

- All in all, 12 current and former employees told me that they experienced a "toxic and hostile work environment," and they regularly endured bullying, screaming and insults from you and Dr. Rogalska.

- Employees told me about the 2020 HR investigation. Employees said nothing has changed. In your opinion, have positive changes been made to improve employee-manager relations since that investigation? What supports your answer?

*Relevant changes were made as a result of the HR/OEI investigation.*

- A. The County doubled the number of FTE Investigators prior to the investigation.*
- B. The requirement for MLI staff to attend autopsies has been removed with rare exception.*
- C. This is already in place and when MLI staff make suggestions to ease workload burden they are considered along with the impact to operations such as the even distribution of workload and efficiency as well as the impact to best forensic practices.*
- D. The follow up with MLI staff occurs after every forensic examination. An email with findings as well as possible required follow up is sent to the MLI that is managing the case as well as management staff so progress can be tracked. MLI staff may ask for additional clarification and if that happens it's provided. Doctors and Administrative leadership are always available for questions or to provide guidance.*

*There is also a morning meeting between doctors, morgue staff, and investigators M-F.*

- E. This is already in place. Emails for example are assumed to be no-emergent and to be addressed by staff when possible. A phone call to an investigator, and likewise questions from investigators that require immediate response are done via phone as a standard.*
- F. Case Management redesign was underway before the COVID pandemic. These efforts had to be suspended during COVID because of urgent needs by the County to address remote work capabilities throughout numerous departments. This is a pending project.*
- G. Positions in management and special projects continue to be a priority. Following the HR/OEI effort three FTE staff were promoted. Suzanne Eskola was promoted from Deputy Director of Operations, Brandee Godfrey was promoted from Chief of Investigations to Deputy Director of Operations, and Cristina Figueroa-Soto was promoted from MLI to Chief of Investigations. Other MLIs have been given projects to work on and this undoubtedly will continue.*
- H. Training for PPE, blood borne pathogens, PAPR equipment and 4 gas meter trainings are happening yearly for all staff.*

- I. *I believe informing clients of rights as it pertains to unclaimed decedents has been addressed.*
- J. *The vehicle standards are in place and continue to be monitored by the Chief of Investigations. I'm not aware of any complaints from MLI staff or the Chief of Investigations.*
- K. *Staff were encouraged to bring suggestions to management prior to my retirement and I believe that continues to be the case.*
- L. *I'm aware of several policies being reviewed before and after my retirement. These written policies are being reviewed for dissemination to staff for comment. MLI staff have taken the lead on developing several of the policies.*
- M. *I believe that all staff are being held to the same standard in their individual positions.*
- N. *In the short time that I have been back in the office and prior to my retirement I believe all safety policies are being followed.*
- O. *The morgue freezer latch worked and works as it should.*

- Why do you think employees are upset and confused about return to the office?

*I don't have any first-hand or anecdotal knowledge about any staff being concerned or confused about why I am back in the interim position. I'm aware that an email was sent to staff explaining the reason and that the purpose was so that critical issues could continue to be addressed after the Director of Operations' departure.*

*My office door is always open and my phone is always on if someone wants to communicate their concerns.*

- Two former pathologists said they experienced suicidal thoughts because of the undue stress in the workplace.

*I'm unable to comment about the mental health of former pathologists. I've not had a personal conversation with any pathologist who has commented to me about their mental health.*

- Everyone who spoke with me who has left said they would not have left had it not been for their negative interactions with you and Dr. Rogalska.

*I can say that when people leave it can be for a multitude of reasons. Death investigation is an exceptionally difficult profession and there is a substantial burnout rate. Dealing with death and grieving families on a daily basis takes a significant toll.*

*There is a significant difference between a lay medical examiner's office or Coroner's Office and a physician-led ME's Office. The level of expertise, expectations from investigators as well as ongoing training and experience is*

*significant. The Dane County Medical Examiner's Office is very busy and the bar for expectations from investigators and really all staff is high. Training is provided through every step.*

*Recruitment of staff can be difficult. Schools that have varied programs for criminal justice or forensics often aren't teaching actual death investigation. When new staff find out what the job actually is, they self-select out.*

*I can say that as a manager, I wore many hats. I work to put people at ease. I have high expectations of staff. I focus on the duties assigned, and I do my job to the best of my ability while maintaining the expected level of professionalism. I would also note that I do not operate in a vacuum. I take direction from the department head and then make sure that training and explanation are sufficient to expect compliance.*

*I can say that the majority of our investigators/staff in Dane County and those in partner counties are exceptionally hard working. They are talented in death investigation, dealing with distraught families, and also dealing with a multitude of partners that the office interacts with on a daily basis. After nearly 18 years I can also say that I am equally sure that there will be some current investigators that decide for one reason or another that death investigation is not what they want to do as a profession. Those people will self-select out and will likely have some frustration about why it didn't work out for them.*

- Dr. Breslauer said you "maliciously" and frequently misgendered them throughout their employment and that you called them "ma'am."

*I absolutely never maliciously or intentionally misgendered Dr. Breslauer. I admit that on two occasions that I can remember I did use the word she when referring to Breslauer, and on another occasion I did say 'yes ma'am' to Breslauer. This was unintentional to be certain. Dr. Breslauer corrected me and I apologized.*

- Employees reported a current backlog of hundreds of cases and families waiting for death certificates.

*The Dane County Medical Examiner is similar to many physician-led ME offices. There is a shortage of forensic pathologists that is well reported nation-wide. It's true that this causes a backlog in reporting and in case closure.*

*There is a nationwide need for more pathologists. Dane County partners are aware of the shortages, backlog and expectations.*

*As our physician staffing increases case backlog will decrease as it has done in the past.*

- Employees said DCMEO continues to do Brown County autopsies without a current IGA. Can you explain the reasons why the IGA lapsed?

*The task of updating the IGA is underway and I have talked to the Administration in Brown County. This was to be completed by my successor but it was not completed prior to her departure. I would also say that the hiring of a doctor for Brown County and the COVID pandemic impacted the ability to finalize the agreement with the necessary cost information.*

- How long will you be the interim ops administrator? Has this been communicated to staff?

*I've only come back to Dane County in this position to assist with ongoing projects. I'm limited in the number of hours I can work and although I don't have an exact end-date certainly the County will not be in a position to have me here for any great length of time. A recruitment for a replacement Director of Operations is underway with a posting for the position closing this week.*

- Investigators and pathologists told me the reason they left DCMEO was because of the "hostile and toxic" workplace environment created by you and Dr. Rogalska. They say the workplace environment is the reason the paths keep leaving.

*I do not believe that the environment toxic or hostile.*

*Staff that spend a great deal of time together can at times find common topics for discussion. Staff member(s) who are frustrated for one reason or another can also share their discontent with peers. Staff have always been encouraged to see administration when there is an issue.*

*Part of every job has something that we don't enjoy doing or like to have to do. Ultimately this is why we are paid to use our skills to provide the service. Work can be enjoyable or at least rewarding but ultimately there will always a part of the work that is not. The hope is that the enjoyment or satisfaction one gets from their job much outweighs the hard or unpleasant part of the duties.*

- Laurie Parisey, former Oconto chief DME, said you and Dr. Rogalska once went to her home and yelled at her in her living room because you were upset she called a funeral home too soon.

*Mrs. Parisey was one of the original investigators that worked for Oconto County when Brown County partnered with Dane County in the IGA. As outlined above, many of the past practices changed when the partnership formed. Those staff, during the transition were given many new policies that were in some cases not well received. There were numerous new expectations. These new policies*

*impacted people differently depending on their openness to change, and their commitment to a higher application of forensics to death investigation.*

*The meeting took place at Mrs. Parisey's residence. The conversation was not loud, there were no raised voices at all.*

- La Crosse ME Tim Candahl said he refused to keep working with Dane County after working with you for 6 months over 2013 and 2014. He said you raised your voice to him and made things harder for his staff rather than alleviate work.

*Dane County was hired by La Crosse County Administration to provide training, to implement policies, and provide guidance to Mr. Candahl and his office during Mr. Candahl's transition from Deputy Chief Medical Examiner to Chief Medical Examiner.*

*I worked with Mr. Candahl to write, train and implement policies. New death investigation policies and administrative policies that protected the County and Mr. Candahl's office were developed and implemented at least for the period of service to La Crosse County. These policies required a higher level of forensic investigation as well as more accountability than had existed prior. Again, new policies for death investigation include doing the same level of investigation for every case every time regardless of the presentation often results in much more work and documentation. I can see where Mr. Candahl would interpret this as making things harder for him and staff.*

*Mr. Candahl and I had multiple conversations about why some policies were appropriate and why policies existed in Dane County. We used many of the suggested NIJ death investigation protocols which Mr. Candahl at times found to be overly burdensome. At the time La Crosse County was having their autopsies completed in Dane County and staff in La Crosse County were required to follow policies that allowed our physician staff to be informed about cases that were being brought to Dane County for autopsy. There were numerous discussions with Mr. Candahl but no yelling or screaming.*

*Ultimately the partnership ended. Mr. Candahl still brought autopsies to Dane County as he deemed appropriate. . This was brought to the attention of La Crosse County Administration and ultimately ended with La Crosse County finding another source for their autopsy cases.*

- Jeff Jansen, former interim ME for Brown, and Al Klimek said during the transition to working with Dane all of Brown, Door and Ocanto's DMEs left because they were unhappy with how you and Dr. Rogalska were treating them.

*The difference between a lay ME office and a physician-led ME office is very significant. Dane County had to be responsible to Brown County while improving and implementing death investigation and administrative policies. Many*

*investigators in Brown County had been operating with significantly more autonomy under the previous regime.*

*The implementation of more stringent policies and procedures coupled with staff shortages created a burdensome situation for staff and investigators. The investigative policies were not well received in many cases and this ultimately caused frustration with staff and in some cases heated discussion about the need for change. There was no poor treatment.*

- Former investigator Alyssa Lytle said she has been yelled at by both you and Rogalska separately and together. She would excuse herself from the meeting and be followed out of the room while the yelling continued.

*I never yelled at Ms. Lytle and I never followed her out of a meeting while still engaging in conversation.*

- Dani Darr said she left after experiencing extreme distress from always being told she was doing something wrong.

*I would again point to the change from a lay coroner's office to a physician medical examiner's office. The changes when Dane County went to a physician ME office were significant. The higher application of forensics to death investigation was a significant step for Dane County and the office partners. Prior to the change in office structure Deputy Coroners, myself included operated with significant autonomy making case decisions independently for the most part. The change had significant impacts on expectations from investigators including a loss of that autonomy. It also impacted how we interacted with partners.*

*One of my duties included making sure that new policies, after training and implementation were followed by each investigator. The new policies were not well received by all and in some cases investigators had to be informed of deficits in their work. The new operational policies created more accountability and ultimately more work. In some additional cases the operational and documentation deficits would continue and more contact with investigators about the same topics had to occur.*

- Kurt Karbusicky said you yelled at him after a particularly hard day (MV fatality and sexual assault/homicide) because he did not take a duplicate set of photos at the homicide scene. He said you yelled at him and belittled him in front of colleagues.

- Karbusicky also said you alienated hospital supervisors, funeral homes, police departments and tissue banks.

*I never yelled or belittled Mr. Karbusicky.*

*I would refer to the multiple times above where I shared that changes from a Coroner's Office to physician ME office made changes in how our office dealt with outside partners. The initial transition impacted our interaction with partners and as such created some tension while the transition took place. We currently have excellent relationships with partners. A death investigation by a Coroner or Medical examiner is ideally an independent but parallel investigation with law enforcement and other involved parties.*

- Given the generous compensation packages and thoughtful investment Dane County makes in recruiting pathologists, why do you think 5 paths have come and gone since 2013?

*I don't know if I'm qualified to answer this question. What I can say is that I have worked with multiple physicians both in Dane County and in other physician led offices over the time I have been in Dane County. I would say with certainty that the Dane County office has the highest standard for forensic autopsies that I have witnessed. The expectations of a new physician to the office may be different from what they have experienced in the fellowship or in their previous office experience. Doctors, like most of us, can find transition difficult especially when there are higher expectations or accountability.*

*Multiple offices are currently recruiting in the nation and Doctors can literally go to any office with similar compensation packages, and doctors transitioning between multiple offices is not uncommon as they search what they perceive to be the perfect fit.*

- Why do you think so many investigators have left over the years?

*I don't think that 'many' investigators have left given the reasons above. Being an investigator is very difficult especially emotionally. It is certainly not for everyone and being in the profession for years doesn't work for many people. Change is also very impactful and it's not unexpected that some will chose not to move forward or won't be successful during probation.*

- Have you ever yelled/screamed at, insulted or misgendered pathologists, investigators, autopsy techs, people in other county ME or coroner's offices? Other employees?

*I've answered the question above regarding misgendering Dr. Breslauer.*

*I've never yelled or screamed at staff or other employees in the Medical Examiner's Offices. As in any office in any field discussion can be heated and voices can be elevated.*