heard this directly before.

Isn't the comment about things you (purportedly) did personally? Have you "reached out about an acquisition, mined them for information playing along and then ghosted", or no? You clearly don't deny it but you object that you hadn't "heard" about bad things they claim... *you* did? For things you're the subject of, shouldn't it be easy to confirm or deny them just based on your own memory? It's not only a bizarre defense on its own, but it's an especially poor one when the claim is that you ghost people, and your reply is that they never tried to talk to you about it! Wouldn't it make more sense to just reject it and say you did *not* ghost people during acquisition talks, or fish for information under the guise of an acquisition, etc.?

Also:

> I don't think some of the claims in this comment are true or in good faith.

"Some" leaves a lot to the reader's imagination. Which ones are the ones that *are* true?

[reply](#)

▲ pc 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm trying to not overstate my certainty. I have no idea what situation OP could be describing, and I have no recollection of anything along those lines, but I don't want to definitively state that nothing like it happened over our decade of operation without knowing more about what's actually being alleged.

We obviously never intentionally ghost companies, "mine them for information", etc. The ecosystem is small and we wouldn't be able to invest in and acquire companies if we didn't have a reputation for good behavior. (And we've invested in dozens.) But maybe some communication got dropped in some particular case or something? I don't know.

[reply](#)

▲ bambax 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I don't know anything about anything and am one of the very few people here who never founded a \$xB fintech, but this strikes me as weak:

> *The ecosystem is small and we wouldn't be able to invest in and acquire companies if we didn't have a reputation for good behavior*

If you're in a position of power (and money), people will return your calls, regardless of rumors. This is true in all fields, from recruiting to publishing to VC deals, etc.

This is also a line of defense used by serial abusers who always (always!) claim that because they have had successful consensual relationships, there can't be cases where they abused the other party.

> *over our decade of operation*

Also weak. "We've done so many things. Seen so many people. It's been a long time. I don't recall. Things were different back then."

- - -

That said -- weak defense is just that -- it doesn't mean offense.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Ah okay thanks for clarifying. It's a strong anonymous accusation, so being clear about it on your end helps a lot. I imagine it'll be hard for anyone here to know what happened.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 13 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

The challenge I see with some phrases like "mined them" and "ghosted" is that they can be very subjective statements. The person on the receiving end may perceive the actions as such, whereas the person on the giving end may seem them differently.

I don't know what happened, just trying to point out that it is possible that a person felt slighted by certain actions and the person doing them may have no idea the other felt slighted and the person hasn't told them directly. But maybe they did, I don't know in this specific case.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 13 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

But in that case he could just deny them and *then* mention that if it came across differently, he'd love for them to reach out. Not just skip to the second part!

Say if someone claims you stole their car (and the alternative could be that you borrowed it with someone else's permission, and they had no idea, so they felt it was stolen), would you reply with "I'd appreciate hearing from anyone who feels I stole their car", or would you first say "I never stole any car, please reach out to me if you know of any such incidents"? Wouldn't it be incredibly bizarre to ask them for a discussion session without first rejecting the premise?!

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I think in the example of stealing a car is more binary: stole it or did not steal it. Maybe it could have been borrowed the car or something, but there would probably still be a more objective person in car event.

Whereas with ghosting, it could be not replying an email, could be not replying a text, could be some other thing the person missed and doesn't even know they missed. So it's hard to deny if the person isn't even aware they did it.

With mining, it could have been asking questions either live or in an email and not knowing the other person felt tricked into sharing more than they had wanted to.

I've taught a class called Emotional Self-Defense and one of the things I see the most is that the "attacker" often doesn't know they're attacking and the "victim" assumes it should be obvious the person is attacking.

What I'm saying is that he may not have any idea that his actions caused that much pain to the person. I had an ex girlfriend who said to me once, "and you don't respect my boundaries!" And I said what? And she said "yeah, 3 weeks ago when you were juggling the soccer ball and you kicked it to me, I said I didn't wanna play, and then a few minutes later you kicked it to me anyway." I was dumbstruck. I had no idea that she felt so angry/violated by me kicking the soccer ball with her the second time. If I had known, I almost certainly would have stopped. I just didn't receive the signal that strongly.

So I'm saying that may be the case here, too. It's also hard sometimes to tell someone in power that what they're doing is hurting or angering oneself.

[reply](#)

▲ cycmanic 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I don't think ghosting and mining is so vage in this contex. It means engage in acquisition talks without actual intent to acquire, but instead to gain information. If you are the person doing this you will very clearly know what you are doing. Viewing in this context the comment is quite correct it is an odd denial, it sounds a bit like PR speak to me.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I'm imagining if this had been a comment from a spurned romantic partner. "He cheated on me and took advantage of me," posted anonymously to a web forum. If I were the person being accused, and assuming I had been romantically involved with many people, I may have no idea who is accusing me or which specific instance they meant. Maybe I'm aware that I cheated on one person, but I may not even know if that is the person making the accusation? If I've only been romantically involved with one, then it may be quite obvious to me who it is and maybe even the specific incident to which they are referring.

However, I imagine Stripe has interacted with many many companies regarding these things, but maybe not.

I think I've just been in too many conflicts where the other person thinks I intentionally hurt them and I didn't see it that way, or conversely, I think I did something to hurt someone, apologize, and they are confused because they didn't feel hurt at all.

[reply](#)

▲ cycomanic 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

But in your example if you never cheated on a partner you could easily say "I've never cheated on someone". So if you're saying stripe has had so many interactions with companies they don't know if they "cheated" in this specific case, that implies they had least cheated in some cases, because otherwise they could simply deny that they ever cheated.

Because the accusation was more specific than "I felt taken advantage of" it was they engage engage in acquisition talks with the intent to gather confidential information, not the intent to acquire.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 2 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

I think most accusations of intent are extrapolations of actions, which one side makes and the other side may not see the same way.

> engage in acquisition talks with the intent to gather confidential information, not the intent to acquire.

Going back to the dating analogy, if I go on 5 dates with someone and then we don't go on any more dates, that person may assume I had no intention to pursue a long-term relationship with them and was just using them, maybe for sex or company or whatever. However, perhaps I was trying to determine whether I could make a long-term relationship work—maybe I initially didn't think it would work but only went on the next 4 dates because I really really wanted it to work.

All I'm saying is that people can glean different intentions from the same action and it can be really hard to know whether our actions have caused pain to people.

> that implies they had least cheated in some cases, because otherwise they could simply deny that they ever cheated.

Again, the tricky part is Stripe may think they have cheated in one case but in that case, the other person may not have even seen it as cheating. Eg, maybe I'm in an exclusive relationship with someone and my ex comes into town and we get lunch. I feel tremendously guilty for doing it and confess and apologize to my current partner. And the my current partner looks confused and laughs saying they're grateful I went to hang out with my ex. A different partner could split the relationship with me immediately and say I'm evil for having that lunch.

To one side it may seem obvious that a transgression was committed and to the other side, it may be oblivious.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I get what you're saying about it being blurry but I don't buy that it affects the ability to reject it. He can quite simply reject it and then explain it might be a misunderstanding or something. Or say it might have happened unintentionally. Or whatever. There are several options here, and refusing to deny the claims doesn't bolster his case.

And that's all kinda beside the point - note that the bad part isn't even the ghosting itself for us to quibble over, it's fishing for information under the guise of an acquisition, with or without ghosting. *That* should be far less blurry and easy to deny head-on, whatever you think of the ghosting.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

One other story (I feel bad for blitzing with replies and in a weird order, I hope that's ok)...

I ran a workshop with about 35 people in the audience. For about 15 mins, I had them sit quietly as I asked them "how do you feel when you think about this? How do you feel when you think about that?" And so on, and had them reply in their heads.

At the end of the session, I opened up group reflection. One woman shot her hand up and said "I feel like you manipulated us." And I asked if others felt this way, and maybe 5 others raised their hands and started talking about how my questions manipulated them. And then this other guy raised his hand and said how for the first time in months, these questions helped him stop thinking about politics and the chaos in the world and quieted his mind and thanked me. A few others agreed with a similar feeling.

So my one action caused (at least) two very different responses in the same group and I would likely have had no idea if they didn't tell me how they had received it.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I wouldn't say "I never ghosted you" if I don't remember the interaction, because perhaps I did? Why would I make that bold claim without having more info about which situation it is?

> And note that the bad part isn't even the ghosting to quibble over, it's fishing for information under the guise of an acquisition.

Even "fishing for information under the guise of an acquisition" could be anything from sending one email with 3 questions to five intense 2-hr interviews over 3 months. One person who feels very secretive and protective of their business knowledge (even some people in startups who don't even have companies yet but just ideas) can feel very violated by one email with one question, whereas other people may not believe they were being fished for info after 3 months of interviews.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> I wouldn't say "I never ghosted you" if I don't remember the interaction, because perhaps I did? Why would I make that bold claim without having more info about which situation it is?

This whole discussion is about intent, which you can (and honestly, *must*) address separately from how you imagine your actions might have been perceived. See below.

> Even "fishing for information under the guise of an acquisition" could be anything from sending one email with 3 questions to five intense 2-hr interviews over 3 months.

This is irrelevant, the question is about intent. You should *not* have a hard time making it crystal clear whether that was your intent or not, regardless of whether you spent 10 minutes on it or 10 days. The only reason you wouldn't be able to make your intents clear is if you're doing things so borderline deceptively that you honestly cannot tell if they're clearly ethical or not, in which case that fact would sufficiently speak for itself.

P.S. I see you're repeatedly leaving parallel replies, I don't know why you do that (can't you just edit your comment?) but they drown out mine and divert the conversation, so I'm not going to reply to them and have 3 parallel conversation tracks, sorry about that.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 12 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Ah, I think I had misunderstood what you were saying. I thought you were saying to deny the action: "I never ghosted you." But now I think what you actually meant was to deny the intention of the action: "I never intended to ghost you."

I would agree one could deny the intention first, yeah, I might actually do that. "I didn't mean to ghost you but perhaps that's what happened or how it landed for you. Maybe you think it should be obvious to me but I feel unclear, will you share more with me about it?"



\*edit: I'm not trying to leave the parallel replies, I guess I'm more used to replying on Twitter where I just add another reply to my reply if I forgot something, instead of editing the previous reply, and HN was stopping me from replying to my own reply. So I'll try to edit here, I wasn't sure what the HN preferred way was to do this, so thank you for helping me adapt better.

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 12 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

You can certainly make "intended to" explicit, and it's obviously better to be clear, but it's unnecessary. Keep in mind the entire *point* and *heart* of the accusation is the malicious intent. The accusation is clearly not "you're a horrible person because my email fell off your inbox!!", but rather "you *saw* and yet *deliberately ignored* my emails because you were actually trying to *gain information* while *pretending* to want to acquire us".

As such, you rebutting with "I never ghosted you" would *not* be equivalent in any shape or form to "I reply to every single email in your inbox" (or whatever) for you to feel you might somehow be accidentally telling a falsehood if you happened to miss some email in your inbox. "I never ghosted you" in this context would be a direct rejection of the purported *intent*—i.e. the accusation you were *purposefully ignoring* someone's emails because you were actually trying to *fish information* out of them—because, absent the intent, that accusation wouldn't have been made to begin with. You can make the lack of intent explicit if you want, definitely, but it's already implicit in the accusation, and so would be implied in the rejection of that accusation.

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 11 hours ago | [root](#) | [parent](#) | [next](#) [-]

I think I just tend to err on the side of less certainty/conviction in how I speak. I'd probably say "I don't believe I ghosted you" or "I don't remember ghosting you" or "I'm pretty sure I didn't ghost you." And maybe that's me projecting the fear of it getting into a "you ghosted me" "I never ghosted you" "yes, you ghosted me!" back and forth.

Frankly, I'd love if someone were to extricate their accusation as you did, making it easier for me to parse the different actions and intentions. I really liked how you phrased it: "you saw and yet deliberately ignored my emails because you were actually trying to gain information while pretending to want to acquire us." I feel more confident in rebutting different parts of that—e.g., "I saw the emails and deliberately did not reply to them but not because we were pretending to acquire you, but actually we were in a legal process where we couldn't share more at the time" or something like that.

Sometimes if someone accuses me of something, I'll even try to ask for clarification on what they mean by ghosted, or I'll rephrase it as you did, to try to gain more clarity. Maybe it should be obvious to people what ghosted and fishing means, but I find clarifying can at least help me and the other person know if we agree what the definition is and what we both think happened.

\*edit: @dataflow, I really appreciate you going back and forth with me on this. I think I learned a lot, about how I try to pull out the intention from the action, and how others may see intention and action intertwined. I'm gonna let my brain digest this as I

sleep, if you want to continue, I'd be glad to pick it up in the morning :-) Thank you!

\*edit2: ohhh and for helping me get better at using the edit feature and not creating parallel threads, I'm not sure if what I'm doing now is more helpful, but I at least believe I'm being more helpful :-D

[reply](#)

▲ dataflow 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

The important thing to note here is the point isn't how you word your reply. Nobody is saying you have to word it like I did. You can be as crystal-mathematically-pedantically-clear as you want in your reply about intents vs. actions vs. perceptions vs. whatever, that's beside the point.

The point is that your reply would need to address the lack of *ill intent* no matter how you word it. I find "I never ghosted you" and "I never intended to ghost you" both adequate, and you can disagree on either of them, but that's not the point. The point is "I've never heard this directly before" would NOT be adequate. It comes across as a completely ridiculous reply that very obviously fails to deny what is clear to everyone to be the heart of the accusation: the ill intent. Which makes it hard to interpret an omission like that charitably.

Edit: Sleep well!

[reply](#)

▲ jimkleiber 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Actually, if it were me, I wouldn't deny it first if I truly didn't know what I did. Perhaps I did do something that I feel guilty about doing but just am not currently aware of. I'd probably ask as he did to figure out how the person is feeling and what they think I did to contribute to that and then see whether I feel guilty about that or not. I may actually feel really bad, hard to know without knowing more specifics.

[reply](#)

▲ bartread 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

This is a valid point. I've observed or been involved in a number of acquisitions at various distances over many years. There are any number of reasons an acquisition might not go ahead and, of course, as the potential acquirer you obviously learn some things that are useful, but I've never known a situation where there has been a deliberate plan to simply mine for knowledge or whatever.

The reality is some acquisitions are opportunistic, some are strategic, and even the opportunistic ones often have a strategic element. For a strategic acquisition, if it doesn't go ahead (comes down to ROI isn't perceived as being as good as potential alternatives), the almost inevitable outcome will often be (i) a different acquisition is eventually made, or (ii) the acquiring company decides to make an investment in that area themselves.

One of the ways to avoid getting "screwed over" as an acquiree is to ensure you've done the work beforehand to maximise the chances of compatibility with the acquirer: things like compliance, data protection, having a poor grasp of your numbers and financials, and other mundane matters (or combinations of them) can easily trip up the process.

When an acquisition does fall through for almost any reason it's pretty natural for the potential acquirees to feel rather bruised by the process: they've wasted their time, they've been screwed over, etc. Often that won't be the case although, I've no doubt, there are instances where it will be.

(Btw, in case it's not obvious, I know nothing about the activities of Stripe or its founders, good or bad.)

[reply](#)

▲ choppaface 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I honestly do not see your participation in this thread as good faith. You apologized to the candidate in public—good start, now do something of consequence in private. But any further involvement from you (especially trying to out the OP) is simply fanning the flamewar. Even HN moderation is helping fan the flames by adding stats and other commentary. This is why I find YC so utterly untrustworthy.

[reply](#)

▲ andrew\_ 12 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Say "Bloody Mary" ten times in the mirror at midnight and she will appear...

[reply](#)

▲ Voloskaya 14 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

> Patrick has almost direct control over YC and HN, you'll notice that every single Stripe post automatically has pc as the first comment, regardless of anything else. Everything negative gets buried.

This sounds like such BS. They are just very reactive around PR, and Stripe while it might be hated internally (based on what you say), it is loved by external developers, so of course developers on HN will tend to have a positive opinion of anything related to it and vote accordingly. And they are quite a lot.

I almost downvoted you for going with the conspiracy theory route, but I like the irony of this post being on the top 5 on the front page and your comment being the top comment of that post, while complaining about him having "almost direct control" of HN and the press.

[reply](#)

▲ throwaway984393 13 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Stripe is a YC company. If Stripe becomes a shit show, YC may lose money. How is it a conspiracy theory to suggest that both YC and Stripe might want to exert some control over bad PR?

Let's not forget that HN's primary function is to attract people with ideas for YC to turn into companies whose equity generates money for YC. And we're not talking chump change like a couple million. More like billions. What's a little push back on negative comments to save a couple billion dollars?

[reply](#)

▲ ChrisKnott 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

> *"How is it a conspiracy theory to suggest that both YC and Stripe might want to exert some control over bad PR?"*

Firstly, you have dramatically undersold what OP claimed, to the point of dishonesty.

Secondly, what OP claimed is a conspiracy theory because it has no actual evidence. If it had evidence it would be a conspiracy.

[reply](#)

▲ metagame 14 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

It isn't dang's fault that Patrick has a Google Alert or daemon running for his name (or just has a lot of employees who notify him whenever it comes up). It's not direct control of HN, it's Patrick being enterprising.

dang has done nothing to deserve bad faith, and while I don't like Patrick, either, it's best to keep the knocks on the right doors.

[reply](#)

▲ Imm 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

HN routinely shadowbans and apparently shadow-pins with at least some frequency per this very thread. It's not an organisation that warrants assuming good faith.

[reply](#)

▲ Bayart 8 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Believe me, the people who are phased out deserve to be. I've had the unlucky experience of using an HN client that showed all comments by default, and you wouldn't believe the amount of deranged, vile shit that gets posted here.

[reply](#)

▲ metagame 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

HN's hellbans aren't real shadowbans, because other users can see them. They just have to opt-in to seeing potentially offensive content (it's a setting in your profile). Other users can even make banned users' posts visible to everyone!

And when they pin comments, it's pretty obvious. dang often points it out: <https://hn.algolia.com/?dateRange=all&page=0&prefix=true&que...>

YC isn't trustworthy, sure, but HN is.

[reply](#)

▲ coffeemug 12 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I was fortunate to work with pc/jc/will in ~2016-18, and my experience has been the opposite. They were super professional and in the time that I've worked with them seemed like genuinely good people. They can be tough negotiators which hey, sucks if you're on the other side of the table, but that's exactly what you want out of a good leadership team. And a lot of stuff slips through the cracks, but I'm not sure what else you'd expect from a company that went from 0 -> \$100B in a decade.

I can see how the intersection of these two properties may sometimes look like what you're describing, but from everything I've seen (which isn't too much, but it's enough) your interpretation of the facts really doesn't seem accurate.

(As a disclaimer, I do have a horse in this race because I have some stock, but I'm pretty certain I'm being objective about this)

TL;DR: me and you are looking at the same screen but aren't watching the same movie.

[reply](#)

▲ fossuser 13 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Their recent 1yr equity periods to screw employees out of upside caused me to lose interest (even though that equity will still likely be very valuable). I really disliked how they tried to spin this as something good for employees.

Which is a shame because a lot of stuff they do is super cool, stripe press, increment (recently discontinued), blog posts, patio11 etc.

It seems like a great place in a lot of ways.

[reply](#)

▲ throwbigdata 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

How did this screw people?

[reply](#)

▲ fossuser 1 hour ago | root | parent | next [-]

If you reprice equity comp each year then you lose most of the upside.

Compare the two following equity plans:

Example Year 1:

---

PLAN 1

FMV: \$1

Strike: \$1

Total #: 40k ISOs

Vesting: 4yrs

---

PLAN 2

FMV: \$1

Strike: \$1

Total #: 10k ISOs

Vesting: 1yr

---

In the second plan you get granted new equity per year targeting some total comp.

This means if the equity goes up in value a lot in the first year, when your new amount is recalculated it'll be way less than 10k.

Example Year 2:

---

PLAN 1

FMV: \$2

Strike: \$1

Total #: 40k ISOs (10k vesting in year 2)

Vesting: 1yr into 4yr period

---

PLAN 2

FMV: \$2

Strike: \$2 (new grant)

Total #: 5k ISOs (The 10k from the first year, and now half that # determined by new FMV for a cumulative total of 15k instead of 20k ISOs).

Vesting: 1yr on new grant

---

This lets the company keep the majority of the upside, taking it away from employees. It also hurts employees that stay longer or have a longer term interest in the company from capturing the value they helped create.

And the more the company goes up in value, the worse the trade off becomes.

[reply](#)

▲ moneywoes 4 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'm guessing because the equity vests at 1 year, you can't realize huge gains in stock prices

[reply](#)

▲ nowayjoseaway 13 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Don't forget the female engineer they fired for calling Elon "a little shit" on twitter. I don't know if it would be worse if it turned out to be because Elon complained or because he is their hero.

[reply](#)

▲ nielsele 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Probably what parent is referring to: <https://nitter.net/isosteph/status/1171236137932771328>  
<https://nitter.net/isosteph/status/1459566899151396867>

[reply](#)

▲ rkk3 51 minutes ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Firing doesn't seem like a proportional response... But representing herself as a Stripe employee after flaming on the internet isn't a good look for their business.

[reply](#)

▲ nowherebeen 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Almost everyone at YC worships Elon, you can see it on Sam Altman's face when he interviewed him on YouTube.

[reply](#)

▲ shrimp 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Sam Altman might actually believe that Elon is superior to him.

[reply](#)

▲ Keyframe 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

That's disgusting really, but looks like it's true.

[reply](#)

▲ wly\_cdgr 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Elon is no angel, but I gotta say it would shock me if he was such a huge loser that he would complain about something like this

[reply](#)

▲ hef19898 8 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Well, he called a rescue diver a pedophile because said diver didn't like Elon's sub and had specific idea where Elon should put said submarine.

[reply](#)

▲ jamil7 8 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

And more recently dismissed Bernie Sanders with "i legit thought you were dead".

[reply](#)

▲ wly\_cdgr 46 minutes ago | root | parent | next [-]

I like and respect Bernie but that's just an internet burn, it's whatever

[reply](#)

▲ hef19898 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Oh, I totally forgot that one!

[reply](#)

▲ tchalla 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I am not going to stand up to Elon Musk or what he said. But, the response generated by Elon Musk was after the British rescue diver said this

> "He can stick his submarine where it hurts," he told CNN. "It had absolutely no chance of working. He had no conception of what the cave passage was like.

Somehow, this part gets left out from this discussion.

[reply](#)

▲ emptyfile 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Yes, and? He is 100% correct. I lost the last shred of respect for Elon after his Thailand photo op.

Disgusting person.

[reply](#)

▲ vore 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

And that makes calling him a pedophile somehow acceptable?

[reply](#)

▲ tchalla 15 minutes ago | root | parent | next [-]

I specifically wrote in my comment "I am not going to stand up to Elon Musk or what he said." How did you come to the conclusion that I found it acceptable?

[reply](#)

▲ dd36 3 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

More acceptable than the absence of such a statement. It makes Elon's pedo comment look like immature reactionary school yard banter. Somebody said something mean to me so I'm going to say something mean back.

[reply](#)

▲ pseudalopex 1 hour ago | root | parent | next [-]

Immature is a kind of unacceptable.

Musk made specific accusations after the victim of his libel threatened to sue.  
[1] It wasn't school yard banter.

[1] <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/ryanmac/elon-musk-thai-...>

[reply](#)

▲ detaro 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

... except the comment you reply to references that.

[reply](#)

▲ chrisjc 3 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'm beginning to think that we should extend Godwin's Law to include Elon. Just about every online conversation nowadays eventually deteriorates into a discussion about how terrible Elon is.

Btw, I'm exaggerating, but still.

[reply](#)

▲ mfrye0 12 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I can't comment on Stripe, but I had a similar experience with a B2B \$XB company, but a bit worse. So I can sympathize going anon.

I agree that the public has a rosy view of a lot of these \$XB founders, when in reality it's lies and back stabbing behind the scenes.

[reply](#)

▲ cm2012 11 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Honestly to be the kind of person who runs a company like Stripe you have to be a bit crazy.

To have the chance to be bought out for unfathomable sums at every step, and willingly go manage the headaches of a big and fast growing company (like this thread) instead?

[reply](#)

▲ paganel 10 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

> On HN and silicon valley Stripe and Patrick are a PR machine.

That's why we still need a thing like Gawker to come back. Almost all of SV hated on Thiel for standing behind Trump but when it came to him bringing down Gawker nobody left a finger in Gawker's defense, and so that here we are, a multi-trillion dollar industry with no internal means to self-regulate ourselves.

[reply](#)

▲ nomdep 4 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Gawker were scum. The worst of the worst in "journalism". Their whole business model was based on creating outrage and division. They don't deserve an inch of sympathy.

I do miss Mike Arrington's Techcrunch, though

[reply](#)

▲ rchaud 1 hour ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

I'll stick to NYT and WSJ breaking real stories, thanks.

Gawker's issues were entirely of their own making. What was their big scoop? That Thiel was gay? At least Gizmodo did some coverage on a pre-release iPhone 4 before being exiled.

[reply](#)

▲ pshc 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Gawker *did* come back FWIW.

Not that I've heard a peep from them since they re-launched.

[reply](#)

▲ vineyardmike 9 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Specifically ValleyWag, Gawker is the conglomerate that owned it:

<http://valleywag.gawker.com/r-i-p-valleywag-2006-2015-175041...>

[reply](#)

▲ paganel 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Big TIL for me, to be honest.

> Not that I've heard a peep from them since they re-launched.

That explains why I thought they were gone for good.

[reply](#)

▲ devops000 1 hour ago | parent | prev | next [-]

I am also a founder of a \$XB fintech startup.

[reply](#)

▲ quickthrower2 12 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

OK I've saved the HTML of this page... just in case :-)

[reply](#)

▲ Ansil849 9 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

> have a huge amount of reporters and power brokers under their control

Extraordinary claims require extraordinary proof, and all that... Can you list this 'huge amount of reporters' that Stripe has 'under their control'?

[reply](#)

▲ showmeyourhits 10 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

Could you elaborate what "\$XB fintech" means? Couldn't google answer myself.

[reply](#)

▲ grzm 10 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

From this thread:

<https://news.ycombinator.com/item?id=29389350>

[reply](#)

▲ dd36 3 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

3 comma club

[reply](#)

▲ omegabravo 10 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

market cap or "valuation" company, x is a place holder so \$1,2 or 3 billion

[reply](#)

▲ bogomipz 12 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

>"I run a \$XB fintech, ..."

I've seen this term a couple of times no in this post. Might you are someone else explain what a "\$XB fintech" is?

[reply](#)

▲ mottozzo 11 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

A billion dollar fintech company, the X being how many billions.

[reply](#)

▲ ggcdn 11 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

"\$X billion fintech" was my interpretation

[reply](#)

▲ emteycz 9 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

Ex-Borg financial technology... Resistance is futile!

[reply](#)

▲ TedShiller 7 hours ago | root | parent | prev | next [-]

\$XB is the symbol for a new cryptocurrency called XBitCoin, it's a fork of Bitcoin Cash.

[reply](#)

▲ mohanmcgeek 6 hours ago | root | parent | next [-]

Not everything in the world has to do with Bitcoin.

This one means a >unicorn

[reply](#)

▲ fredgrott 6 hours ago | parent | prev | next [-]

We are approaching this wrong. We should not look at ghosting as a personal attack. If you want a fiend to bring to yhe interview get a dog, comes to mind.

Also compare how a lowly cook handles interviews at a new dinning place. It's none of the entitled BS but oh a new adventure...lets see what happens.

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