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Here is the next update in the saga of three institutions and the people who staff them failing the victims of sexual assault.

You know the Spiderman meme? Where there are 3 Spidermen all pointing at each other? Label one MPD, one DCPS, and one Ellington and you got the situation.

Now, I did not want to be a part of this story. It's not my story. But the lies told in the first three parts of this story prevented me from staying out. So when that headline says "Former Ellington Teachers", I'm one of them.

Let me explain why.

I have seen, heard and read a lot about sympathy for the victims, and reassurances about new protocols and investigations going forward. What I have not heard or read is an apology to the victims for what happened to them. It doesn't matter if the current staff at DCPS were there in 2004 or 2013/18. It doesn't matter if the current commander overseeing the division at MPD didn't handle these cases originally. It doesn't matter if a new Principal was in place starting in 2017. Those individuals may or may not have culpability, but they represent institutions that do. And they owe a lot more than just some sympathy.

I was unbelievably upset when we received that email in 2018. I had teacher guilt that I MISSED SOMETHING. Guilt that I could have done something then, stopped it. Then guilt that I had never been more aggressive at trying to push for Mark Williams to be gone from Ellington. He was abusive and unprofessional towards me and I pushed back. We reached a detente of sorts of sheer open hatred for each other. I don't deny that, it was difficult to maintain my own professionalism around him and I did not always succeed, even around students which is not excusable. But those issues were around his obvious drinking, belligerent attitude and tone, and his general feeling that rules didn't apply to him. I had heard of rumors of the first victim in these stories and I knew others had too. WE WERE ALL AT WILL EMPLOYEES. There doesn't need to be an "incident", just the will. I'll get back to that.

As I state in the story, I told the Principal who the 2013 victim was. Now what I didn't say is how that happened. I was called into her office after our faculty meeting where we were told sketchy details about how things were going to be handled and told not to talk about it. I, and another staff member, were asked if we put the email out on social media. Um no. The email was sent to over 200 individuals, not all of whom were faculty. No need to look at staff to figure out how it got out on social media. But I stayed after that meeting and said I know who this student is and how I knew. I didn't say the name at that time and I wasn't asked. I'll get back to that.

I was asked by an alum through email for the name of who to talk to about an investigation. This alum was friends with the victim. I asked the Principal for that information, passed it on to the alum, and gave the Principal that alum's email address. I know that alum reached out to that DCPS contact, conversed with them, and passed that contact on to other alum. There are literal email receipts of contacts and conversations that DCPS says do not exist. The "he was not a DCPS employee" is carrying a Nile amount of water right now. You mean to tell me that if any of the thousands of contract employees in DCPS schopols (food service workers, security staff, before and after care specialists, specialty maintenance staff, and yes, Ellington teachers) was accused of a Title IX violation of some sort, that DCPS would not do, and have no obligation to do, an investigation and maintain records of that? If that is their claim, then Brooke Pinto's letter is correct that the issue needs to be rectified.

So we received that email overnight October 14th into the morning of the 15th. I said I knew the victim's name on the 15th. I had almost daily conversations with the Principal that week. While I had heard that the victim was not okay with the email being sent, which kept me from initially saying her name, I decided that it was my obligation to share the full name and I did in subsequent conversation with the Principal. To be clear, I was also, ONLY TALKING TO THE PRINCIPAL! Because that's what we're supposed to do and I wasn't trying to feed a rumor mill. I thought I was looking out for the student.

I was led to believe that my information was passed on to MPD. I give the Principal the grace to believe that she did that as I have no proof that she didn't. The last updates she gave me on the status of the investigation from MPD was that the victim was not willing to cooperate at that time. She told me the case would not be closed, but would remain open if she changed her mind. I took that to mean that they had contacted her and like Victim 1 upon first contact, was not ready to talk. But apparently those are giant lies. She was never contacted. Nobody did anything. I don't know where the breakdown happened. I'm not pointing fingers at individuals, I'm pointing out the giant failures of institutions here. As MPD has now contacted both victims and this division is under new leadership, I give them grace that they will do the right thing by them. But that doesn't erase the failings of the years before and they should be held to account for that.

Now, the status of the investigation by MPD was not the only thing I kept asking about. I also asked about the staus of Mark Williams. He was the only full time employee in that department and while he was on administrative leave, there was not sufficient coverage of staff to supervise students. It was a problem. I was told there wasn't money to hire someone while he was still being paid on leave, they were trying to get part-time staff to cover more classes, etc, etc. Fine. Again, that email came out in mid October. Apparently he voluntarily resigned in January sometime. Now, clearly it is not appropriate to share personnel matters with staff and the Principal didn't. We didn't know what was happening with him. But I pushed and was told that the school's lawyers were making sure that i's were being dotted and t's were being crossed to make a clean separation. Now that indicates to me that some sort of investigation was done by the school.

Well guess what. He was asked to resign because of a DUI the week after the allegations came out (he has said as much to the first victim, AFTER THE STORY CAME OUT!). He was not separated because of sexual assault allegations. Now you may or may not know this, but I have resigned a teaching position mid-year because of allegations made against me. And I resigned "in lieu of termination" because it gave me the opportunity to find another school district that would hire an openly gay woman without fear that I would turn a School Board Member's daughter gay (fuck you Ritenour School District forever and always). There are legal questions you have to answer when you go through a background check for employment in schools. A DUI resignation might allow Mark Williams to get a new teaching position somewhere where he could have fresh access to students. A termination For alleged sexual misconduct most assuredly would not. Not cool on Ellington's part in my opinion.

Now, I'm not even speaking about the other staff member in this piece. I don't know him and we didn't overlap. But he speaks to a larger fundamental problem. It is my opinion that Ellington cares about Ellington and the image of Ellington. The tell is in the sentiments of sympathy and not an apology and a looking backward and inward. I don't give a rat's ass what kind of writer Mark Williams supposedly was. A lot of people called him a genius and used that as a fig leaf and a shield for what a shitty human being he is. They knew who he was. They just didn't care. Now those people don't run Ellington anymore, but that dirty seed was already planted, and they aren't dealing with the roots of the problem now. If that all brings continued problems for Ellington and its independence, that isn't my fault, or the fault of the other faculty member who came forward, or the victims. Don't try and blame us for what other people didn't do.

I have missed the opportunity to stop the second victim from becoming a victim. I have missed the opportunity to prevent the victims that came after her, because it is obvious there are more and I can tragically write you a list of possible names who fit the pattern and practice he clearly exhibited. That is my guilt. That is my burden. I own that. We failed as an institution to protect them. All of us. I am so sorry that the second victim was ever made to feel like no one cared about what happened to her. I can't fix that.

I can only speak up. So I did.



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Former Ellington Teachers Say School Could Have Done More About Abuse Allegations

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