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Bud Light truck drivers have been flipped the bird, called homophobic slurs in wake of Dylan Mulvaney fiasco

By **Ariel Zilber** May 26, 2023 12:39pm Updated

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drivers **who deliver Bud Light** have been flipped the middle finger and vendors have been called homophobic slurs, according to beer distributors reeling from slumping sales in the wake of the Dylan Mulvaney fiasco.

Several top officials at beer distribution companies **told ABC News** they have been put in an untenable position by Bud Light's St. Louis-based parent company, Anheuser-Busch, which has seen sales of its top brand fall six consecutive weeks since the April 1 tie-up with the trans influencer.

Aside from harassing truck drivers, distributors have faced intentional collisions from shopping

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carts as they drop off Bud Light and vendors have been called “gay beer salesmen,” officials for the family-owned businesses told the outlet.

“I feel like my main supplier has put the wholesalers and their employees in a really bad spot,” one Anheuser-Busch beer distributor told ABC News.

“It’s frustrating.”

Another Anheuser-Busch distributor based in the Pacific Northwest told ABC News: “It’s sad that they [the boycotting consumers] can’t make that disconnect between the independent wholesale and a big corporation — it’s disheartening.”



Bud Light distributors nationwide are bearing the brunt of the boycott that was launched last month.

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NOW ON



Sales of Bud Light and other Anheuser-Busch products have fallen for six straight weeks.

Christopher Sadowski

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Bud Light has come under fire over its marketing partnership with social media influencer Dylan Mulvaney.

@dylanmulvaney via REUTERS

A Kansas-based distributor, Pestinger Distribution Company, which serves 23 rural counties in the state, told ABC News that it has seen a nearly 30% fall in sales of Bud Light since boycott calls grew early last month.

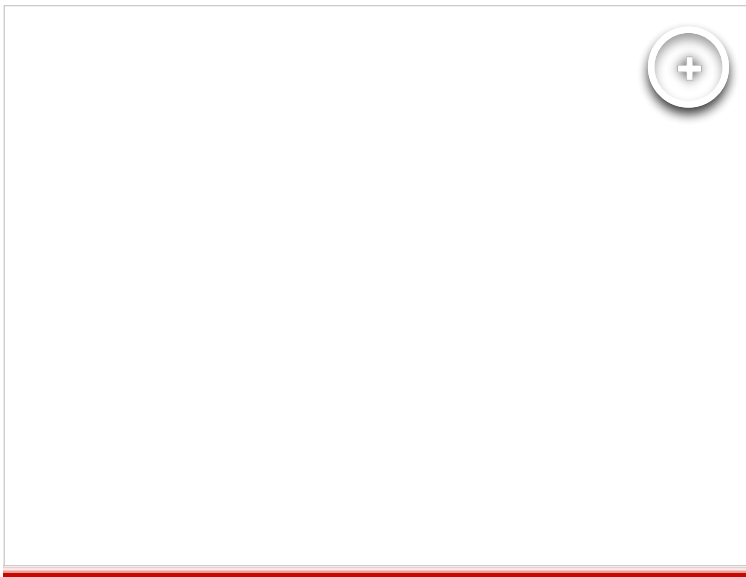
Anson Frericks, an executive who left Anheuser-Busch InBev last year, told ABC News: “The biggest losers here are the 500 independent businesses in the US that distribute Anheuser-Busch products.”

“Those are the people really hurting,” Frericks said.

Matt Pestinger, the owner of the distributor, told ABC News that he has seen a 2% drop in revenue since the Mulvaney social media posts went viral.

“We’re stressed some because you never want to see red numbers,” he said.

Pestinger has resisted cutting costs. To make up for the shortfall, he has spent more on sponsorships of local festivals and charities, he told ABC News.



Truck drivers delivering Anheuser-Busch products have reported being given the middle finger by passersby.

Facebook

“Our business philosophy is you take care of the community and the community takes care of you — we’re doubling down on that,” Pestinger said.

An official at High Plains Budweiser, a Nebraska-based distributor, told ABC News: “In the end, the people hurt the most are the local small business retailers and wholesalers in your community.”

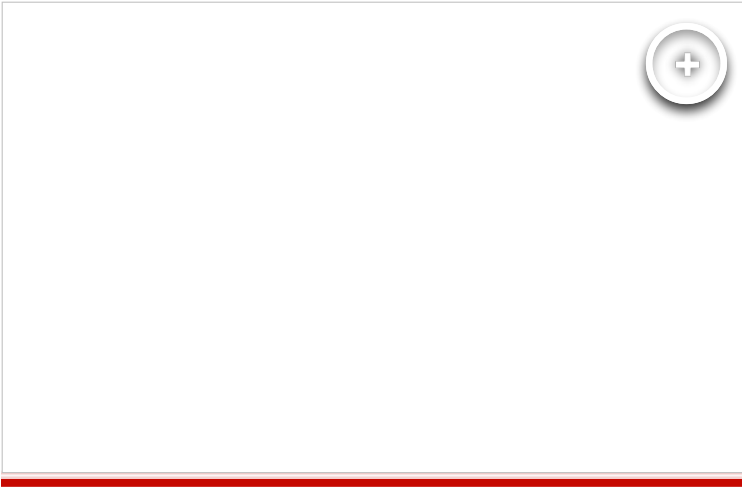
The Kansas-based distributor told ABC News that while sales have slipped, there have been signs that they are picking up again.

The Pacific-Northwest-based distributor agreed, telling ABC News: “I think the bad times are behind us.”

“We do have a game plan if it does come to that level of severity,” the distributor said.

Last week, Steve Tatum, general manager of Montgomery, Ala.-based Bama Budweiser, **paid for a radio commercial in hopes of reassuring** alienated consumers that he wasn’t on board with Bud Light’s social media campaign partnership with Mulvaney.

“We too at Bama Budweiser are upset about it and have made our feelings known to the top leadership at Anheuser-Busch,” Tatum said.



Several beer distributors have reported falling revenue as a result of the boycott.

Alamy Stock Photo

Steep drops in sales of Bud Light **continued to worsen for the sixth consecutive week**, plunging by nearly 25% **since the ill-fated promotion with Mulvaney**, the latest industry data shows.

Sales of the US's No. 1 beer were down 24.6% for the week ended May 13 compared to a year ago — slightly worse than the 23.6% dip they suffered a week earlier, according to Bump Williams Consulting and NielsenIQ research.

Even more alarming, industry experts say, **is the negative impact on Anheuser-Busch InBev's other brands**, including Budweiser and Michelob Ultra — with the latter being the nation's No. 3 beer last year with more than \$3.3 billion in sales.

FILED UNDER ANHEUSER-BUSCH, BEER, BUD LIGHT, DYLAN MULVANEY, SOCIAL MEDIA, 5/26/23

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