

From: Tom Croskrey

[REDACTED] Date: June 2, 2020

at 3:22:40 PM PDT To: Lexi Wingfield

<Lexi.Wingfield@co.benton.wa.us> Cc:

"[REDACTED]"

Subject: Complaint

Lexi,

I would like to file a Hostile Work complaint. This email serves as notice of that complaint.

Complaint: Hostile Work Environment

Subject: Jerry Hatcher (Sheriffs Office)

Issue: Due to threats, anger, lies and in general horrible working conditions I am unable to return to work.

In 2019 I was hired to act as the Commander of the Benton County Jail. I was performing those duties for several months. As a new member of the department I was taking my time to determine what issues the employees were facing and then work through solutions. After being there for a few months it became apparent that the main problem was the elected sheriff Hatcher. I learned that the jail staff was short 12 positions and they were in need of training and equipment. I did my best to hire staff and purchase needed equipment from the existing budget.

When I approached the sheriff with these issues I was met with anger and hostility. I was allowed to hire some corrections staff but not the needed clerical, I was seldom allowed to send clerical employees to training. For example; I was able to get one training request approved but it took three in person visits over a three day period to get approval. I believe this to be horrible leadership and fraud. Fraud because of the time it took me to get approval was a complete waste.

Another example of jail issues was the defensive tactics training suit. The instructors had to use duct tape to hold the suit on during training. I inspected the suit and asked Captain Shelton why we didn't order a new one. Captain Shelton said that he asked but the sheriff wouldn't let him replace it. This suit was a danger to the employees who had to use it. This was a disgrace to the men and women of the jail. I made the purchase of new equipment without notice to the sheriff, this was really the only way to take care of the people.

Months later the sheriff was accused of assaulting his wife and witness tampering. This is when the department took a turn for the worse. I met with Jerry Hatcher the day the Herald released the story. During our meeting the sheriff

admitted to me to grabbing Monica (his wife) by the neck. He was later accused of witness tampering, he admitted these crimes to several people in the department and subjected numerous employees to stories about “great” make up sex with his wife. This created a lot of angst among the staff and me, as his discussion was an admission of witness tampering (a felony) and is a text book pattern from our domestic violence training that we as police receive.

For about two weeks the sheriff took a leave of absence and placed me in charge of the office. For two weeks people were happy and tension was reduced. During that time the commissioners took control of the jail and I was moved to the patrol side of the house as a Commander.

Once the Sheriff came back to work, around November he started on a rampage of trying to find out who had been talking to his wife. He told me that, “When I find out who’s talking to my wife they’re through!” I took this as a direct threat to my employment because I had talked to his wife per department policy.

Over the next several months things rapidly declined and tension became worse especially when the stolen ammo was located at Jerry’s house. During this time period the Sheriff Deputies Guild filed their second vote of no confidence. Once the second vote of no confidence was posted Jerry became enraged and hell bent on finding out who was behind all of this, he believes there is some one instigating his troubles and has never realized that he is the cause behind the issues.

During this time period the sheriff was grasping at straws and trying to get the guild to retract their letter or write a different letter showing support for him. That is when the sheriff said that he was going to line up every deputy and interview them and make “Brady cops” out of them. Making Brady Cops is the kiss of death for a police officer, the sheriff was basically saying he would ruin everyone’s career. This was especially upsetting for me since my son is employed as a Deputy at the department. This was an indirect threat to my sons career and livelihood.

In another conversation Jerry told me that he was going to call my son into the office and investigate him. Usually when you investigate an employee there is a complaint or accusation, but there was none, he just said he was going to start an Internal Affairs case on my son (for no reason). I took this as a direct threat to me and my son. Right after saying he was going to start and I/A on my son he asked me to call the Tri-City Herald and give them a positive supporting for him. I took this whole conversation as a threat and an attempt to coerce me into supporting him. I refused to do this.

There are many other examples of issues. All of Jerry’s hostility, anger, lies and attempts to manipulate me has caused me great stress and anxiety. I am mostly concerned about my sons future. To think that I told him (my son) that the sheriffs office was a great place to work and he ultimately chose the department makes me feel horrible that I am the cause of ruining his career and livelihood. It makes me sick to my stomach that the sheriff would target him in an investigation solely to control me to support him is the most disgusting thing I have witnessed in my entire life.

I have since had to seek medical treatment for depression and anxiety. Before coming to work at the Sheriff’s Office I had a long and meaningful career and retired as a Police Officer. Since being hired by Jerry he has humiliated me, lied

about me, used me as a scape goat, and treated me horribly. My work office is actually the copy room. I had the printer removed from the copy room so that I had room to meet with employees. I asked Jerry if I could use one of the vacant offices and he said, "No."

Also, recently Jerry had Franklin County conduct a civil department investigation on the ammo that was found at his house. He told me that it was simply a few boxes of training ammo. Jerry assigned me to be there liaison for Franklin County investigators. During this time of the investigation I saw Jerry obstruct his own investigation and secretly change the course of the investigation. This is obstruction.

He used the investigation of ammo as a cover story to find out who was talking to his wife. I believe this is corruption and Malfeasance of Office.

I also believe that I am a witness to a Whistleblower and being intentionally targeted by Jerry. I have also witnessed Jerry committing violations of the Whistleblower Act on other employees.

I also asked Jerry to promote me to the rank of Undersheriff and let me take care of the morale issues. Jerry refuses and said, "You missed it." I asked what I missed. He said that I missed the conspiracy against him and because of this he would not promote me. This to me was a very telling problem of someone who has a mental health issue. He truly believes that there is a secret group of people trying to take his position, but there is not. He has brought so much shame and embarrassment to our office that nobody wants to take his place. He basically destroyed everything. There are many other examples of Hostility in the workplace and I would like to some day document them with an investigator. Until then the stress and anxiety put on me by Jerry Hatcher is too great and it goes against my moral compass to work for someone who is using their elected office to cover up and conceal criminal activity.

For these reasons I am filing a hostile work complaint and stating that due to the hostility that it has affected my health and well-being so greatly that I am no longer able to go to work. I am out of sick time, and only have a couple hours of vacation.

Working for Jerry has broken me.

I am done.

Sincerely

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Tom Croskrey