

The Miami Dolphins' Offended Lineman: Richie Incognito vs Jonathan Martin

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Abstract

On October 28, 2013, offensive lineman Jonathan Martin went missing from the Miami Dolphins training facility after being the subject of a prank in the cafeteria at dinnertime. Martin's whereabouts were unknown for several hours until he contacted coaches and family members to let them know he had checked into a hospital. The media investigation into the event and the subsequent weeks ended up uncovering an environment of harassment and bullying in the Miami locker rooms among the team members and staff. The story was covered nationwide by the traditional media. The events were also featured on websites like *ESPN*, *SB Nation*, and *Bleacher Report*, and were covered heavily on Twitter.

News outlets published transcriptions of voicemails, text messages and personal interactions between Incognito and Martin that showed offensive and harassing behavior between the teammates. Players on the Miami Dolphins team voiced their support for the alleged harasser, Richie Incognito, defending him by saying it was common practice to behave in such a manner in NFL locker rooms.

Learning Outcomes

After reading the case, a student should be able to:

1. Describe the concepts of reputation and reputation management
2. Apply and evaluate the principle of reputation management as it relates to the seven reactive public relations strategies
3. Analyze the potential pros and cons of each reactive strategy
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the way the Miami Dolphins management handled the situation

Application

This is a decision case where students consider the events leading up to the eventual final suspension of Incognito, and the potential decisions the Miami Dolphins organization might make to mitigate the PR crisis on their hands.

Key Words

Reputation Management, Public Relations

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