

[Editor's note: This document was provided to me by Jem Zero and is hosted on my site with their consent. At Jem's request, I removed/redacted references to Lisa Green's author penname, as Jem and I were not sure how publicly those identities are linked. – *Erin Fulmer*]

Timeline of important events pertaining to the dissolution of the publishing contract between City Owl Press and author jem zero:

- **Jun 20, 2023**

- Contract for A SPARK IN HIS HAND (Voltaik #1) is signed; acquired by Lisa Green (City Owl editor) from Jem Z. ("jem zero").

- **Oct 27, 2023**

- I (Jem) initiate a conversation with Lisa Green on Discord. I mention that "current political atmosphere" is making it difficult for me to work on the second book in Voltaik (V2), which addresses "late-stage genocide." LG immediately refers to the discussion of genocide as 'propaganda.'
- Since she brought it up, I honestly inform her that I am Pro-Palestine and Anti-Zionist. I clarify that I do not condone antisemitism. Then, I request that we do not discuss it deeper.

jemz 10/27/2023 1:02 PM

my celebration was quickly turned into SLEEPY 😊



but like, so, the current political atmosphere is making writing about late-stage genocide uhhh *intense*

10/27/2023 1:06 PM

Be careful please. I am Jewish and there is a lot of propoganda out there. I'm for peace but I'm super sensitive right now

jemz 10/27/2023 1:06 PM

i was wondering if you were jewish actually so i'm glad you mentioned



you might want to avoid/mute my twitter timeline for the time being because i am RTing and boosting some heavy heavy stuff but while i am pro-palestine and against zionism, which i think is fair for you to know (but you can forget if you'd like), i am also very vehemently opposed to antisemitism and do not condone it ANYWHERE in activism of any sort.

i don't believe in "i have [marginalized] loved ones so i care about [identity]" but i actually almost converted to judaism after denouncing my xtian upbringing, so it's deeply dear to my heart

10/27/2023 1:10 PM

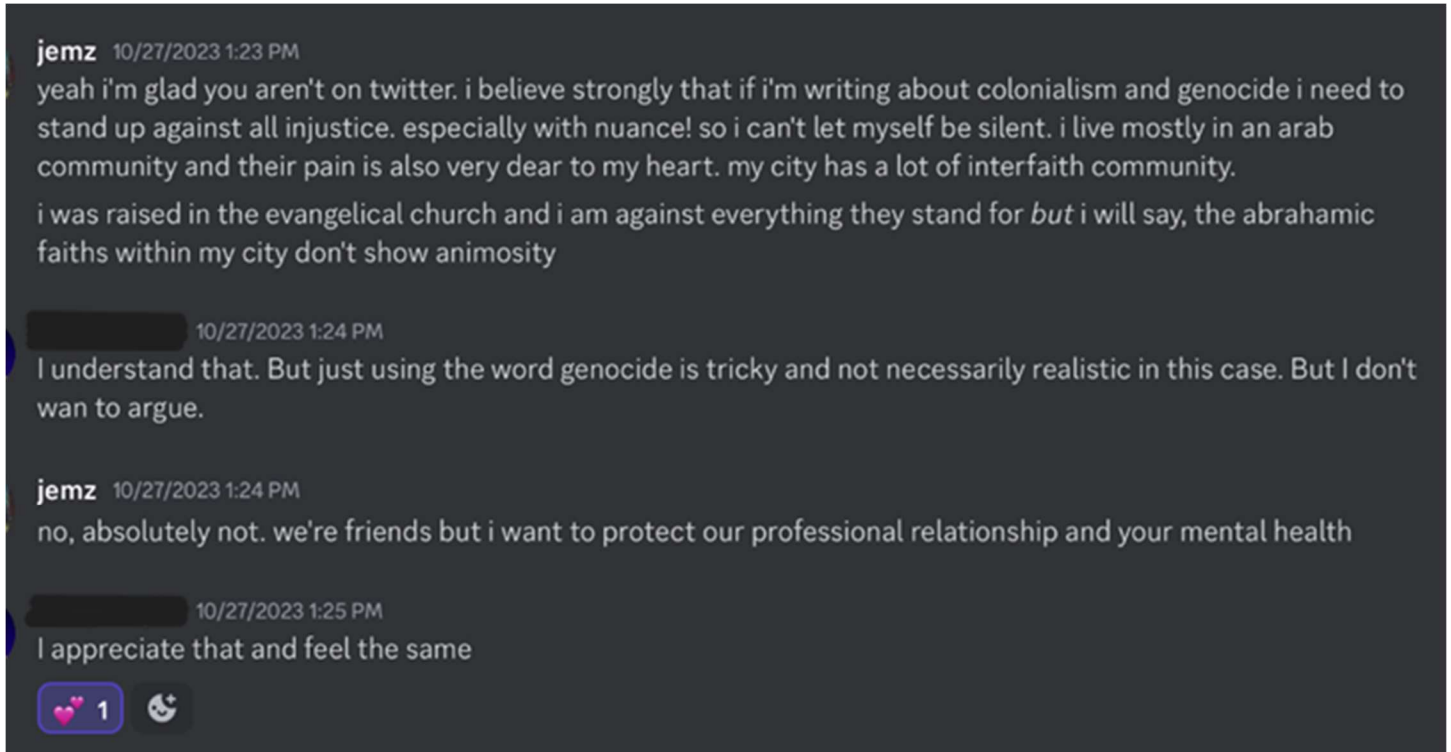
I am not on Twitter anymore so you're safe. But I seriously caution you to really check the info.

jemz 10/27/2023 1:11 PM

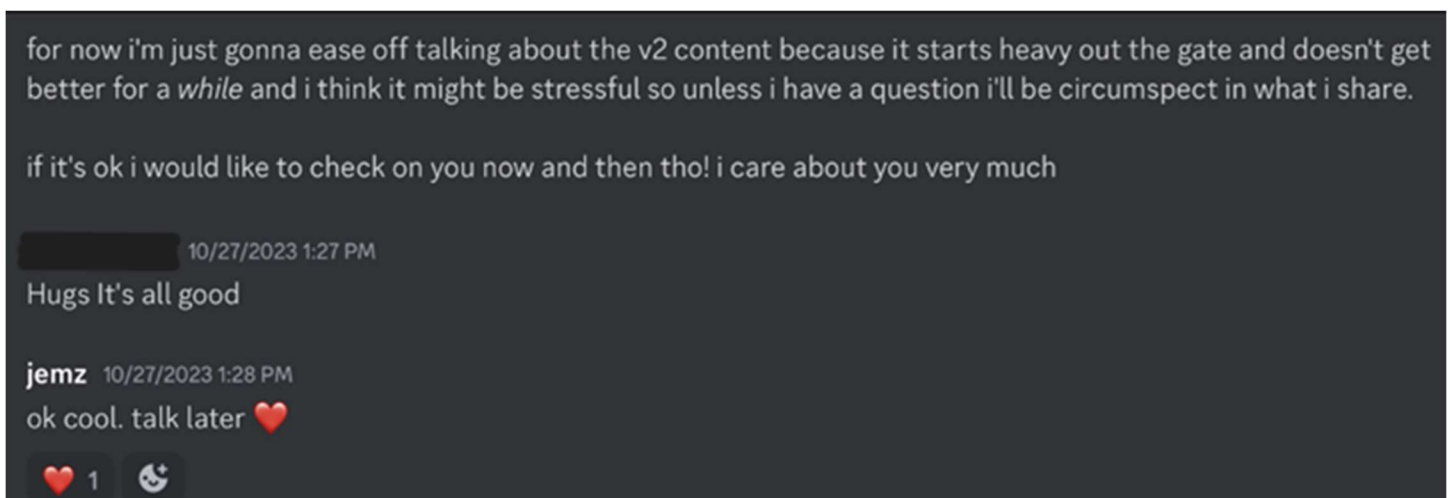
i promise i do my best to look at facts, but for sensitivity's sake it's probably better we not discuss it deeper. just know i would never, ever justify the harm against any marginalized group, but especially not jewish people.

- I go on to explain that I believe writing about colonialism and genocide means I should not be silent about the real-world incidents of these evils. LG says: "...using the word **genocide** ... **is not necessarily realistic**" in the case of bombing Palestinian people in Gaza, their homeland.
- Again, I request that we don't discuss the topic any further, as I'm unsettled by this statement. I say I would like to protect her mental health, as well as our professional relationship.

■ *Note: When I say "absolutely not" I am referring to "wanting to argue."*



- I state that I'm going to "ease off" talking about the content of V2 because a primary theme of the story, deeply explored within this book, is the history of colonialism/genocide within this setting.
- I follow this by asking if I can check on LG, to which she responds positively.



- This is the last conversation LG and I ever have.

- **Nov 2 & 9, 2023**

- I send LG updates about V2's progress. Neither include heavy topics. Neither receive a reply.

- **Nov 9, 2023**

- I receive the following email from Tina Moss, COO of City Owl Press:

Tina City Owl <tmoss@cityowlpress.com>
to me ▼

Thu, Nov 9, 2023, 8:23 PM



Hi Jem,

I hope this email finds you well. I wanted to talk with you about an editorial change. I know you and Lisa talked for a bit regarding issues outside of writing, and that it's put you both in an uncomfortable spot.

To be clear, I, personally, do not and will not, ever support genocide or ethnic cleansing. I cannot see any reasonable person supporting those things.

I do understand the painful history in Palestine-Israel, but I am not Jewish or Arab, and thus, I cannot understand the real terror that comes from living in a world rampant with antisemitism and Islamophobia. So, I want to give everyone on the team, editors and authors alike, space and grace to vocalize, discuss, and process those emotions.

Lisa is an incredibly empathetic and empathic person, and her suffering regarding world events is palpable. At this time, she needs to step back from it.

- Tina goes on to offer me a new editor, who will go unnamed. I request a video meeting to discuss the situation with both Tina and the new editor. The meeting takes place **Nov 13, 2023**. I leave it feeling positive, if sad, but am mostly satisfied by my discussion with Tina about my views on Palestine vs. Zionism, the conflict with LG, and the heavy themes addressed in Voltaik.

- *Note: The entire arc of the trilogy is covered. This includes the core plot focusing on survivors of a genocide.*

- **Dec 11, 2023**

- I inform Tina Moss of my decision to void my contract with City Owl Press. Tina responds acknowledging the decision and giving information on what will happen next.
- In response to my situation with LG, Tina says she doesn't know Lisa's stance on "the subject."

Tina Moss

to me ▼

Dec 11, 2023, 1:33 PM



Hi Jem,

I'm sorry to hear you won't be moving forward, but I understand your decision. I hope ASIHH finds a great agent who will champion the project.

To address your concerns, I want to be clear that I don't know Lisa's stance on the subject. I have known her for many years, however, and believe her to be a kind and compassionate person. I cannot begin to imagine or understand the complexities of her feelings. But I feel badly that your friendship cannot be salvaged. Losing friends is never easy. But you need to do what is best for you.

- I respond that I am basing my conclusions about LG's opinions on her explicit wording. I also inform Tina that I will be announcing the reason I will not be publishing A SPARK IN HIS HAND with City Owl, but will not name names or encourage any harassment.

Re: Lisa, I don't know what her present thoughts are, but I am referencing her explicit words during our conversation. I do not think she's an unkind person—I've experienced and heard much the opposite—but pertaining to this issue, I think she is on a tragically wrong path. I wish I could say different, because I very much loved her as a friend, and she was the editor I really needed. Since this happened I've felt lost and hopeless, and I don't think that will ever go away.

I will be posting on my social media an explanation of why my book contract has ended. It'll be truthful, but I will not be naming names, nor will I be tolerating harassment or smear campaigns against the press.

- **Dec 11, 2023**


- The contract release between myself and City Owl is fully processed.

- **Dec 13, 2023**

- I officially announce on X/Twitter the circumstances surrounding the dissolution of my contract. I claim my editor stepped away because I support Palestine. This is based on the evidence produced above.
 - The tweet can be found here:
https://twitter.com/jem_zero/status/1734952203150864593

 **jem z. will follow-thru** 🌟 @jem_zero · Dec 13, 2023 ...
I'm disappointed to announce that my contract for A SPARK IN HIS HAND with City Owl Press has been voided. This was a hard decision, because I was quite happy until my editor stepped away from working on the trilogy because I am a supporter of Palestine.

💬 19 ↻ 69 ❤️ 332 📊 31K 📌 ⬆

 **jem z. will follow-thru** 🌟 @jem_zero · Dec 13, 2023 ...
Please note that everyone else I spoke to at City Owl was extremely helpful & kind in allowing me time to process and consider voiding the contract or going with another editor. In the end, I simply felt too hurt to proceed with the press.

Do not seek out anyone to harass them.

- City Owl Press does not in any way address my announcement, publicly or privately with the other authors.

- **Jan 4, 2024**

- I am informed that City Owl Press has been outed for unscrupulous business dealings. These are not mine to share or document, but the issue of my conflict with LG is brought up.
- I receive information that Tina sent an email claiming LG's feelings about the subject matter of V2 (genocide) were the reason for LG withdrawing from the project.
 - *"We would never, absolutely never, cancel a debut author's book for being pro-Palestinian. I am personally devastated regarding that situation and the author's book. Navigating the feelings of our Jewish editor with the subject matter of the author's next book in series (genocide) was the crux of the matter."*
- If this claim is true, why would that not have been mentioned in any of the previous discussions I had with LG or Tina, regarding Voltaik's content?

These are the content warnings for A SPARK IN HIS HAND:

CONTENT WARNINGS:

- Ableism including labor exploitation, use of slurs
- Medical trauma, electro-shock torture
- Colonialism and discussion of historical genocide
- Explicit consensual sex
- Conflicts with a militarized police force
- Structural classism
- Non-violent misgendering of a side character who is intersex/nonbinary
- Description of various bodily functions/fluids
- Violence in self defense

At no point was it unclear, or a surprise, that Voltaik as a trilogy dealt with settler-colonialism and genocide.

Furthermore, on **July 11, 2023**, LG and I had a Zoom meeting in which I presented a detailed outline for V2, which she approved – this was before I began work on revising the book, so she had ample opportunity to speak up at that time.

- **Jan 6, 2024**

- Tina Moss sends another email accusing me of misinterpreting the incident.
 - *Note: I am a transmasculine person, which the City Owl team knows. Tina refers to me as she/her this entire email, despite my pronouns being they/them.*

8) Given our history of humanitarian support for Ukraine, and that a previously signed City Owl Press author allegedly no longer has a contract due to the in-house handling of feelings around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, what steps are you taking to ascertain how best to respond publicly to City Owl Press's stance on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

Unfortunately, that incident was misinterpreted, and I have said openly to anyone that asks the following: the author was writing a second book in the series that had a major plot line tied to genocide. The editor was not comfortable continuing with that book given the subject matter for her mental health. The author was asked if she'd like to work with another editor, and after having a Zoom meeting, we all agreed that her book was important and timely and deserved the chance to be queried to agents. We even said the contract could remain open, if the author did not find an agent, and wanted to come back and publish with us. The author later chose not to.

There is no way for us to put out a statement regarding that incident without refuting the author's feelings and perspectives. And given the highly charged subject matter, we cannot do so.

As to a statement regarding the conflict, our concern is as I mentioned before. There are no good answers with this.

Thank you,
Tina

Tina Moss
Chief Operating Officer

There are multiple social media posts in which LG refers to pro-Palestine viewpoints as propaganda, as well as genocide denial. In addition, LG has DM'd and blocked multiple others, using the same language. This includes COP-affiliates who prefer to remain anonymous.

Tina has never addressed my statement personally, and at this point I have no desire to speak to LG. If Tina could provide evidence I was told directly that LG stepped away for her mental health **due to the content of V2**, I would retract my statement. Until then, I will continue to maintain that LG withdrew due to my stance on Israel's genocidal targeting of Palestine, after she deliberately sought the information.