

Classic Example of Pathetic Leadership of the Dorn VA Medical Center

January 9, 2020

- In the mechanics shop at Dorn VA Medical Center in Columbia, South Carolina, Mr. Jose Manuel Marrero Jr. was allegedly assaulted by Mr. Joseph Norris (pictured on right); witnessed by Mr. Randal Jack Minton and Mr. Elisha Jefferson around 06:30 am.

This all occurred while Mr. Marrero was filling out paperwork for checking out the forklift with his work leader Mr. Minton

- Mr. Marrero continued to do the work that he was assigned before going to see the Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator (EEOC) and the police, not only to file a complaint but also to press charges for assault and battery.

He did not feel comfortable utilizing the chain of command so he by-passed the chain of supervision just like he was originally instructed to do in NEO (New Employee Orientation).

- Before going by the EEOC office, Mr. Marrero returned to the mechanics shop to return the keys to the forklift. He rang the buzzer Mr. Norris answered the door and, according to Marrero, started to make an apology by *stating "I don't know what I was thinking but it sounded good in my head at the time."*

Mr. Marrero was concerned because this did not sound like a genuine apology. It was more like an excuse and not a very good one at that. Mr. Marrero got the impression that Norris was thinking about his behavior and talking it over in his head.

- Mr. Marrero went to the EEOC Mrs. Tori Thomson around 09:45am. Mrs. Thomson and Mr. Marrero spoke about the incident and Marrero's options concerning the assault and battery. Mr. Marrero and Mrs. Thomson discussed what he had to do in order to properly file a complaint about the attack.
- After leaving the EEOC office, Mr. Marrero stopped by Officer Christopher Paxton (pictured on right above) and Major Calvin Rascoe's office (Rascoe in uniform below) and spoke with Officer Paxton about how to go about pressing charges against Norris.
- Mr. Marrero arrived at the Dorn VA Medical Center police department around 10:45 or so, located by the Emergency Room, where he was greeted by Officer Richardson.



Mr. Marrero proceeded to tell Officer Richardson that he wanted to press charges against Norris for the assault and battery. Officer Richardson did not seem receptive at first. According to Mr. Marrero Richardson made him feel his attempt to file a complaint was too much of a bother.

When Mr. Marrero told Officer Richardson there were witnesses then he changed his tune a little bit. He instructed Mr. Marrero to fill out a statement to the best of his capability and be precise.

- Mr. Marrero wrote his statement which at the time he claimed he was still feeling anxious about the whole situation. They also took pictures of his back but, because he had three layers of clothing on, there were no marks especially since time lapsed before he reported it. After this, he reported back to duty and completed the workday.
- Mr. Marrero went to Lexington Medical Center and reported the incident with the Urgent Care department. They examined him for any further damage and reported that Joseph Norris had worsened his existing deteriorating back condition and the attack most likely caused Marrero increased back pain.

January 10, 2020

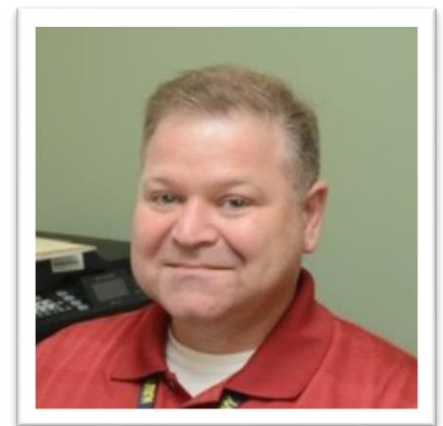
- Mr. Marrero called in sick the following day because he was in excruciating pain. Marrero reported his back was still inflamed by the incident. He took Naproxen that was prescribed by his Primary Care doctor at the VA. Marrero was already undergoing physical therapy prior to this physical attack as described by Norris.

January 11-12, 2020

- Mr. Marrero did very little during the weekend but nurse his back to minimize the pain and suffering he was caused to endure. Marrero made arrangements for someone else to pick up his children from school to avoid further pain and the potential for additional injury.

January 13, 2020

- Mr. Marrero went to work as usual Monday morning, but avoided his usual parking area so as to avoid another confrontation with Mr. Norris. His workplace had become toxic and he wanted to do whatever he could to avoid Norris because of his proclivity towards violence.
- Later in the day he was told that he needed to go see Mr. David Bagley (pictured on right), who was his supervisor at the time. Mr. Bagley temporarily replaced, Mr. Jonathan Stirewalt who was his original supervisor until the engineering department hired a new supervisor.



Marrero explained to Bagley the circumstances concerning the assault he was subjected to. Bagley replied that he felt the assault was an “isolated incident,” and that he had to take Mr. Norris’s word that assaulting

a fellow coworker wouldn't happen again.

- One point in their conversation, Mr. Bagley stated the assault was being characterized as an “accident” based on what Mrs. Tori Thomson and the VA police had told him. Mr. Bagley asked Mr. Marrero to avoid Mr. Norris and stay out of their shop where the assault occurred. The leadership from Bagley was to victimize the victim once again. The workplace was toxic and Bagley didn't want to get involved.

According to Mr. Marrero, it was impossible to avoid Mr. Norris because the mechanics shop is right next to the shop where Marrero worked. Furthermore, they also must report to the mechanics when their equipment goes down or is having mechanical issues.

January 14, 2020

- Mr. Marrero stated that he made up his mind to permanently change his parking habits and started avoiding going around his own shop except in the early morning upon arrival and only at the end the day.
- Feeling the entire matter was being whitewashed; Mr. Marrero went by the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) office and filed for a copy of the police report involving the incident.
- A co-worker Alex Reid approached Mr. Marrero about the matter. He asked Mr. Marrero what had happened between Mr. Norris and him. Mr. Marrero said, ***“This is how fast news travels around there”!*** Mr. Marrero reported that he told Mr. Reid that he could not discuss the matter. Mr. Reid replied that he just wanted to make sure Mr. Marrero was alright.
- Mr. Marrero reported that he ended up running into Mr. Norris over by the CONEX buildings where the department stored equipment. Mr. Norris was getting something out of the mechanics CONEX and Mr. Kenneth Walton, and Mr. Marrero were shoveling mulch onto the cart for another job they were working on..

January 15, 2020

- Mr. Marrero went by at 9:00 am and saw the Chief Investigator Mark Webb (pictured on right). Mr. Webb gave Mr. Marrero the police report number.

Mr. Marrero was told by Mr. Webb that the officer's name was William Richardson, and that Mr. Marrero could check on Monday to obtain a copy of the report. He apparently told Marrero that submitting a FOIA request was not the proper way to obtain a copy of the report.



January 16, 2020

- Mr. Marrero noticed a mistake of 8 hours of overtime being on his check at 12:30 pm. Mr. Marrero, told Mr. Bagley he did not work these hours and was trying to be honest about it. Mr. Marrero asked them to remove the excess hours. Was Marrero being set up to be fired under trumped up charges?

Mr. Bagley joked with Mr. Marrero about the matter in the presence of Don Knight, saying Mr. Marrero owed him 5 hours back. Mr. Marrero told him he would rather him take it off, but Mr. Bagley replied, *“don’t worry about it and don’t say anything”*.

January 21, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said he ran into Mr. Joseph Norris at 07:34 am no words were exchanged.
- Mr. Randal Jack Minton Mr. Marrero’s work leader and Mr. Marrero spoke with Mr. Johnny Allen and several other Union workers at the Union around 12:30 pm. They informed him that it sounded like a hostile work environment and that he needed to launch a full investigation with the EEOC.
- Mr. Marrero checked on his FOIA police report request. They told him it should be ready by 1:00 pm and that he could pick it up then. So, he did.
- The police report lacked crucial information such as a request by Marrero to press criminal charges against Norris. The police report was made to look like the assault and battery was a simple matter that would be handled administratively, implying that Marrero was OK with that. The cover-up was now in effect.
- Mr. Marrero took the day off January 22, 2020, for an unscheduled leave day so he could make an appointment with Mrs. Tori Thomson the EEOC representative for the Dorn VA Hospital in Columbia SC.
- Spoke with Mrs. Thompson around 12:45 pm, she asked Marrero to come back around 3:00 pm.
- Mr. Marrero asked about filing an EEOC complaint. She presented him with a flier that tells him how to contact ORM (Office of Resolution Management).

January 23, 2020

- Mr. Marrero started the day off late cause he couldn’t sleep; he was having anxiety and nightmares over this incident that happened to him. When would he be attacked again from behind?
- He had to put in leave for 30 minutes because he was late for work.
- 9:11 am: Mr. Marrero stopped by to see Mr. Bagley per his request. He stated he wanted to check up on him and see how he was doing. Translation; Bagley was probably more interested in keeping a lid on things, rather than a concern for Marrero.

Mr. Marrero said he told him that he had lost sleep because of this and that it was causing him anxiety. Mr. Bagley told him if he wanted to file for reasonable accommodations that he could go see Ms. Christina Rose on the second floor in BLDG 22.

- That afternoon around 1:31 pm Mr. Marrero spoke with Ms. Christina Rose, and she advised him of how reasonable accommodations worked and what he needed to do. She took his email information and sent

him the necessary forms to fill out.

January 27, 2020

- A friend of Mr. Marrero, Mr. Beverley Bush Meyers, offered to arrange a meeting with Major Rascoe in order to correct the way the police report was written. Mr. Marrero told Mr. Meyers that he recorded his supervisor Mr. Bagley, saying that the assault was an “accident.”
- Mr. Marrero spoke with Major Rascoe, witnessed by Officer Christopher Paxton and played the recording for Major Rascoe. Major Rascoe said he felt like the case was not handled properly by Officer William Richardson after listening to the recording.

Major Rascoe called Officer Richardson and told him to swing by his office. Officer Paxton, Mr. Marrero and Major Rascoe were in the office. When Officer Richardson arrived about ten minutes after getting the call from Major Rascoe.

Major Rascoe told Officer Richardson that he didn’t believe that he even listened to the victim at all, and the victim wanted to know why charges weren’t pressed like the victim requested.

Officer Richardson in turn said to Mr. Marrero that he thought that Mr. Marrero’s chain of supervision would handle the matter administratively. Mr. Marrero injected, ***“Oh really! You really think so? Do you?”*** Marrero shared how frustrated he was, and how betrayed he felt by the system who was protecting the perpetrator of the crime.

Mr. Marrero then played the part of the recording where Mr. Bagley states that the EEOC and the VA police said it was an “accident.”

Mr. Marrero said they sent him out of the office to talk to Richardson alone and then called Mr. Marrero back into the office so Officer Richardson could take a revised statement from Mr. Marrero and redo the report with Simple Assault charges instead of the original “official” police write up. Officer Richardson left the office to get that done immediately.

- Major Rascoe told Mr. Marrero as they got done with this meeting that they were going to ensure that Officer Richardson was going to issue a citation for simple assault. They told Marrero this will ultimately end up in court.

January 30, 2020

- Mr. Marrero contacted ORM to file for a hostile work environment and he was told that the incident of assault was not a matter for them to handle unless it was harassment or discrimination. They said that it was a VA police matter, so they had to handle it. He got the same answer from the VISN7 EEO office.
- Mr. Marrero said he was still isolating himself and still having to avoid his assailant. Mr. Marrero said Mr. Norris is still employed and as far as he knows no suspension has ever occurred, not even a reprimand.

February 3, 2020

- Mr. Marrero invoked the FOIA act to retrieve the second police report that Officer Richardson had to redo.

February 10, 2020

- At 08:18am Mr. Marrero made note that Mr. Joseph Norris was still employed here at the VA even after the police report had been corrected. The Dorn VA Medical Center, according to Marrero, was basically endorsing assault and battery in the workplace with their lack of action against Norris. A hostile work environment at the Dorn VA Medical center is nothing to be concerned about.



February 13, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said this meeting was set up by Mr. Sterling Bird (pictured on right above).
- Mr. Marrero met with Mr. Jeffery Soots (pictured on right, below), and he explained to him what had happened. Mr. Soot's told Mr. Marrero that it was indeed a hostile work environment and that a **No Contact Order** should have been filed immediately when the assault happened first thing.



Mr. Marrero told Mr. Soot's he had a recording with Mr. Bagley saying the EEOC and the VA police said it was an "accident" and asked Mr. Soot's if he wanted to hear it? Mr. Soot's replied **"No and I am going to pretend like you didn't say that."**

According to Mr. Marrero, Mr. Soot's also said, The VA police were supposed to confiscate the recording because what he had done was illegal. Marrero didn't know that in America, it's illegal to protect yourself from clandestine cover-up artists.

Mr. Marrero replied that's funny because he had allowed Major Rascoe to listen to it, and he did not confiscate it. Mr. Soot's is the Associate Director of the Dorn VA Medical Center and apparently damage control artist to protect Director David Omura.

February 20, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said he was called into Mr. Bagley's office, and was told, I guess you must sign one of these as well since he made Joseph Norris sign one too. So, Norris finally signed a no contact order.

February 25, 2020

- Mr. Marrero went to work and performed his duties as normal and reported that he checked with Major Rascoe to see when his court date was supposed to be. Major Rascoe said he hadn't heard anything yet, but he would get back to me. Mr. Marrero said he spoke with him around 1:00 pm.

March 18, 2020

- Mr. Marrero had an appointment for Physical Therapy. He had previously spoken with Mr. Bagley about his appointments and gotten permission to attend them. Mr. Bagley told him to just let himself or

his work leader know when he had to leave.

Mr. Marrero failed to give Mr. Bagley advance notice of this appointment. He searched for him before he left, but he was unable to locate Mr. Bagley, so he called his work leader, Mr. Minton, who happened to be off that day.

Mr. Marrero also submitted a leave request early that morning to cover the time he was at PT and for the remainder of the afternoon, because the therapy would always leave him sore. While at his appointment, Mr. John Hanna attempted to find Mr. Marrero to assign a task for him to complete.

March 19, 2020

- Mr. Marrero arrived at work as usual to do his job as always and he found out his leave request had been denied. Mr. Hanna was the person in charge of approving leave requests.
- Mr. Marrero was told by his co-workers that Mr. John Hanna was angry and running around looking for him the previous day and that when they told him that Mr. Marrero was off, he replied that he would “fix that.”
- Upon seeing that his leave was denied, Mr. Marrero sent an email to Mr. Hanna regarding the matter. He told Mr. Marrero that because he did not notify his supervisor and that Mr. Bagley now required a doctor's excuse for such appointments.



Jose Marrero working his ass off at the “Healing Garden.”

- Later that day around 10:40, Mr. Hanna found Mr. Marrero and his work leader Mr. Randal Minton working in the Healing Garden (Garden shown above with Jose Marrero on right). He told them to report to the front of the hospital to sweep out the Triage tent that had been set up the previous day, since neither

one of them were at work on the day he needed them.

- Mr. Marrero stated when they arrived and attempted to sweep out the tent; they were stopped by the safety crew and Mr. Mark Green, because they were still getting it setup and were not ready for it to be swept. The two waited for the tent to be ready for sweeping and as they did, Mr. Joseph Norris arrived out front to fix a chain.

That type of job normally gets assigned to the grounds people. While walking away from the area to adhere to the No Contact Order, Mr. Marrero overheard Mr. Norris telling Mr. Minton that Mr. Hanna had sent him to fix the chain. Mr. Norris has been called “Hanna’s boy” by the ground’s workers.

July 21, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said he entered Reasonable Accommodations on this date.

September 14, 2020

- Mr. Joseph Norris has broken this No Contact Order on several occasions. The first time was when his buddy named Bam was training Mr. Marrero in the cardboard bin around 08:30am. Mr. Marrero reported this to Mr. Laney Johnson his supervisor.

Mr. Marrero was unsure if this was the guy’s real name or just a nick name nor he ever knew Bam’s full name. Mr. Marrero barely knew the guy just knew he was leaving the job and he was taking over for him while waiting for retirement or a decision about his reasonable accommodations.

September 16, 2020

- Mr. Norris went by the cardboard shop again. This time approaching Mr. Marrero about the assault and informing Mr. Marrero he had no hard feelings towards him, that he was going to have to perform preventive maintenance on the equipment in the cardboard bin and he did not want it to be awkward.

Mr. Marrero reminded Mr. Norris of the no contact order and reported this to Officer Paxton. Mr. Marrero inquired about if he considered dropping charges how would he go about it and Officer Paxton informed Mr. Marrero that he would have to go to court to do that if he wanted to.

November 10, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said on this day, he texted Mr. Bird to inform him that he was no longer going to have a job by the 22nd of this month.
- Mr. Marrero said he also texted Mr. Bird a copy of a job listing on usajobs.gov and it was a secretary (OA) position that opened on the 6th of November 2020 and closed on 30th of November 2020. Mr. Marrero said to Mr. Bird, why he couldn’t do this job.
- Between Mr. Zell’s recommendations as well as Office of General Counsel, Mr. Marrero must return fit for full duty, resign, or apply for medical retirement. If Mr. Marrero could not do that within five days,

they would have to take appropriate actions.

- Mr. Marrero said he had many conversations with Mr. Bird about what had happened to him on the job. To include what had happened to him while he was in the military. Mr. Marrero informed Mr. Bird that this incident had triggered his anxiety and that he had been diagnosed with PTSD, but it wasn't service connected.

Mr. Marrero said for some reason they have him service connected for anxiety and depression, but it is for treatment purposes only. He also stated he did not understand why they won't service connect his PTSD.

November 17, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said at 8:38 am that morning Mr. Norris yet again broke the **No Contact Order**. Mr. Norris told Mr. Marrero that he had left a tool in the vehicle that Mr. Marrero drives and had to retrieve it, so he did and left.

November 23, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said his 90 days of Reasonable Accommodations passed without them finding a job for him. They only searched in the Engineering Department. They told him his last options were to either quit or file to medically retire.

December 2, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said at 8:47 am, Mr. Norris came by the cardboard shop again. This time he told Mr. Marrero that, "Hey you didn't see me, but I am looking for 1ft x 1ft boxes" Mr. Marrero said he moved out of his way to let him get some boxes and he left. Later, he came back again for more boxes at 11:51 am.

December 10, 2020

- Mr. Marrero said at 10:15 am Mr. Norris came by to talk to him about Mr. Marrero's vehicle that he was driving because it had broken down. Mr. Norris's excuse this time was he had no choice but to talk to me because I was the one driving it and could give him firsthand information. Mr. stated they could have sent the other mechanic Mr. Elijah Jefferson.

December 11, 2020

- Mr. Norris stopped by the cardboard bin yet again. This time it was to ask Mr. Marrero if his Supervisor Mr. Johnson informed him of what was wrong with the vehicle he drove. Mr. Marrero said he replied yes.

January 19, 2021

- Mr. Marrero said came to work that morning and had received an email Mr. Christopher Zell (pictured on the right) containing a memorandum that he must sign pertaining to what OGC and



himself had decided about Mr. Marrero's position and the Columbia Dorn VA Hospital. So Mr. Marrero said he went to go Mr. Zell personally.

- Mr. Marrero said he was asked to relinquish his position so they could double encumber the position after speaking with Mr. Zell. They discussed keeping him on until the retirement cleared.
- Mr. Marrero said they only discussed the above-mentioned matter and never once did he bring up the assault. Mr. Marrero said still to this day Mr. Zell has never addressed the assault case with him.

January 29, 2021

- Mr. Marrero spoke with Investigator Mark Webb and Major Roscoe about the court date for the assault charge while in passing. They both assured him that this case would not get dropped and he did not need an attorney because his representation would be the prosecutor.

March 1, 2021

- This is the date that the US Attorney Peter M. McCoy resigned and turned it over to the new US Attorney M. Rhett Dehart (pictured on right). Mr. Marrero said he could not be sure which one of them (McCoy or Dehart) dropped the charges.



April 8, 2021

- Mr. Marrero said he inquired about the case a few months later. He was told the charges had been dropped after speaking with the Department of Justice for Federal Civil cases at 9:30 am.

The clerk that answered the phone told Mr. Marrero that they could not tell him why the charges were dropped but offered a solution advising him that if he wanted to know if charges were dropped, he could ask the Dorn VA Medical Center.

Mr. Marrero spoke with Chief Investigator Webb who said that he couldn't tell Marrero why, but the VA police had no control over it, and it was up to the US. Attorney's Office.

Mr. Marrero said he told Mr. Webb this is bullshit and Mr. Webb agreed. Agencies were just point the finger at each other and jerking Marrero around hoping he would get frustrated and quit pursuing his quest for justice.

July 16, 2021

- Mr. Laney Johnson pulled Mr. Marrero back onto grounds to assist with the garbage around campus for the last two weeks of his employment. Marrero was lied to and harassed until his final day with the Dorn VA Medical Center.

Mr. Marrero said if you ask him, they knew what they were up to all the time. To aid the cover-up, the powers to be ultimately got rid of the key witness to the assault, Mr. Minton.

Mr. Marrero's wife had to go back to teaching full-time because they did not know what was going to happen with the retirement, but they knew Jose Marrero would eventually be out of a job.

Mr. Marrero's wife had been teaching part-time in the evenings and staying home with their boys during the day. So, Mrs. Marrero was forced to take a full-time position going back to work. Her employment began on **August 9, 2021**.

Mr. Marrero left the job on **07/30/2021** with his retirement being in the 2nd phase and still not knowing if they officially approved it or not. As of the 13th of August 2021, he still didn't know if he would be approved. Mr. Jose Marrero was sent home with no job or retirement.

Summary: VA employee is the victim of an unprovoked attack at work. The VA Medical Center Police attempt to cover-up the attack calling it an "accident." The U.S. Attorney's office didn't want to fool with it. Jose wasn't a relative of theirs, besides, who cares if someone is physically attacked at the VA facility.

Virtually everyone turned their back on Mr. Marrero and no one was held accountable. Lack of accountability is the unwritten policy of the Dorn VA Medical Center.

