

August 11, 2024

Dear Members of City Council and Madame Mayor,

My name is Ethan Hutchinson. If you don't remember me, recently, at the end of May, you all voted on a motion that I had submitted to vacate the city's property adjacent to my lot. My family and I are still in awe and extremely grateful for what we have been able to do thus far with our portion of the vacated alley. So, again, we say thank you!

Now, this time, however, I am writing to you in regards to the recent news circling around the Clerk of Court of the Delaware Municipal Court, Mrs. Cindy Dinovo. As you all know, I was once a former employee of Mrs. Dinovo for two years and recently left the job at end of May this year. I originally got the job because of my interest in the legal and court system. However, I was unaware of what would transpire in the Clerk's office during my employment there. From the moment that I started to the very week that I left the office, I could sense that there was some type of target on my back, though I did not know why. It all started with small comments that she would make here or there to put down or belittle what I had said and at other times escalated into a verbal scolding in which she would scream at me in front of all of my coworkers in the office during office hours. Sure, there were times when she would ask me to come to her office to "talk" to me. However, in those instances, I would still be patronized for something I had allegedly done, whether what she was accusing me of had really happened or not.

Many of my former coworkers can vouch for my character when I say that I don't believe that I deserved the mistreatment that I received while under Mrs. Dinovo. I was called

“wreckless” and accused of exerting “male superiority” over a coworker for simply asking them kindly to bring something to my desk. In front of the whole office, while on the phone with a police agency requesting the rescheduling of an arraignment date, Mrs. Dinovo came to my cubicle, pointed at me, and screamed, “Wrong! Wrong! Wrong! See, this is why I told you that you were a *danger* to me!” When I questioned the Clerk as to what I had done wrong (because I had performed the phone call according to procedure and how I was trained), she provided no correction. However, those that were around to see the incident actually agreed with my explanation and themselves questioned the Clerk.

These are just but a few examples. I could go on and on about how I was told that the way I communicated or interacted with her was considered inferior, less than, and disregarded because I am a *man* and *young*. The point is, that on many accounts the Clerk made me feel mistreated, mischaracterized, misrepresented, put down, degraded, and unheard.

About a year after I began employment under the Clerk, I sought counsel in Human Resources, giving them one example after another of how I had been treated. However, they determined that there wasn't a toxic environment, nor was there any type of bullying or harassment displayed that they could do something about. In fact, they suggested that it was simply a clash of personalities and that it would be in my best interest to not have HR sit down with Cindy and I so as not to exacerbate the already bad situation.

It honestly has taken me a long time to come out and talk about this outside of anyone in my social circle simply for the fear of what might happen if she were to find out about what I had said. The last time that I tried to communicate to her how she made me feel in my letter of resignation, she requested not once or twice, but three times, if I would redact the portion of my

letter that explained my poor experience due to the toxic work environment I found myself in on a daily basis. She went as far as to bring me into her office and blame me for the toxic relationship that she had created between us.

I really just don't understand how someone could be so cruel and mean to those that have not done anything purposefully to hurt or wrong her. That being said, I write this letter in hopes that something can be done to remedy this situation. I have watched as my previous coworkers have had to endure this for much longer than me and do not want to see anyone else have to go through this. I can't begin to tell you of the stress and anxiety that I would have and bring home everyday not just because of what was done to me, but also how I saw her treat others. It isn't right...

I thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter and hope that this leads to a healthy and helpful solution soon. If you were to have any questions or desire to talk further regarding my experience at the Clerk's office, please feel free to reach out to on my phone at 740-281-9848.

Sincerely,

Ethan Hutchinson