



On The Move

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We Need an Independent Investigative Unit to Deal with Biased, Rude and Incompetent SEPTA Managers

Just when we need to work together to save mass transit jobs, SEPTA managers are treating our members like children, not adult men and women who work hard everyday.

We recently discussed the bad behavior of SEPTA supervisor Lou Crocetti, EEO attorney Erin Andrea and cashier boss Stacey Richardson. Yet, no action has been taken to deal with their bigoted, insulting behavior.

Every day, SEPTA supervisors mistreat and disrespect hard working union members--- using bullying tactics, being rude and threatening discipline.

Many of these incidents go unreported because employees fear retaliation from supervisors who will take extreme action to cover their tracks. That's why we need an Independent Investigative H.R. Unit to bring the problem under control.

Revealing a Larger Problem

In fact, Crocetti's targeting of a female African American employee was just the tip of the iceberg. The Crocetti saga has a long, nasty history and the fact that it remains unresolved exposes a much bigger problem. When Crocetti ran Woodland Shop, he bullied and terrorized our members. He created an atmosphere that had everyone feeling unsafe at work. Things got so bad that members asked the IG to investigate Crocetti and put an end to his bigoted and rude behavior.

Kathy Blankley, an agent from the IG's office, went to Woodland to check things out. But instead of dealing with Crocetti, she threatened to discipline Crocetti's critics, based on trumped up charges she allegedly had against them. Blankley proved that the IG is simply *a tool of management*, totally incapable of dealing with an unfit boss. By retaliating against our members, Blankley gave Crocetti the green light to continue his bad behavior. The same thing happened when Tom Comber, who works for SEPTA's EEO Department, "investigated" complaints against Crocetti.

SEPTA is in the Dinosaur Age

SEPTA needs to wake up from their fantasy nap and deal with the realities of public transit in this new era. The old ways of doing business are the ways of the dinosaur, making it all but certain that SEPTA will become extinct if it fails to upgrade its game.

While bigoted managers are nothing new at SEPTA, times like this demand better ways of doing business. In the old days, SEPTA was the only show in town. These days we have to compete with driverless vehicles, door-to-door providers like Uber and Lyft and legislation promoted by private companies and lobbyists to destroy the *public transit* system.

That's why SEPTA has to retrain or get rid of supervisors who mistreat and disrespect our members. If we're at war with each other, we can't possibly combat private competition, or our foes in Washington and Harrisburg. Thus far, there are few signs that top management understands the *depth* of the problem—the humiliation and disrespect being handed out on the job every day. In fact, we just had another shameful example of an asinine decision that involved a female cashier.

Ignoring the Human Element

SEPTA now employs well over 800 female workers, in all types of jobs. However, SEPTA supervisors continue to mistreat the Authority's female workforce.

A few months ago, a female cashier called her dispatcher to request a short break to get some female supplies at the drugstore just outside the station. In all, she would have been away from the booth for about 10 minutes. Instead of granting this simple request, the dispatcher forced her into the sick book, with five hours left on her run. Assistant Director Diamond and Director Lashley supported the dispatcher's decision.

As a result, the cashier lost five hours pay and got charged with two attendance points. Yet, surface operators who get eggs thrown on their uniforms, or who soil their pants, are allowed **to go home** and return an hour or so later! Forcing a cashier into the sick book for having to deal with a female issue is bad business and shows a complete lack of concern when it comes to enforcing SEPTA's rules.

To make matters worse, SEPTA's Labor Relations Department supported the decision to send the cashier home, making a farce out of Labor Relation's claim that it acts as a check against bad decision-making by management.

Independent Investigative Unit

While the union is willing to work with SEPTA to protect us from Uber and the privatization crowd, incidents like this make matters very difficult. The SEPTA Board has to understand that real cooperation between the Union and the Authority will be stymied, as long as supervisors hurl insults and show disrespect toward our members, each and every day. In order to combat biased, rude and incompetent managers, we need to establish an **Independent Human Resources Investigative Unit** (in short, the "HRU") to address complaints from employees about mistreatment on the job.

The HRU would receive and investigate these complaints and recommend action to resolve the problems raised by rank and file employees. The HRU would be staffed by people from outside of SEPTA--- investigators with no attachments or loyalties to the managers they are investigating. The HRU would have the authority to investigate all of SEPTA management, including any bad behavior by the detectives in the IG's office.

The clock is running. General Manager Jeff Knueppel has to get the ball rolling. Knueppel has to deal with unfit supervisors and narrow minded managers with no common sense, who, as a result, make terrible decisions. In short, Knueppel must create an *independent* human resource and investigative unit, the HRU.

Cooperation between SEPTA and the Union depends on high employee morale. And to improve morale, the men and women who keep the system running must be treated with dignity and respect on the job, unlike the way Crocetti and too many other managers treat those under their supervision.