

Audism, Racism and Violent Narcissism at Cuyamaca College

Chapter 1

I never wanted to write this story.

This story is going to be about the most violent, abusive and utterly vindictive person I have known in my entire life.

This story is going to be about how numerous administrators and faculty members at Cuyamaca College and members of the American Federation of Teachers' Union Local 1931, all part of the hundred million dollar political organization that makes up the Grossmont and Cuyamaca Community College District in El Cajon, California, allowed an utterly grotesque, violent and abusive person to attack myself, two other Deaf instructors and the American Sign Language Department at Cuyamaca College in an utterly relentless and dehumanizing way for more than three years.

These attacks completely destroyed my health and made me believe that I was going to die while I served as the tenured chair of the American Sign Language Department at Cuyamaca College from August of 2013 until March of 2020 at which time I submitted my immediate resignation.

These attacks made me mentally ill.

This person did this with the complete support and approval of numerous Cuyamaca College and AFT 1931 stakeholders.

These relentless attacks continued unabated for three years all because I asked for help with resolving communication problems with my Dean, the person I was supposed to be communicating successfully with and having all kinds of thoughtful discussions about how to put the ASL Department in the best position to succeed.

That is all I ever asked for. And I never got that. Not once. Not once at all even though I am profoundly Deaf and have had communication challenges and difficulties throughout my entire life that I have always worked to overcome.

There are so many people at Cuyamaca College who have the word 'equity' listed directly in their job titles. There are two Deans entrusted with being Equity Chiefs and experts in equity and Critical Race Theory.

None of these people responded to my pleas for help or tried to help resolve what this person needed to understand about Deaf people and the Deaf community and the ability and right to ask for equitable communication.

Many of the faculty at Cuyamaca College list the word 'equity' pridefully in their syllabi or public biographies as areas they are an expert in.

None of these people responded to my pleas for help either.

Cuyamaca has so many people that deign to be so emotionally vested in the well being of other people, to the point where faculty member pridefully cry out in pain and anguish and weakness during faculty meetings to demonstrate their magnificent wokeness and humanity and that they're completely able to understand and empathize with cultural differences and people of all kinds when the truth is so many of these faculty members have led privileged and isolated lives without developing any kind of genuine attachment to unique cultures.

This violent and abusive person that attacked me relentlessly just for being Deaf and asking for communication help in the most genuine way is Alicia Munoz. She was the Dean of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Divison at Cuyamaca and my direct manager for four years.

For completely destroying my health, her efforts in attacking two other Deaf instructors and subsequently destroying the ASL Department, Alicia Munoz was promoted and she is currently the Vice President of Instruction at Cuyamaca College at the time of this writing in November of 2023.

Munoz has apparently retired or is now working in a different capacity at Cuyamaca College at this time in 2024.

Chapter 2

In this story I will explain how I served as the tenured Chair of the American Sign Language at Cuyamaca College from August of 2013 until March of 2020 at which time I had to submit my immediate resignation to avoid having a second severe mental health breakdown because of these relentless attacks.

These attacks persisted for more than three years. Every single attack was a nasty disruption of some kind. These attacks were designed to belittle, mock, insult, gaslight, and dismiss my communication needs and identity as a culturally Deaf person and make it utterly impossible for me to carry out my duties as Chair of the ASL Department.

These attacks continued to persist throughout the greatest social justice movement known to man, the Black Lives Matter movement, at which time two other Deaf instructors were attacked under the watchful and approving eyes of so many members of the Cuyamaca College faculty and administration.

Nobody protected me. Not after I had my first severe mental health breakdown and went on emergency medical leave.

Nobody protected me even though I was having severe mental health issues and it was clear to my medical professionals that I needed to be protected.

Nobody protected the other employees or students at Cuyamaca College from any number of unpredictable situations that can occur when a person becomes mentally ill for any of many possible reasons, and continues to be relentlessly attacked and gaslighted by a grotesque person with violent narcissistic tendencies in a position of power.

Not even the Cuyamaca College president who I always thought to be a magnificent and respectful woman. She said repeatedly in a fierce and clear way that these attacks were to stop. And they never did. Not once. It's so clear now that her words were nothing but platitudes for Jim Mahler and the American Federation of Teachers' Union.

Chapter 3

Dr. Julianna Barnes... President of Cuyamaca College. You did not protect me. You did absolutely nothing to protect me. And then you took part in these attacks and tried to silence me. For being Deaf and standing up for my communication needs and the communication needs of Deaf people everywhere.

Dr. Julianna Barnes. For more than four years I listened to you talk and talk and talk about the issue of equity for marginalized people and communities... and I listened to everything you said carefully and in the most respectful way. Because you appeared to put so much genuine thought and passion in your words.

I took your words to heart and I always tried to be as equitable with everyone I came into contact with at Cuyamaca College. Every time you talked, I listened thoughtfully, the exact same way I have always tried to listen thoughtfully to everyone at Cuyamaca College. And I tried to share and apply all of your messages about equity and different ways to support people from marginalized communities.

And I finally needed to ask for such a tiny, such a tiny and minuscule amount of equity.

This equity I was asking was not only for myself, but for Deaf people everywhere, and for all of the ASL students at Cuyamaca that will go on to interact with, support and work with Deaf people in and out of Southern California later on.

This equity I was asking for was so, so small... I only asked for the chance to communicate in a thoughtful and meaningful way with the person that had such an utter disinterest in communicating with me in any kind of meaningful way and then went to make sure in so many clear ways that she was going to destroy the ASL Department at Cuyamaca College. Because I asked for help with communication.

Dr. Barnes, all I ever wanted was just wanted one chance to have a meaningful discussion with this person. To help her understand why I was not responding well to the way she was communicating with me and to have her give me the chance to talk with her in a genuine and thoughtful way about the ASL Department.

And I never, not once, received that. I never had the chance to have one genuine discussion with this grotesque person in more than three and a half years of working with this person.

Dr Barnes, not only did you show that you believe Deaf people aren't deserving of equity, you allowed this violent and abusive person to attack me and two other Deaf ASL instructors at Cuyamaca College. You allowed this person to model to so many other people at Cuyamaca College that it is perfectly acceptable to treat Deaf people in utterly dehumanizing and disparaging ways in front of so many other people at Cuyamaca College.

You allowed this person to absolutely refuse to communicate with me in any kind of meaningful way for more than two and a half years. And you rewarded this violent and abusive person by making her your Vice President of Instruction.

Dr. Barnes.... you're now the Chancellor of the South Orange Community College District. Remarkable.

Dr. Barnes, are you still speaking poetically about how everyone deserves equity. Are you still saying you believe everyone deserves the right to equity and that you'll fight for equitable treatment for all people?

Der. Barnes, You had zero equity to share with the Deaf people and the Deaf community that Cuyamaca College was supposed to serve and support. Not the tiniest and smallest amount of equity for Deaf people.

There was none at all for myself or the two other Deaf instructors this violent person attacked or the entire Deaf community in the region that Cuyamaca College serves.

Dr. Barnes, you utterly failed to protect me.

I was severely mentally ill and I begged you for protection so, so, so many times.

I sent so, so many emails to you and the other administrators. I kept on giving very clear examples of how she was constantly creating these nasty and utterly dehumanizing disruptions.

And you never did anything to protect me.

You never did anything meaningful to protect me from this violent and abusive person.

I sent you so many emails over the course of three years.

I begged you for meetings.

When we finally met almost a year and a half after she started attacking me. A year and a half of sending so many emails and explaining yet another way she was treating me in the most nasty and vindictive way possible, we finally met with Munoz.

You spoke and spoke so forcefully and completely took over the meeting even though that was supposed to be my meeting. I needed to explain what I needed from Munoz that would create equitable working conditions that would also protect my health. But I never got to talk about that.

You presented yourself as the person in charge. And these dehumanizing and demeaning attacks were supposed to stop. But they never did.

And in the end you refused to meet with me and you made it very clear where you stand on equity for Deaf people.

There is no equity for Deaf people in your administration. None at all.

You made this utterly grotesque person your Vice President of Instruction.

You allowed this person to destroy my health and the ASL Department.

When I think of you, Dr. Barnes, I think of Graham Spanier, another person who covered up abuse and violence.

Chapter 4

In this story, you will learn how I remained silent about these attacks for more than two and a half years, trusting and believing that the President of Cuyamaca College, Dr. Julianna Barnes, the Vice President of Instruction, Dr. Patrick Setzer, the President of the American Federation of Teachers Union Local 1931, Jim Mahler, and the Associate Vice Chancellor at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District, Craig Leedham, were working with Alicia Munoz privately on giving her the support and training she needed to lead the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Division at Cuyamaca College successfully.

The support and training she needed to become more... human like, while also communicating with her privately and clearly to make sure she was able to understand that these things she was saying and were doing to me were so insulting, debasing and dehumanizing to Deaf people everywhere.

Instead, it became clear after two and a half years of being attacked relentlessly and seeing the ASL Department erode and crumble with every vindictive and spiteful chunk she took out of

myself and the ASL Department, I finally needed to ask for help and support from the other faculty members and administrators at Cuyamaca College.

As a result, the entire college, including the Chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College, Dr. Lynn Ceresino-Neault, and the AFT 1931 union led by Jim Mahler decided to attack me and make sure they would silence me permanently.

Alicia Munoz was rewarded for her vindictive small mindedness and incompetence by being named the Vice President of Instruction at Cuyamaca College in the Spring of 2020 by Dr. Julianna Barnes.

You will understand how after being attacked relentlessly for more than two and a half years, it became very clear that Alicia Munoz was not rewarded for her work as a teacher or administrator.

This was never her job.

Alicia Munoz's job from the very, very beginning was to be a vindictive union bully for Jim Mahler, President of The American Federation of Teachers Union Local 1931.

Her job was to create an environment of hostility, fear and intimidation within the Cuyamaca College faculty and administrators for Jim Mahler.

Jim Mahler clearly saw Alicia Munoz for who she was. Mahler understood from the very beginning that this was a person of utterly mediocre intelligence. He saw that this was someone incapable of having thoughtful and rational discussions, but coveted and desired power in the worst way possible and cherished and thrived on being in the position to bully others instead of using this power in an inspirational, enlightening or uplifting way.

This is clear. Because after three years of working with Alicia Munoz, I can say without a doubt that her face only lights up and beams with an absolute joyfulness when she realizes she has incited some kind of hateful reaction or destroyed a small part of a person's spirit or some kind of essential part or function of Cuyamaca College.

This is when her face lights up, her eyes shines, and her lips become wet with an excited happiness. This is a person so utterly incapable of thinking in a thoughtful, organized and rational way that allows her to reason in a fair and engaged manner and communicate thoughtfully to reach positive outcomes that resolve differences.

Alicia Munoz is a person that chose to destroy the ASL Department at Cuyamaca College instead of trying to have a single meaningful discussion with me about the support I needed from her to continue helping the ASL Department succeed.

Alicia Munoz is a violent person. She has embraced narcissism of the worst kind. This is a person that needs to belittle, demean and hurt others to feel prideful about the work she is doing.

Jim Mahler understands and appreciates the tendencies of narcissism very clearly. He clearly believes it's more important to manipulate and reward these people that so desperately covet power at Cuyamaca College and Grossmont College in the worst way. All for the strength of the union. It's so peculiar. AFT has a singular mindedness of trying to impose an environment of what can only be called fear which allows the AFT 1931 to maintain control over both colleges even if it comes at the cost of what providing an amazing education is supposed to be all about.

Four year academic colleges hire faculty in large part based on their demonstrated research skills more than their teaching ability. It's supposed to be the other way around at Community Colleges. Teachers are hired for their teaching skills more than anything else. The students need to learn practical and applicable skills quickly.

But the faculty are also hired based on their "fit". The issue of "fit" at Community Colleges is how faculty are hired more than anything else, maybe.

The "fit" at Cuyamaca College right now is based on hiring cruel, weak and small minded people who see themselves as equity and critical race theory warriors but all of this is really a guise for maintaining a belief that this has to happen so the union can continue to stay powerful and "protect" the faculty members. And that has become the pervasive attitude and "fit" at Cuyamaca College in many ways.

The Union, AFT 1931 and Jim Mahler was supposed to protect me. Mahler never did anything. He just let it go on and on and on even though he was supposed to be the most powerful person in the room and it was such a tiny and small problem that could have been resolved so easily. Instead, you allowed her to repeatedly intentionally insult and dismiss my communication needs in front of you and in so many of the emails we exchanged.

Chapter 5

Jim Mahler. All you needed to do was talk to her like a five year old in a firm and clear way.

All you needed to do was make her stop attacking me relentlessly.

I was a complete nobody. I never wanted to be anyone. I was such a small, such a tiny part of the College. All I wanted to do was my job and teach ASL. I never wanted to get mixed up in the political side of the college.

And your bully couldn't even see or understand that devoting so much attention to me was such a meaningless waste of time and energy.

Your bully devoted herself to attacking me relentlessly for two and a half years. This is your hand-picked bully and you allowed her to attack me with impunity. This is your bully that you were supposed to be able to keep under control.

Jim Mahler.... Just imagine... I remember all of these emails you sent out during the Black Lives Matter movement. You were sending out two or three emails each week about Black people, Black history and anything related to Blackness. You seemed to have such a profound interest in the position of Black people within the college.

But when I tried to hire Cuyamaca College's first Deaf and Black ASL Instructor, you and Alicia Munoz made it very clear that I would not be able to hire this Black person who was the exact person we needed to step in and teach a new course for the ASL department.

Munoz couldn't even support that in the tiniest way. Just because it was what the ASL Department needed at the time. The matter came to your attention. And you never once gave this black person we actually had already hired and placed into the Cuyamaca College system your support as your position as AFT 1931 president required you to. All because your bully was determined to destroy my health even if it meant destroying the ASL Department.

You allowed your bully to attack me relentlessly for two years all because I explained to Pat Setzer that I was not feeling supported and that I was not receiving any kind of real or genuine communication from the person I was supposed to be working closely with.

Jim Mahler. You are an Audist and a Racist.

Jim Mahler, I did everything you asked me to. I communicated with your bully in a professional, courteous and respectful way for more than two years and nothing mattered. These attacks and disruptions were so utterly relentless.

I sent so many examples and forwarded so many emails containing insults and descriptions of dehumanizing actions she created and imposed on myself and the ASL Department and you never did anything to make sure she remembered to communicate in a mature and professionally courteous way in which she was perfectly very well capable of doing.

You allowed this grotesque, flabby and decrepit bully to completely destroy my health and the ASL Department while you stood by indulgently, supervising her raging narcissism, all of the gaslighting she was doing, beaming with pride the whole time.

Jim Mahler, you and Alicia Munoz are exactly how the Kray brothers are portrayed in the movie "Legend". You are Reggie Kray and Alicia Munoz is Ronnie Kray.

You two are a pair of utterly violent people. The only difference between you and Munoz is you've figured out how cover up your violent side with a thin veneer that blurs who you really are.

You've managed to figure out that it's unnecessary to show people who you really are when you have someone like Alica Munoz you've molded and cultivated into your image to carry out the more detestable, nasty and vindictive aspects of the mental violence and culture of fear you believe its necessary to maintain control over Cuyamaca College in the easiest way possible.

Chapter 6

Patrick Setzer.... Vice President of Instruction Setzer. Oh Pat... Pat... I have so many stories about you. Just think... we worked so closely for three and a half years. You were my Dean, Pat!

Oh Pat, there were so many times when you said or did something insulting or utterly offensive to myself or Deaf people. And I would overlook all of that. Because I felt that you were trying to support the ASL Department in many other ways. And that was all I cared about. That I had the support and communication I needed from you to carry out my goals for the ASL Department.

I never even cared that you made it clear you didn't want any kind of a personal relationship with me. Even when I would share some kind of innocuous news from Pennsylvania, thinking that since you're from Pennsylvania yourself, not too far from where I was born myself, you'd appreciate the news. Instead, you'd act like you'd totally forgotten I was born in PA and have extensive family and roots in PA. And you know, I would just let it go.

Oh Pat, I actually even brought my parents into the Dean's Office to meet you, Pat, just because you asked me to. You remember that, don't you, Pat. And you didn't even have anything genuine to say to them. You looked at them and then you went into your office almost immediately. And I let that go. Just like I let so many other things go.

Oh Pat, do you remember the time you did one of the most insulting thing you could possibly do to a person that willingly shared their culture and language with you because you decided you wanted to know about the experience? You chose to attend the workshop I presented during Professional Week my second year at Cuyamaca. And I willingly shared what I knew about Deaf people and American Sign Language, all of these experiences I've accumulated throughout my entire life as a profoundly Deaf person from the time of birth.

Remember that? At the beginning of my second year at Cuyamaca President Zacovic asked me to present a workshop on Deaf people and American Sign Language during professional week. I spent several days putting a workshop together designed to share my culture and language.

Oh Pat, do you remember how I got through the first slide of my Keynote presentation. I was showing some interesting pictures and trying to share some cultural information as part of my introduction. I moved onto the next slide. I'd spoken for only a few minutes. No more than ten minutes about the history and culture of Deaf people. And then I was ready to move onto what must have been the third slide. That slide was designed to help me segue into introducing and teaching signs to the participants.

Oh Pat, do you remember. Before I even got through the second slide, you interrupted me and said something to the effect of, "That's great. But when are we going to start learning some signs."

It was sort of unreal how intentionally insulting the comment was meant to be. You, Patrick Setzer. Teacher of the Year Patrick Setzer. And I'd done nothing but treat you with the absolute respect, deference and courtesy the whole time we worked together for more than a year.

I was so stunned and shocked at that comment, even more so being in front of our college president, Dr. Zacovic for what I believed to be a professional and educational presentation. I stood there... and I replied with the utmost amount of respectful kindness I could muster and said, "Yes, that's right on the next slide."

Oh Pat, look at you. To think you actually won a teacher of the year award.

Pat... what you did was so... so wrong. You allowed this violent and abusive person to attack me relentlessly. I asked you for help repeatedly. And then I begged you for help. And then you just started to gaslight me repeatedly, acting like this person was genuinely trying to support the ASL Department when it was clear she was destroying my health and the ASL Department with every attack and disruption. I mean... how many emails did I send you about these attacks over two or three years? Thirty? Forty? Fifty? I'm sure it could have been closer to Sixty or Seventy. There were so many. So many.

And then in the last two semesters preceding my second severe health breakdown, you completely vanished from the scene and allowed Alica Munoz and Jim Mahler to attack the other Deaf instructors and completely destroy any chance the ASL Department had of working in a cohesive way. Oh Pat, look at you. Teacher of the year Patrick Setzer!

Pat, really. After all of the support I gave you... after all of the things I did for you. After all of the stupid and insulting things you'd say or do that I chose to overlook, all I needed was a tiny bit of support from you to make these attacks stop. And instead, you chose to gaslight me endlessly and act like you didn't have the least idea of what was going on or who Alicia Munoz really is.

You never told me the truth about her. Oh Pat, shame on you.

Pat... you know... You've fortunately retired. But this will be part of your legacy. That teacher of the year award you won needs to be balanced out with this truth that will help others learn about the environment at Cuyamaca College you helped create.

Pat, somewhere along the way you decided to show who you really are. All you had to do was talk to Alicia Munoz like a five year old in firm, simple and clear terms in a way that she understands and these attacks would have stopped. Instead, you allowed her to abuse and attack me relentlessly.

Oh Pat... shame on you, Pat. Teacher of the year.... Oh Pat, not you. You're no teacher of the year. You're someone who chose to be completely indifferent to someone who was completely and utterly focused on destroying my health and the ASL Department.

Chapter 7

Craig Leedham... you're the one with a Judicial Degree. I sent you so many emails. I shared so many examples of these attacks. And you participated in the gaslighting by acting like you weren't able to understand or identify how these attacks and constant disruptions were happening. And then you attacked me with everyone else in the end. Craig Leedham. The lawyer with the job title of Vice Chancellor in Human Resources.

There are so many other people that participated in these attacks. I will share all of their names and stories too. Remember these people.

Especially the name Rachel Jacob-Almeida. Remember that name. This person proudly recognizes herself as a social justice and equity warrior and this person chose to attack and silence me for standing up for Deaf people. This person supports and stands up for female violence painted as "effective and thoughtful communication". Her dissertation clearly shows this.

This person fiercely spoke up for Ibram Kendi's writings at an Instructional Leadership meeting in front of all of the Department Chairs and Deans and our Vice President of Instruction and then and wept openly and in the most anguished way about how mentally and emotionally tired she was during the BLM movement. Then at the very same Instructional Leadership meeting the following month this person fiercely told me that I did not have the right to ask for equity for Deaf people when I spoke up on behalf of Deaf people when social justice issues were being discussed. She silenced me in the most stunning and culturally debasing way she could have thought of and this happened in the middle of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Rachel Jacob Almeida was my assigned Cuyamaca College AFT 1931 representative. She was up and close and completely present for so many of these nasty and dehumanizing attacks that happened in front of the other faculty numerous times and she chose to overlook all of them.

You have to take a look at her dissertation. It's rambling and really hard to follow but then it starts to become clear that she is writing about gender identities and she makes repeated references to the differences between boys and girls. After a while it becomes clear that she suggests boys are violent and girls are better at communicating.

Rachel Jacob-Almeida. My Dean, Alicia Munoz was absolutely refusing to communicate with me and when she did communicate it was in the nastiest way she could think of.

You saw her attack me and blindside me completely repeatedly in the most nasty, dishonest and vindictive way at the meeting that was supposed to discuss “my insubordination”. In this meeting we were supposed to communicate in a professional and thoughtful way. I met with Michael Golden. But you never even met with me to help me understand your role in the meeting. You never even spoke up for me at the meeting. You never even had a private discussion with Munoz after the meeting ended to see if there was something you could do as this supposedly amazing thinker and communicator to help with our communication issues.

There.... Was nothing genuine on the part of your involvement at all. Even though I specifically asked for your help because I was impressed with the fact you proudly identified as a social justice and equity expert on marginalized people and I thought you would be able to have a really honest and profound view on how Munoz and I were communicating and you would be able to help with that.

And then you showed that you were perfectly fine with sitting around indulgently and laughing heartily during the times Munoz would attack me in the most completely insulting, small minded and dehumanizing way in front of the other faculty members.

Oh Rachel Jacob-Almeida. What kind of things are you teaching your students. Are you speaking to them about equity and finding ways to make your students believe you truly have a cogent and rational understanding of what equity really means and why it was so important to make sure I had the equity and communication I was asking for.

And then after a while, even though it was clear that Munoz had won and she was just really sort of destroying me and the ASL Department with these random attacks, she was still completely refusing to communicate with me in any kind of genuine way.

Rachel Jacob-Alemeida. You’re not a person that understands equity. You’re a completely toneless and intellectually devoid person with a bright and artificial smile. You showed that you are a person who is so utterly incapable of understanding that your job and responsibility and everything about how you claimed to represent about yourself and your beliefs.

All you needed to do was to stand up for the equity for Deaf people that Munoz was completely denying and then destroying at Cuyamaca College. You could have done this privately. Could have used the amazing communication skills that you claim to have, the communication skills you claim women have which you proclaimed repeatedly in your dissertation from the University of California at San Diego. It was such a tiny and small situation. It never needed to become so huge. And then it became about my health. The health of the college and the community too in so many ways.

But you never did anything. And then in the end you forcefully spoke out in front of 35 other faculty members during my last zoom meeting showing that you truly, do, do not have any respect or compassion for Deaf people.

Chapter 8

I always thought the story I have been saying I will write for the last twenty years would turn out to be an absolutely fantastic and enthralling novel. It would be a compelling read full of excitement, mystery, passion and intrigue.

My mother always told me to go read a book when I was young kid and feeling energetic and restless. My mother always took the time to explain the things I read that I didn't understand. And somehow as a profoundly Deaf person with profoundly Deaf parents, a Deaf sister and the majority of my extended family also being very Deaf, I developed a love for reading and writing very early on.

My mother, sister and I would often walk about a mile to the local library when I was a small kid and we would load up our backpacks with books. We often came back home with our packs and bags stuffed full of books. And those were heavy books for a little kid to carry on foot over a mile.

My mother would write words out on a slip of paper and tape them to objects around the apartment we lived. She would show my sister and I how to finger spell these words and then sign them out. My mother would also mouth or speak these words. She spoke well enough to communicate with hearing people face to face and was never embarrassed to try to use her voice or to try to lipread the best she could. And that also helped my sister and I practice lipreading and develop a certain phonological awareness. Seeing these words in all of these different forms helped my sister and I developed a real love for reading books and a passion for understanding and learning more about the nuances of English at a very early age.

The same thing went for my father in the way of always trying his best to communicate and interact with hearing people. He would write and pass notes back and forth. My father has had very different and severely delayed language experiences and is so much more of a conceptual signer than a writer. But he always tries his best to write clearly and he has a wonderful, very unique and flowing penmanship.

They both worked very hard at trying to provide everything my sister and I needed when we were young. We lived in an apartment and money was very tight. My father worked while my mother stayed home and took care of my sister and I for the first few years of our childhood. Our parents had to watch every penny and we lived from paycheck to paycheck but we always had something to eat and always had the clothes we needed.

My parents and sister are wonderful people and they've always tried to do the right thing in their lives.

The same thing goes for my mother's parents. My late grandparents were both Deaf and had three Deaf children. They lived in a beautiful home behind farmlands and a church in New Holland, Pennsylvania. My grandparents were kind, gentle church going people. They always

believed in doing the right thing and treating people with patience and kindness. My grandfather was a wonderful man. He managed to scrape enough money to buy some land and build a house with the help of his friends. My grandparents have never ever had any money. They've always been so very careful and conscientious about not living beyond their means.

Chapter 9

All of these experiences I had as a child and a young adult helped me develop the steadfast belief and confidence in myself that anything is possible.

This is the truth I knew and believed about America growing up as a Deaf person. If you work hard, develop some real and tangible skills and apply yourself, anything's possible. Anything's within reach. America has supported and lifted up so many people of all kinds.

Everyone truly has the chance to succeed if they work hard in America. So many of the Deaf kids I grew up with and attended school with in Washington DC are so successful, and these are people of all kinds of colors, racial and ethnic backgrounds and identities.

Until I came to Cuyamaca College in San Diego County. At Cuyamaca College I learned another truth about myself and Deaf people for the first time.

At Cuyamaca College, I found out for the first time in my life... that Deaf people are... absolutely nothing.

Deaf people do not have any kind of value at all at Cuyamaca College. There is absolutely no equity or equitable treatment for Deaf people at Cuyamaca College. There isn't the least amount of care or regard or genuine respect for Deaf people at Cuyamaca College. Deaf people are chattel at Cuyamaca College.

At Cuyamaca College, while people all around America and the world were taking part in the greatest social justice movement the world has known in the Black Lives Matter movement, Deaf people and the American Sign Language Department were being attacked in an absolutely grotesque way under the watchful and approving eyes of the entire Cuyamaca College administration and the American Federation of Teachers Union by the most mentally violent, abusive, vindictive, and hateful person I have encountered in my life, the person I was supposed to be working with closely, my direct manager and Dean, Alicia Munoz.

All because I explained that I was having communication problems and asked for help in resolving these communication problems. This person instead of trying to communicate with me in a thoughtful way with the bare minimum of professional respect and courtesy for a colleague instead chose to attack me in an utterly relentless way for more than three years until I had two severe mental health break downs.

These attacks were not only directed at me, but were also designed to destroy any chance I had of rebuilding my mental health and emerging from the severe mental illness that was beginning to overtake myself and continuing to lead the ASL Department in a cohesive and successful way.

There were relentless disruptions that affected everyone in the ASL Department. There was an absolute refusal to communicate with me in the least genuine way for more than three years. I found every single attempt I made to communicate with her mocked, belittled, insulted or dismissed.

All because I asked for help with *resolving communication problems*.

This behavior and utter disregard for communicating with Deaf people in a thoughtful and equitable way was modeled repeatedly in front of many others inside and outside of Cuyamaca College.

For more than two and a half years, and especially after I had my first severe mental health break down, I begged the Cuyamaca Administration for support and help. I found my requests for help repeatedly dismissed from every single person I spoke to. These attacks and an absolute refusal to communicate with me in the least genuine way continued unabated and with complete and utter impunity.

I am almost in disbelief that I have been trying to start on this story for more than three years since I submitted my resignation in March of 2021. Every time I have tried to start on this story I have found myself filling up with anger, shame and utter disbelief that not one person spoke up on my behalf at Cuyamaca College. Not one person made a genuine effort to create a fair, safe and equitable environment for myself and Deaf people and the community we were supposed to support.

I tried to handle these attacks privately and silently for more than two and a half years. And they were relentless. I only finally asked others at Cuyamaca for their help with this matter after it became clear this person was utterly incapable of demonstrating the least amount of genuine kindness, empathy or professionalism for Deaf people and the ASL Department. And then I found out in such a shocking and clear way that Deaf people truly do not matter to Cuyamaca.

Chapter 10

In this story, I will explain what systemic Audism and Racism looks like in an educational institution that behaves and performs more like a self-serving cult. The cult at Cuyamaca College is filled with people more interested in protecting their lucrative salaries by acting as sheep protected by a public education union rather than being participants in and stewards of a community college that is supposed to strive towards giving the students of California an amazing, genuine and thoughtful education and above all help people think independently and

have all kinds of fascinating, thoughtful and far reaching discussions about the truth as it applies to anything.

In this story, you will understand what it means when an Union President gives an absolutely small minded, irrational and vindictive person with raging and uncontrollable narcissistic tendencies unlimited power even if the person uses this power to attempt to destroy a person or their department repeatedly over several years while being paid an amazing salary by the State of California to lead and support in thoughtful and far reaching ways.

In this story, I will give you the names of so many people that were directly assigned the responsibility of making sure Cuyamaca College was an equitable place for people of all kinds and how all of these people, every single person, made it very clear there was no equity for deaf people at Cuyamaca College.

In this story, remember these names. There are many other names that will appear throughout this story. Remember their names too.

Alicia Munoz: Dean of the Art, Humanities and Social Sciences Department. Promoted to Vice President of Instruction; mentally violent person, a union bully who serves at Jim Mahler's bequest.

Quite probably the first or second person I have encountered in my life that truly thrives on preying on and hurting and bullying people. This person is a raging narcissistic that prides herself on belittling and insulting people instead of building thoughtful, supportive and professional relationships.

Patrick Setzer. My first Dean at Cuyamaca College, eventually promoted to Vice President of Instruction; winner of the 2010 Hayward Award for Excellence in Education.

Dr. Julianna Barnes. President of Cuyamaca College who proudly claims the John W. Rice Diversity and Equity award. Current Chancellor of the South Orange Community College District.

Jim Mahler. President of American Federation of Teachers Union Local 1931.

Rachel Jacob-Almeida. Faculty member and self-avowed Woke Social Justice Warrior. Takes pride in standing up for equity for marginalized people. This person was my AFT 1931 appointed representative. Jacob-Almeida wrote her dissertation on equity but makes many veiled references to the "violence" men perpetuate. She makes many references to how well "women communicate" and then she silenced me.

Jacob-Almeida directly told me in front of 35 plus other faculty members that there is no equity at all for Deaf people at Cuyamaca College. She said this during the greatest social justice movement in America.

Lauren Halsted. Current Dean of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Cuyamaca College. She is an Audist and a Colonizer of the ASL Department. Thinks nothing of culturally appropriating the Deaf experience for her own fame and profit.

Craig Leedham. Associate Vice Chancellor of Human Resources at the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District. Has a judicial degree and is supposedly a law expert. Willing and passive participant in these attacks.

Dr. Lynn Ceresino Neault. Chancellor of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District. Refused to acknowledge the repeated communication I tried to share about these relentless attacks and then attacked and silenced me alongside everyone else.

Dr. Jesus Miranda, Dean of Success and Equity at Cuyamaca College. Critical Race Theory expert. Refused to respond to my repeated emails asking to talk about equity for Deaf people. This man who preaches about equity but clearly identifies with white colonizers. This is a person I worked with for several years that never once showed any interest in or tried to have any kind of conversation with me that might help him understand or have some kind of awareness about Deaf people so that he could feel comfortable he had done his part in assuring Deaf people were ensured the same kind of equity that was being shown to all of the other people at Cuyamaca College.

Dr. Bri Hays, Senior Dean of Institutional Effectiveness, Success, and Equity at Cuyamaca College. Did not respond to my repeated emails asking to discuss the matter of equity for Deaf people at Cuyamaca and how the ASL Department was being destroyed. Amazing. Another woman with a beautiful smile at Cuyamaca College that stood by passively and in an utterly indifferent way and refused to meet with me or try to help in the tiniest way possible.

Moriah Gonzales-Meek, social equity and DEI warrior. Always, and I mean she always preaches to the choir about “the right thing to do” regarding equity and equitable treatment. This

I repeatedly asked these people and many others at Cuyamaca College for their help. And not one single person made a genuine effort to stop these attacks from happening.

Not one person made a genuine person to protect my mental health and overall health. Not one of them showed a genuine awareness that it was not only my mental health they needed to protect, it was the overall physical health of the entire College and the community. And not one person cared enough or understood that it was absolutely their responsibility to do their job. That’s all they needed to do. Do their job.

These people knew I had a completely severe break down that was verified by multiple doctors.

And they refused to help. They did nothing to protect the college. This is what these people are really like. Nobody cared enough to get involved even though so many of the powerful faculty members at Cuyamaca would constantly talk about and act passionately in ways that showed

they were severely impacted by the Black Lives Matter movement and the push to understand more about how to achieve equity for all kinds of people.

Even the long time Mayor of neighboring Lemon Grove which has always had a sizable Deaf community, Mary Sessom, stood by passively while I made a plea for help and support from the other faculty. She is one of the most powerful people at Cuyamaca. And she did nothing to check and make sure Deaf people were being treated in fair and equitable ways. She sent me a short email after my immediate resignation and then vanished from the matter the exact same way everyone else at Cuyamaca has done at one point or another.

Chapter 11

The older you become, the more perceptible you are when something shifts in your life and consciousness. Something changes. Sometimes you know exactly what it is. Sometimes you're not so sure.

It was 2012. I was going into my seventh year as a High School English teacher at Texas School for the Deaf. Located in beautiful and rapidly booming Austin on South Congress Avenue, my classroom on the second floor of the HS building overlooked the football field. My classroom also had a view of downtown Austin to the north and all of the newly emerging skyscrapers that were starting to multiply with abandon.

I felt lucky and blessed. I loved being in Austin. I loved so many things about Texas, especially the beauty of Central Texas. When I first came to Austin as a senior at Texas School for the Deaf to play football, I always knew I wanted to come back one day. It took me twelve years after graduating in 1994 from Texas School for the Deaf to come back to TSD.

Austin absolutely felt like home. I was able to buy a small and beautiful home about two miles away from TSD near the South Austin Hospital. Beautiful and clear Lake Austin was less than twenty minutes away and full of hydrilla and huge largemouth bass.

When I was not teaching, reading, exercising or coaching, I would try to go there with my old and little jon boat as often as I could and try to catch huge bass in middle of all of those beautiful multi million dollar houses.

Many people fish all of their lives without catching a ten pound bass. I had caught about five or six fish over ten pounds at that time and lost a few more that could have been anywhere between ten and fifteen pounds. Becoming a professional bass fisherman was probably my earliest career goal. And it was amazing being able to fish for those huge bass so near to home.

Despite these blessings, sometimes you need to move on. Some people have said that ideally you should teach young kids for only ten years and move on. At that time, I had spent about twelve years in K-12 education and I was starting to see and feel the truth in that.

Chapter 12

The field of education had completely changed since I first started teaching American Sign Language as a 22 year old at North Stafford High School. It was now not so much about teaching and more about being in so many meetings for a multitude of reasons, or so it felt.

The No Child Left Behind law had ballooned into what felt like numerous confusing and chaotic disruptions to the classroom schedule and experience by the time I was teaching at Texas School for the Deaf. There were so many state mandated tests our students needed to take. There were constant training sessions to prepare for these tests. There were constant meetings to teach us teachers how to assess our students correctly. There were meetings after meetings.

Due to the non-traditional block schedule we had in place at Texas School for the Deaf, it would not be unusual for us to not see our students for more than a week from time to time or maybe only once in a week and a half when testing or assessment schedules were in place. The block schedule did not seem to make much sense to me. Especially when I thought about how it was like to be a Deaf kid myself with massive amounts of energy. I absolutely loved when it was time for the recess period or my P.E. classes.

I loved being able to run and rough house with the other kids. I always brought a football with me and tried to organize tackle football games before school or during recess. Even though some teachers would always try to break our game up and force us to play touch football. Even when I would tell everyone that wanted to play to raise their hands if they were okay with playing tackle football. The majority of the kids would almost always want to play tackle football. But still, that wouldn't be enough. There were always one or two teachers that thought it was wrong and too rough for us to play tackle football. They would always try to ruin our fun and force us to play touch football or threaten to take my football away even though little kids need to play rough sometimes. That's part of being a boy and growing up into a man. Playing rough with other boys and becoming stronger and more skilled in different ways is such an important and fun part of growing up. Physicality is always so important with boys. So many young kids, especially boys always need to find ways to unleash the energy they have.

I loved football so much as a kid there was a period of time for several years when I always slept with a football.

One of the most heartbreaking and cruel experiences I've ever had as a kid was when someone I thought was a "cousin" to me decided to steal my football. My family went to visit the Bravin family in New York. I must have been about seven or eight years old. Judy Bravin is one of the children my father grew up with when Carola and Ray Rasmus decided to take my father into their family and raise him. My father has always considered them family. My father has always wanted to do everything for the Bravins. My father has given the Bravins so many things. When they needed skiing equipment, my father gave them free equipment even though my father did not have any money at all. But my father desperately wanted to be a good "uncle" to the Bravin children.

So I had a “new” football that a friend gave to me. Looking at it, you’d think it was nothing special but it really was a completely amazing gift. Because when you’re young it can be hard to throw a football well. This football was smaller and I found that I could throw pinpoint passes with this ball just because it fit my hand really well. So I was filled with excitement and joy about visiting the Bravin family. I thought I’d get to play football with them for a while. I showed Jeff Bravin who must have been about fourteen or fifteen years old at the time the football and I was so excited about it, so proud that I could show them this awesome football and maybe even my athletic talents with this football, too. So we play for a while and then Jeff throws the football really high up in the air. It ends up on the roof of his family’s three story co-op. Jeff says it must have ended up on the other side and he runs around the co-op to look for it. And he runs off. He didn’t realize that I started running after him and just as I rounded the corner of the building I saw him pick up the football and try to hide it behind an air conditioning box.

He saw me just as he tried to hide the football. And I’m just a kid at that time and I don’t really believe what I just saw. This is supposed to be my “cousin”. None of my cousins on my mother’s family would ever have done anything like that to me.

Jeff picks up the football and just sort of laughs easily and says lets go play more football. We run back to the other side of the co-op and I ask him to be careful because I didn’t want the football to end up on the roof again and get stuck. Jeff says sure... A few minutes later he thows the football high up on the roof again. Luckily it rolls off the roof and back down. I start to get really uneasy and upset. I ask Jeff not to throw the football high up any more.

A few minutes later he throws the football high up on the roof and it doesn’t come back down. Jeff runs around the building and the football is gone. His brother Seth was nowhere to be found. I start to get really upset. And then I start crying.

I just knew, absolutely knew that there was something going on and Jeff decided to steal the football from me. I start crying really hard. And I ask him repeatedly to please give me the football back.

Jeff is laughing easily. And he keeps on saying it’s stuck on the roof. And it wasn’t. I knew it was not stuck on the roof. I think he asked someone to stay behind the building and hide or take the football.

When my family leaves their home I beg Jeff Bravin to give me back the football. And he just laughs so easily with that wide smile he has and says it’s stuck on the roof. And I knew, just knew he was lying.

I left their home in tears that day.

Today, through understanding more about racism, I wonder if that was a form of Jewish racism. Did they see me as a *goyim*. Maybe that is why Jeff Bravin was able to laugh so easily at me as I was crying. Because I meant nothing to them.

Jeff Bravin today is the Superintendent of the American School for the Deaf.

When my son died, the mother of my child and I decided to have a very small and private celebration of life. It was a few members of her immediate family and the same thing for my family. A few people from my mother's side of the family came.

One of the most revolting things that ever happened to me at the time was the card I received from Judy Bravin. She enclosed a check and I will never, ever forget the note she wrote. She "chided" me for not inviting her family to the celebration of life.

My son... had just died... and that was the only thing Judy Bravin could think of to share with me at the time. About how I "should" have invited her to the celebration of life.

Moving from class to class each fifty minutes long in which they'd take part in high impact instructions and still be able to talk or play or even rough horse a little bit in the five minute break between classes does so much for a lot of kids. It's just a really good way for kids to keep on recharging throughout the day. It doesn't happen as much sitting in a classroom for two hours and fifteen minutes for three or four classes a day.

Most of our students struggled with reading and were academically behind their hearing counterpart in core academic areas. And we were supposed to keep these kids engaged for more than two hours for each class. It was easy to often see students becoming mentally exhausted and bored after the first hour especially during Reading and English classes.

So many of our students at TSD also had severe attention deficits. Many of these students showed repeatedly that they had severe difficulties in trying to stay focused or engaged for more than thirty minutes at most due to their hyperactive natures.

Many of these students were also medicated. I would be in disbelief at how powerful some of these drugs were and the clear effect they had on some of my students. From time to time students would come to my classes clearly zonked out from the effects of a new medication.

It really was kind of frightening in a way seeing how completely different they appeared under the effects of these powerful drugs. They were completely subdued, unable to focus and lethargic. It seemed so wrong to me. These were teenagers. I could relate to these kids. I was the same kind of kid, full of energy and never able to stay still. Always causing trouble or problems of some kind for my teachers. But thankfully I never had drugs forced on me for my restlessness or overactive energy.

Near the end of my time at Texas School for the Deaf we also had a new principal that had a somewhat heavy handed approach. He scheduled many after school meetings and trainings for the High School Department that took up copious amounts of time that many skilled and experienced teachers should have and wanted to use to meet with their students or work on their lesson plans. Many of these meetings were on Friday afternoons at the end of the day after a long week of teaching.

Worst of all, our classrooms were designed in the traditional special education style with a small private observation room with an one way window. In my first meeting with this principal, he explained that he would now use this observation room to conduct impromptu observations and even conduct evaluations without our knowledge. He then sort of told us to sign a paper giving our consent to this. It didn't really feel like a choice at all. It felt like I should have had the right to decline to sign that paper based on how the request for permission was phrased. I was amazed at how confrontational the explanation was, as if I was sort of being given a tiny and imperceptible opportunity to decline consent, but then in a blink, I found out it wasn't really being presented as a choice at all. I was told to, "Sign! And I was officially notified that we had a principal who was effectively saying he was keen on micromanaging and spying on his teachers.

This principal's wife also gained a teaching position in the high school department which I personally feel should never have been allowed to happen based on Texas Education Law. I personally think there's an extreme conflict of interest based on both of their personalities. He should be more aware of this and make sure his wife works in another department. Because his wife does not always relate to other people in the most successful way and it's clear that if his wife can easily affect how the principal views other members of the high school department.

During my last year at TSD it was easy to see morale plummeting among the high school teachers.

Some of the newer teachers were really nasty too. Two people would constantly try to bully me. Sean Moore and Pia Marie Paulone. They would have such completely nasty and insulting discussions about people in front of all of the other teachers during lunchtime. It was really sort of unbelievable because Sean Moore is a small person, both literally and physically. He has always had the most childlike reactions to adversity. He is someone who constantly gets in arguments with other people while playing basketball and he will take the basketball and stamp off the court in the most childlike rage you can imagine. We had to stop playing basketball once because he did that and he was the only person who brought a ball.

Russell West who was the Director of Student Life at TSD at the time made one of the most revolting and despicable things to me anyone has ever said.

I always treated Russell West with professional courtesy even though he had such a tremendous reputation for bullying the workers under his management.

While he was a pledge master for Kappa Gamma, he attacked a number of pledges mercilessly and relentlessly in a manner people have characterized as being truly violent.

One day we happened to walk through a relatively vacant hallway and into a stairwell at the same time.

Russell West had just bought a house not too far away from my house. In the same development and area. We'd talked about that earlier. He knew where my house was and commented that he'd also bought one in my area.

That day as we walked down the stairwell with nobody around, Russell West looks at me with a nasty and dull reptilian gleam in his eye and says out of the blue, "Sometimes I drive past your house... and I wonder." And he just sort of looks at me in such a nasty and inhospitable way.

And my stomach just turns in such a completely revolted and violent way. I could only stare at him in confusion and think about what he was implying.

Russell West became the superintendent of two different New York State Schools for the Deaf, I believe. I saw that he recently resigned from the position of Superintendent for Lexington School for the Deaf in New York City.

Russell West is a weak, cowardly and abusive person who bullies people under his control.

Every single person that worked under Russell West at Texas School for the Deaf hated him. Absolutely hated him. Russell West is a raging narcissistic.

My last year at TSD we were required to attend a new two day training program. This program was supposed to help us relate to our students better and understand where many of them came from.

The first day, Karl Hummel was the presenter. He did a good job of making his presentation student centered.

The second day, our presenter was Russell West. He spent the whole day talking about himself and his "employment" viewpoints and how he treated the workers under his control. I sat there the whole day in disbelief. I was so taken aback by what Russell West talked about, just in complete disbelief. The two day program was not supposed to be about him but the students we worked with at TSD.

For some reason, Gallaudet University produces a lot of cowardly, weak and despicable people that have strong cultural connections to the Deaf community and these people will bully and attack others relentlessly. So many of these people are members of the Kappa Gamma fraternity or Phi Kappa Zeta sorority. Those people almost always find ways to treat non members like crap or belittle others constantly throughout their entire lives.

Russell West and Jonathan Kovacs are birds of a feather. Jonathan Kovacs is a violent and manipulative narcissistic.

Jonathan Kovacs has attacked and assaulted so many women. Watch out for Jonathan Kovacs. He has a bright smile and he can be charismatic when he wants to. But those who know him know better. This is a manipulative and violent person that will lie, cheat and steal from anyone.

Watch out for Jonathan Kovacs. He is a master manipulator and one of the most two faced and cowardly people I know. Do not trust him around women. He will lie and manipulate people in the most glib and deceitful way imaginable.

It was time to make a change.

Chapter 13

In the Fall of 2012, while trying to recover from a terrible shoulder surgery, I told my parents that I wouldn't be going home for Christmas. My beautiful but aging house needed a number of improvements before it would deteriorate to the point where I might find myself saddled with a number of expensive repairs.

I took out a small loan to pay for these repairs. What I thought would be a fast one or two month long renovation took me almost eight months to complete. Despite starting work on my house in December I found myself scrambling to wrap things up in August.

It was not an easy task. The repair on my left shoulder had just detached a month or so earlier and I was in quite a bit of pain.

Dr. Edward Seade, the doctor who operated on me told me I had a torn labrum. He said it would be a quick and simple procedure. And that I should only wear a sling to support my shoulder for a few days. All of these things were not true at all.

My post operative left shoulder was lower than my right one and my posture was terrible. Dr. Edward Seade did not even have the courage to look me in the eyes when he told me his surgery had failed. When my eyes widened in surprise at how cavalier his explanation was, he quickly ran out of the room before even making sure I had the chance to clearly understand my options for recovering from the failed surgery. Do not trust this doctor. He is an addict and narcissist of the worst kind. He does not care about his patients at all.

The same thing is true of Dr. Gregory Marchand at the South Austin Family Practice. Do not trust this doctor. He preys on Deaf people. This is a predator who learned a little bit of sign language but cannot understand anything signed back to him and will constantly talk and sign over his Deaf patients instead of trying to understand what they are trying to tell him.

The physical therapist I worked with on my shoulder after my surgery kept on telling me to straighten my posture and force my chest and shoulders outwards. I was not sure if it would ever happen. My body was different, my posture was forced inwards just based on tightly my shoulder was tied in and I really did not know if I would regain the strong, proper and straight standing posture I have always had.

This was hard on me. My parents always told me to not stoop or slouch. I have always had good posture. I have always exercised regularly. Exercise and playing sports has always been such a huge part of my life. This change in my physicality was a lot to accept. I handled it in the best way I knew how to which was to continue to try to stay as active as possible.

Chapter 14

While I was trying to recover from my surgery and complete the necessary renovations on my house, in my free time I was also searching for a college level American Sign Language faculty position. I hoped to be lucky enough to gain one of these faculty positions in a wonderful area. I loved Texas and thought I would want to stay in the West. I really didn't know exactly where I wanted to go, though. I thought I might enjoy living in Colorado or California.

By chance a friend told me about a community college in San Diego County, Cuyamaca College, that not only needed a full time ASL teacher, they wanted this person to be the Chair of the program and coordinate or lead the ASL Program. I decided to apply for the position.

The timeline was very tight. I only had about a week and half to prepare and send in my application to Cuyamaca College.

I sent in my application and I was quite excited when Cuyamaca asked me to come in for an interview on a very tight timeline. I needed to come in for an interview in less than two or three weeks. Buying a plane ticket to San Diego on such short notice was unbelievably expensive. I wasn't making much money as a high school teacher at TSD at all.

I scheduled a round trip flight that would give me less than twenty four hours to spend in San Diego. I flew in late at night and took an Uber to my motel. Even though the drive was about forty five minutes long I didn't have the least idea of what San Diego really looked like.

I tried my best to get some sleep. In the morning after having breakfast at Denny's, I went to Cuyamaca College for my interview without the least idea of what to expect. I talked minimally with Kelley Nielsen who was listed as being the ASL Department Chair and had an idea of what the college looked like from the research I'd done.

Chapter 15

Upon arriving for my interview, I was greeted by an administrative assistant who explained that before my interview started I would need to give a writing sample in which I would need to explain my perspectives on teaching. I found this to be interesting and different from the other college teaching level position interviews I had participated in.

In some of those interviews I actually wished I had been able to provide a writing sample or had been able to communicate through writing or texting because the interpreters I had to use at more than one of these interviews often struggled with facilitating communication clearly and professionally.

One particular interview comes to mind. At that interview, there were two ASL students who understood me better than the interpreter did. I felt that was what cost me the position more than anything else. The chair of the foreign language department kept on falling asleep during that interview. That was how bad, halting and unclear the communication I tried to convey was interpreted and presented during that interview. It was a surprise finding out how much the interpreter struggled to convey and explain academic terms since it was explained to me that this was the interpreter the college relied on most of the time for more than one Deaf student. Mmm.

After completing the writing sample I was called on for the start of my interview. I found out there was a member of the interview committee that signed fairly well. This person's name was Therese Botz and she was the sole full time faculty member of the ASL Department at Cuyamaca College.

Therese explained that the interview committee agreed that they would all speak using their voices and that she "wasn't supposed to sign, but that she still wanted to sign just a little bit."

I nodded in an amused sort of way, not really understanding why this should even have been a point of concern for the committee since the interpreter at the meeting would and should be able to convey Botz's signs to the committee members easily. The interview moved on nonetheless.

I answered all of their questions, presented my teaching demonstration and based on the reception I received, thought there was a chance I would be called back for a second interview.

I went straight to San Diego International Airport after my interview concluded. I tried to see as much of San Diego through the windows of my Uber during the thirty minute ride to the airport as I could. I could only reason to myself that if I was called back I would have the chance to see a little more of San Diego at that time.

About a week later, I was happy and surprised when I was invited to come back in for a second interview. I thought it was just absolutely remarkable that I actually was in the running for the position.

During this interview, I would be meeting with the President of Cuyamaca College, Dr. Mark Zacovic and two other faculty members from the interview committee, Mary Graham and Scott Herrin. Mary Graham taught Writing and Scott Herrin was the Interim Dean Of Athletics.

I scheduled another expensive last minute flight to San Diego. Once again I would be in town for only one night.

I flew in. I met with the college president, Dr. Zacovic, the next day and found him to be an amazing, warm and personable man. Mary Graham and Scott Herrin were positive and pleasant. I did not want to get my hopes up, but I felt like based on the warm and positive reception I received it was possible I would be offered the position.

After the interview concluded, I had about four hours to spare before my flight to Austin would take off. I had the use of a rental car this time. I wanted to see what one of the San Diego beaches looked like.

I had absolutely no idea which beaches were “better” than others. I started looking at the map on my iPhone and Imperial Beach came up. I figured it would be as good a beach as any to check out seeing as how it didn’t seem to be too far from Cuyamaca or San Diego International Airport.

Imperial Beach was quite underwhelming. It was somewhat nondescript, just a little bit seedy and nowhere near being glamorous. It didn’t seem to match the descriptions of the amazing San Diego beaches I had heard about.

That is something my students usually laughed at, when I shared the story about how Imperial Beach was my first impression of the amazing San Diego beaches I’d heard so much about. Imperial Beach is really in a somewhat still impoverished and seedy area of San Diego. There’s a fence that divides America from Mexico that extends from the beach into the water and you can see Tijuana in the distance.

Time was limited. I looked around Imperial Beach and drove north through Coronado Island. I may have stopped for a smoothie in Coronado but otherwise headed for the airport feeling as if I had seen just a little bit more of San Diego than I had during my previous visit. And once again, I reasoned hopefully that maybe I would have the chance to eventually see more of San Diego.

Chapter 17

Despite my positive feelings about how both encounters with Cuyamaca College had transpired, I was in absolute disbelief when I received a warm and thoughtful email from Dr.

Zacovic that invited me to teach American Sign Language at Cuyamaca College. The close friends I shared the news with were as surprised as I was, and they were as happy for me as I was for myself. It seemed like I would have the chance to see more of San Diego after all. It seemed rather surreal.

My response to Dr. Zacovic expressed how amazed and lucky I felt to have the chance to lead the ASL Department and shared that I would do my very best to lead the program successfully.

Scott Herrin and Mary Graham also reached out to me during this time to let me know I should contact them with any questions I may have. Herrin was apparently assisting Human Resources and Dr. Zacovic with a small number of matters related to my application.

Chapter 18

During this time I needed to reach out to Scott and Mary to ask them for their thoughts about something I was concerned might affect my standing with Cuyamaca College. I wanted to make sure they were aware that there was a person that had been attacking me online in quite a malicious and libelous way for more than twenty years dating back to my time as a graduate student at Gallaudet.

I explained to Scott and Mary that there was a period of time when I attended Gallaudet University that I had numerous personal problems that I didn't know how to or couldn't handle correctly or in a mature way. And that as a result I absolutely didn't communicate with so many people with the care and thought that many of these people deserved.

I wanted them to know it was something I have absolutely taken responsibility for throughout my entire life. I have approached so many people to try to make amends for anything I may have said in my youth while I was still trying to grow and develop from a boy with many problems into a strong man even if I said these things not fully realizing the impact it may have made on some people.

I have spent so much time and thought on working on my communication and interpersonal skills. That is what anyone and everyone should do if they want to become a better version of themselves. Everyone is a child or kid at some point with problems they're unable to deal with at that time in their lives for some reason whether that is from the lack of maturity, awareness, intellect, knowledge or support they may have needed at that time.

Everyone deserves the chance to grow into a mature, grounded and responsible adult at some point and move on with their lives.

I explained to Scott Herrin and Mary Graham that there was a part of what this person posted about me that was true. But that there also was so much stuff, so many comments that were anonymously posted about me on this person's website that was absolutely untrue or taken completely out of context.

Chapter 19

Going back to 1994 when I first enrolled at Gallaudet University, the Internet was just starting to emerge. Most students did not own a computer. Smartphones hadn't come out yet.

The closest thing to the Internet at Gallaudet was a discussion forum on Gallaudet's server. You could register for an account through Gallaudet and that would allow you to start topics and respond to these topics. You could also message users through the site. It was quite basic, but it allowed Gallaudet students to have important discussions about educational topics as well as any other topics they were interested in.

I enjoyed participating in these discussions from time to time. One of my friends started to talk about this person who was constantly disrupting so many of these educational and thoughtful discussions with his vehement and belligerent replies and insults.

Glenn Lockhart was very upset with this person. I don't know why but he was particularly agitated by this person and he sort of wanted me to help him get back at that person and then it sort of started as online sparring. Glenn is a very good writer and he would come up with these hilarious narratives about this person that would agitate him and I sort of would support Glenn and poke fun at him.

What nobody really knew at the time was this person was a keyboard warrior. Keyboard warriors didn't exist back then. Nobody knew what they were. The way this person talked to people online, you would have thought he was a massive 6'4 and 240 pound football player and he was doing his best to challenge and barrel through everyone else in the most confrontational way possible.

This person would often start arguments about all of these small and insignificant things in all of these insulting, belligerent and abrasive ways.

So many people tried to talk to this person in a thoughtful way and support him by giving him meaningful feedback about how his online approach was affecting the other participants. These people tried to explain to him that so many interesting academic discussions would just be completely derailed once he would force himself into these discussions.

But this person continued to treat others online with a contemptuous and unbridled arrogance.

And this person, in fact, has continued to attack and try to hurt so many people online for more than twenty years. So many private individuals, so many young kids and people who deserved the chance to learn from the mistakes they made in their youth in relative anonymity and become better people. And even though so many people have continued to try to talk to this person in kind and patient ways, he continues to find joy in attacking others.

Sadly, this person always falls back on some kind of sad story or act that allows him to believe he's a perpetual victim even though this is a privileged person that has had so many amazing opportunities to become a successful person. For some reason this person believes he has the right to judge people and completely destroy their reputations online.

So many people have tried to help him. After graduating from Gallaudet, he had several wonderful jobs and he was fired from all of them because he couldn't stop attacking people.

It's really amazing how many people tried to invite this person into their community and give him a chance to climb the career ladder in a professional capacity and make something out of himself, but it has always been more important for him to attack people and act like a victim.

Maybe because it's one of the easiest things to do. Attacking people online really doesn't require much thought or work at all.

Chapter 20

I think this person first attacked me on the internet, sometime in the late spring of 2005. I was completing my graduate studies at Gallaudet University after having spent four wonderful years teaching ASL at North Stafford High School.

Someone came up to me and said this person is saying some really awful things about you online. I went online and after I read what he said about me which were some of the most terrible things anyone could say about anyone. I remember four things in particular.

He said he found out I was abused as a child and said it in such a joyful and excited way.

He said I shoved him once because I did not want to hit my girlfriend, implying that I would hit women.

He said he "grinned" when he found out my newborn son died.

He accused me of being homophobic.

There was a lot of other stuff including how I played what I sort of thought were some fun and harmless pranks on him that gave him the attention he absolutely coveted from people.

Chapter 21

It is quite probable or possible that my profoundly Deaf father was abused as a child. He was given away at birth and spent his early years being shipped from orphanage to orphanage.

My father is one of these people that grew up without any language throughout his very early childhood and he has had severe communication problems throughout his whole life.

And he has worked throughout all of his life to overcome the abuse and social deprivation he experienced as a child. It has been so hard on him. He has had such a hard life, and somehow miraculously, he still managed to attend and graduate from Gallaudet University, gain employment and support his family in the best way he can his whole life through working hard every single day of his life and continually trying to grow into and become a more patient and better man in so many different ways as all men want to do throughout their lives.

My father has a very different way of processing communication from most people. He needs time to process things that most other people can just understand and respond to fairly rapidly.

Through most of my life, he would have so many severe communication breakdowns. He would often fall back on a default mechanism of becoming angry and defensive even if the situation didn't require these emotions or warrant that type reaction at all.

Every time he tried to explain something to me when I was a kid, it was often in a somewhat angry, forceful or confrontational way. Almost as if I should've known how to do these things instead of having the chance to learn these things as a young child. Even if it was something like learning how to tie my shoes. For some reason I struggled with tying my shoes as a kid and he would get really upset, to the point of being angry that I couldn't do it right.

I can only think this was most probably a defense mechanism or a form of post traumatic stress syndrome from the abuse he experienced as a child. My father has had to work his whole life on understanding that it's ok when he doesn't understand something and that it's ok to respond in a thoughtful way and show that he needs time to process things instead of becoming angry and defensive and responding with a strong or aggressive comment that really does nothing to improve the situation at all and only escalates tensions. And it has taken him many years to do that. I find it amazing that I can have conversations and discussions with him many years later that would prove to be so hard and stressful when I was a kid. That is a testament to how hard he has worked on his communication skills throughout his entire life and sort of a testament to the same thing for myself because that's exactly what I've done every day for so many years.

Most important of all, my father is an amazing person. He loves his family beyond belief. That's all he's ever wanted to do. Have a family he can love and support and that's what he's always done for me even though there was a long period of time in my life when I had such a hard time communicating with him. Just because I didn't truly understand the nature or severity of his communication or cognitive abilities. But my father has always continued to stand by me and support me in the best way possible.

Still, when I was younger, this certainly had an impact on my communication, confidence and social skills when I was young. And I have similarly needed to work every single day in my life to overcome some of these bad habits or defense mechanisms I've developed. And for so many

years I have interacted in the most genuine, thoughtful and interested way I can with so many different people.

I have learned that when things appear to be escalating beyond my control for any reason, one of the best things you can do is to give every single person the mental, emotional or actual space they need to coexist with me in some way when communication difficulties arise as a result of our required interaction, whether that is a friend, student, co-worker or anyone in general that I have needed to share personal space of some sort with.

I have learned that to try to incite some kind of nasty or negative reaction beyond anything that may have been a genuinely upset and strong initial reaction to any kind of stimulus is a complete waste of time and energy and never ends well for anyone. Life is such an amazing thing and you realize that the time you're given should be used to seek amazing opportunities to continue growing in the best way possible.

Chapter 22

Back to Gallaudet and this grotesque keyboard warrior. For him to suggest or even say that I shoved him because I didn't want to hit my girlfriend at the time or to imply I would have done something of the sort was such an utter lie. I have never, ever hit a girl or woman in my life. Not as a kid, not as an adult. I have never ever wanted to hit a woman and I have never ever hit a girl or a woman in my life. Never.

One of the greatest joys anyone can have is to spend time with a beautiful, intelligent and wise woman. Nothing will ever replace or top that.

The truth about the situation in which I shoved this person in a stronger way than I really should have is that I was in an utterly manipulative and violent relationship that I couldn't extricate myself from for more than three and a half years.

This girl I was in a relationship with brought out the utter worst in me. This person lied to me repeatedly in an utterly pathological way for more than three years.

I struggled with self-confidence as a kid. I needed to receive counseling services as a young kid.

I never dated much in high school. I dated a couple of girls somewhat briefly, but never had any kind of serious relationship.

And then I found myself in this relationship that I just couldn't extricate myself from for some reason.

Chapter 23

It's 1994. Gallaudet University. Freshman year, I am playing Division 3 football. I became the starting quarterback position three games into the season. I had to beat out a very good returning quarterback. It was exciting. We were playing all of those schools that had really strong programs with huge athletes. We were got beat up in almost every game but we came to play hard and tried our best. We really had some amazing athletes come in as freshmen that year.

We had a terrific man as our coach who played football for Clemson University. A great and strong man full of character who learned how to sign so he could coach at Gallaudet University.

Our Coach put together an absolutely amazing recruiting class. We had such an incredible group of freshmen that year. Almost every player was deaf and Coach Ciniero put countless hours in calling and recruiting all of us to come to Gallaudet University. He wanted to build a team that would eventually make it into the Division 3 playoffs. That was his dream.

And then I meet this amazing woman midway through my first semester at Gallaudet. She was one of those utterly kind, patient and amazing women. It was so easy being with her. I don't think we argued about a single thing. And it was just one of those things where I fell completely and utterly into love with her. And the most remarkable thing is... I still hadn't had sex for the first time. Sex was not something I wanted to rush into. It just felt like it was one of those things that would happen when the time was right.

So I come back to Gallaudet after winter break... and find out that this girl decides that she needs to break up with me. And oh man... I crashed pretty hard. It hurt so much. She was a senior, and she was just in a different time and place in her life, and that's something only someone with age and wisdom can really understand about being in a different place from someone else. It wasn't something I understood at that time at all.

I became really depressed. Oh boy, was I depressed. My friends constantly told me to stop moping around. And sadly, I started drinking for the first time in my life. I never drank or smoked in high school. Even when my friends were sort of putting peer pressure on me to start drinking, I didn't want to. I just wanted to play sports and lift weights and have fun in the outdoors.

But being in college is different. There's a newfound independence. And my drinking became a real problem. It's definitely hard for young people to see how that kind of thing can be a real problem. It's hard for many young people to know their limits with alcohol. You just don't have that kind of self awareness about how alcohol affects you or others. All you see is young people drinking and partying and behaving in the most utterly stupid ways under the influence of alcohol. And it's easy to use that kind of behavior you see to help you rationalize or believe that your own stupid behavior under alcohol isn't a real problem, that it's just sort of how everyone behaves when they drink.

So many people around me wanted to drink and there was constant peer pressure to drink. My drinking, combined with my depression and all of the suppressed emotions I was trying to handle as a Deaf person making my way into the world as a young adult was not a good combination.

Chapter 24

Sophomore year at Gallaudet was different. We had a new football coach. Coach Ciniero was let go during the spring semester of my freshman year. Gallaudet explained that his goals were too ambitious and that they decided they were going to make the football team a club program. We would not be a Division 3 team any more.

The new players during my sophomore year looked small and scrawny. We had a new coach, Richard Pelletier, that was small and scrawny but talked big as if he thought he was Lou Holtz. It didn't really jibe with a lot of people. We were a club program with an utterly mediocre group of athletes compared to the previous year and he was talking and acting as if we were still a Division 3 program. It didn't feel like we were a real football team any more. But I decided to play anyway.

Very early on in the semester, there was this freshman girl that was showing interest in me. I was still hurt and still quite depressed from the previous relationship. I hadn't dated anyone at all since the break up from the previous year. This freshman girl seemed to always be around. She always seemed to want to talk to me.

Gallaudet University is located on a really small 99 acre campus. Gallaudet's actual footprint on those 99 acres is probably around 50 to 60 acres. The other half of the campus is composed of K-12 programs, Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD) and Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES).

There are only two or three places at Gallaudet where people typically hang out and chat with others. If you're not at one of these areas, you're usually in your dorm room if you live on campus which I did at the time.

The amazing H Street and NE renaissance in Washington DC that resulted in the current explosion in the number of high end bars, restaurants and lounges in an otherwise decrepit and fairly dangerous area of DC that surrounded Gallaudet University on all sides hadn't happened yet. At the time it wasn't safe to walk to or around H St. after dark. You really needed to watch your back when you ventured out of Gallaudet whether that was during day or night. Most people just stayed on campus or drove to nicer parts of DC when they wanted to go out.

It generally was easy to find people at Gallaudet if you sort of got to know them and wanted to find them.

The strange thing, I wasn't even interested in the girl. She seemed young and there wasn't anything I found particularly remarkable about her. But she was always around. The best way I can describe it is she was really persistent. She kept on finding me and finding reasons to talk to me. One thing led to another and this girl and I started dating.

I still wasn't sure about the relationship. There were things I saw or observed that didn't really feel right to me. It's like I'd see a red flag pop up and I wouldn't be sure what to think about it.

It's not like I had extensive experience being in relationships. This girl always and I mean she always wanted to be with me. It felt like it was getting to be too much at some times. I needed time with my friends too. But she would be so persistent and then act so upset if I didn't respond in the way she wanted to I would just give in. It was just one of those things that felt like it was moving faster than it should have.

Then late in the Fall semester, it must have been November. She starts talking about having sex. I told her I wasn't really sure about that. I didn't feel ready. It didn't feel like she was the right person at the right time. But she starts pressuring me to have sex.

And every time she pressured me to have sex, the same thing would happen. She would act angry, upset or hurt when I said I wasn't sure I was ready. It was just one of those things where the constant pressure really started to make me think about breaking up with her. It wasn't something we needed to rush into at all.

But it's like she decided she absolutely wanted to have sex. She kept on saying it was going to be her first time. And it seemed to be such a very important thing to her. So it was one of these things where the pressure just wore me down and we eventually had sex.

Fast forward to the next semester. It was Spring. Spring time in D.C. is beautiful. Things are blooming. The weather is getting warmer and warmer.

But... the girl that always wanted to be with me during the fall semester.... The girl that always acted so excited and as if she only had eyes for me and always wanted to talk to me... completely changed into someone else midway through the Spring semester. She was now talking to so many other guys in the same excited and flirtatious way she used to talk to me with. And I was becoming more confused and increasingly unhappy.

I would wait for her after one of her classes and she would walk out of the class talking excitedly to some other guy and she would act as if she was so engrossed in that conversation as if she didn't even notice me waiting outside of her class. And with Deaf people, you notice so much in your line of vision. You're constantly using your eyes. I knew she was doing it intentionally. I just didn't understand why at all.

When she would finally acknowledge me, instead of showing the tiniest bit of happiness or excitement related to seeing me for the first time that day, she would just act like it wasn't a big deal.

Chapter 25

She was flirting constantly with one of people I happened to grow up with, Terry Giansanti. Terry is someone that really doesn't respect people at all.

The strange thing, I actually thought Terry was smart. He was older than me and knew sports. And I tried to be his friend when I first met him at Kendall School, the first Deaf school I attended in my life when I was five or six years old. But Terry never really wanted to be my friend. He would manipulate me and use me to bully the other kids and then he would laugh. And I'd think he was laughing with me because that was how dumb and naïve I was as a kid.

Terry always made fun of his autistic uncle. Autism was not one of those things really talked about in the 1980's. Terry always talked how it was cool his uncle lived with him because he could give him orders to do things for him like make a sandwich for him.

When we attended Kendall together, Terry would often ask to borrow other kids' basketball to go play in one of the gyms at Gallaudet after school ended since both of his parents taught at Gallaudet and would pick up Terry after they were done teaching their classes in the evening. A lot of those kids at Kendall were dumb or naïve and would just give Terry their basketball. And after Terry was done playing, he would just throw the basketball away.

Terry didn't give a shit about returning the basketball to these kids. A lot of those kids were poor. Just like I was growing up. My family never had any money. A \$25 basketball was an absolute luxury. Terry didn't care about that, how those kids might not have the chance to have a basketball of their own again. He just didn't want to carry it back or take care of the basketball until he could return it to the kid.

Terry is one of those white people that always called black people N----rs. He loved using the sign for N----r. Or sometimes he would use the euphemism "Nigra". He loved using that term even though he never really had any black friends. Kendall school was in Washington DC. Kendall School and DC were full of black people. It always bothered and puzzled me because my parents never ever talked like that and I'd never been around that kind intentional cultural derogation.

Chapter 26

I've always loved all people deep down inside even if I wasn't able to show it in the best way for a long time. I grew up in an apartment complex in Vienna, Virginia that was as diverse and multicultural as any other place, probably. We had all kinds of people living there. You'd see kids playing soccer in the yard more than football.

My very, very first best friend in the hearing world I lived in very early on as a kid was a Black hearing kid. We rode the short yellow school bus together to Camelot School in Fairfax, Virginia for a year and a half or so. I still remember how we became best friends.

I loved playing with Matchbox cars when I was a kid. And he saw me playing with those cars one day. The next day he showed up with his own Matchbox car. And then we sat together every single day on the bus playing with our cars and communicating in this amazing way that only little kids can. We must have been four or five years old at that time. And one day I found out he would be riding on another bus and my heart broke.

My mother tried to help me stay in touch with him but it was not easy at all. I couldn't just call him and set a time to go over. It was very hard making phone calls as a Deaf person in the 80's. We would have to call an interpreter using a TTY or TDD and these calls never went well. We would have to call an interpreter. We would often be put on hold for 15 or 20 minutes. And then we would need to type our messages slowly and in a halting manner out to the interpreter. It wasn't uncommon for the call to become disconnected. It wasn't unusual for a simple call to Domino's Pizza to order a pizza to take more than twenty or thirty minutes to complete. Sometimes even more than forty five minutes if we were repeatedly disconnected while being put on hold.

I never saw this best friend again until I was in college.

I was at Nottoway Park in Vienna, Virginia playing basketball one day. He wasn't someone who played at the park regularly. I'd never seen him at the park before that day. But he saw me and once he realized I was Deaf, he remembers me. It was amazing seeing him again even though I was in a very hard and dark time in my life at the time I and wasn't able to connect with him as much as I would have liked to.

I always looked up to the black Deaf kids at Kendall school. Those people were my role models. The black kids were so genuine and real. I always wanted to talk to them. They always appeared as strong, real and genuine people with so much confidence. Guys like Terence Cooper, Erich Clark and Mike Kent were the older guys I looked up to. I didn't really look up to any of the white kids at Kendall School.

I think it's because my dad is one of the most genuine people I know. Not that his genuineness was always a good thing. Because sometimes some stuff just does not need to be said. But it really helped me see and understand how someone genuinely acts. And the black kids at KDES I looked up to were some of the most genuine people I knew. Most of them had a hard and real life and carried themselves with so much swagger, strength and pride. And I respected that.

Chapter 27

I would see Cara who was supposed to be my girlfriend and Terry constantly talking during the Spring semester. Right in front of me. And I was becoming unhappier and unhappier. I was just utterly confused and stunned about how she went from being this utterly devoted person that only wanted to spend time with me to someone so interested in talking so intently with so many other guys, especially this guy of all people.

I sort of feel like they're cheating on me. And then I found out that they absolutely were cheating on me. And they're lying so easily about it. I don't know why I wasn't able to just walk away from her right then and there.

At the start of my junior year at Gallaudet, I was really unhappy with the relationship I had with Cara. I was seeing more and more red flags and I told her it was time to break up. It was hard on me. But I wasn't happy at all and I didn't feel like I was with the same person at all that acted like I was the only person for her. It was just unbelievable for me... It really was so sad. I wanted to wait to have sex with a really special person, the person I would probably marry. And now I'm sort of realizing there's so many problems with this person. That she is not who she presented herself to be at all. It was just starting to feel so wrong.

There was one huge red flag that I should have known better than to disregard. This person didn't even respect my mother.

She always wanted to come over and visit when I was at home. I was still living with my parents in Northern Virginia, thirty minutes away from Gallaudet. My mother did not want her to stay overnight at all. She would always be supposed to go back to her dorm at Gallaudet University but it became another thing where she would just become so insistent about staying over.

One day my mother finally consented to having her stay over. She told me that we absolutely couldn't sleep together in the same bed. That we needed to sleep together in separate beds. That was fine. I often watched TV downstairs and then I would fall asleep on the sofa. I liked sleeping on that sofa and in fact I slept so well in that cool or even cold basement.

My mom would walk downstairs sometimes and she would always say she had no idea how I could sleep down there with just a thin blanket considering how cold it would get down there with the uninsulated cement floor in the Winter time.

Cara couldn't even respect that. The exact same thing would happen. Now that she had gotten permission to stay over, that still wasn't good enough. She would be so insistent about sleeping in the same bed as me. I would explain what my mother said several times about how she was really very firm and serious about making sure we did not sleep in the same bed. And I'd just get the same insistent and relentless reaction again over again about how it really wasn't such a big deal and that would just wear me down and I would give in yet once again.

My mother of course was furious when she realized in the morning that we slept together in the same bed.

That was such a huge flag. There were so many of them. So many lies and deception and manipulation. I should never have let things go beyond that. But that's what happens when someone has found out that they know exactly how to manipulate you. For some reason, she really got her hooks in me deep.

Chapter 28

The day after I told Cara it was time to break up at the start of my junior year is as clear as rain.

The previous day, we had a long talk. It wasn't the first time we talked about breaking up. It was the third or fourth time. Maybe even the fifth time. But it was the first time I told her I was serious, that I really needed to move on and I asked her to please understand that and to allow me to move on.

So I walk into my dorm suite in the afternoon. My dorm suite had a large foyer and two smaller bedrooms. I open the door and walk into the foyer and I was completely stunned to see her there talking to my roommate, dressed very nicely. And I stand there in confusion wondering why she's there. And... she doesn't even acknowledge me. She just ignores me and continues to talk to my red haired roommate. I can only walk into my bedroom in confusion. I don't know what the hell's going on.

I walk back out into the foyer and wait for her to acknowledge me. And again, she totally ignores me. And I finally have to wave and ask her in sort of a confused way about what's going on. And then an expression I could only describe as being a mixture of scorn, disgust and anger comes across her face. She looks at me in disgust and in an utterly spiteful way and just walks out of the room.

And you know what. I did the stupidest thing I could have possibly done. I chased after her in confusion. I never wanted to have any bad feelings between us. Breaking up was so hard and I just wanted to stay friends.

Somehow talking to her led to one thing after another. And what should have been a year long relationship continued in this toxic and violent on and off way for more than three years.

During this time she beat me up violently. Twice. The first time she hit me with her fists so hard all over my face and head and I just let her do it. I was this big and strong football player. I should be able to take being beat up by a girl, right?

Then there was this time we went to a Washington Capitals game. I really, really did not want to go. This was something she planned with her friends. I really didn't like her friends that much at all. Terry Giansanti was going to be there too and I knew I would feel tense and uncomfortable the whole time. But again, she was so insistent that I go to the game I caved in and finally agreed to go.

At the game she starts flirting and talking with Terry too and I'm getting more and more upset. I finally decide I need to go take a walk and let off some steam. But Cara wouldn't quite let me leave. She kept on walking with me and she was continually grabbing my wrist and just refusing to let me walk away.

This went on for quite some time in the hallway or concourse encircling the court where all of the concession stands are located. And you just can't sign or communicate if someone's grabbing and holding your wrist. I finally had to jerk my wrist away from her grasp. And when I jerked my arm away, her hand flew up and she acted like she hit herself in the face. Her face turns flushed and angry and she said, "You hit me."

I was stunned and said, "No, I didn't." She said, "Yes, you hit me. You hit me." And then she just turns away and walks back to where we were sitting at the game.

And now I'm in disbelief. I'm just utterly stunned. I never hit her. That was such an utter lie. And I could only go back to my seat since I rode with her and her friends to the game and watch her sitting with her friends with her face all red looking like something huge had happened.

I could only wonder what she told them about me. Did she really lie to her friends and tell them I hit her. In front of everyone else, all of the fans present at the game. That was such a huge red flag. And by that time, I should have known better. I should have run as far away from her as possible. But I didn't.

There was the time she beat me up for the second time. I was at a friend's home. It was late at night. There had been a small party and most people had already left. So somehow we started arguing again and when Cara argues with me, it would be utterly relentless. Our arguments would go on for two or three hours. And somehow she starts beating me up again. She hit my head so hard I actually had a lump on the top of my head for several days. And that time, I finally grabbed her wrists to get her to stop hitting me. And I walked out of the room.

You'd think I would have learned my lesson by that time and stayed away from her. But that wasn't the last time she manipulated me. There were so many other times in which she would manipulate me and gaslight me to the point where I would become angry and confused. There were so many times.

This person really did more than anyone else could possibly have to destroy my ability to trust the people I enter into relationships with even to this day.

The worst thing she ever did to me was gaslight me endlessly by acting like she was having an affair with a much older man until I reached a very dark and deep place where I didn't know what to believe at all. I still remember that day. I saw her in the afternoon. We started talking about stuff. You know how you usually talk about your day or something like that. But she's acting strange and just sort of evasive. And that was one of those red flags at the time that I just

didn't know how to handle. So I ask her about her day and how things are going. And again she just sort of passes off my question and acts like she didn't see me ask about her day.

And this gaslighting goes on for two or three hours. It's like the second year we've been together and I still hadn't recognized or fully realized how well or skillfully she would lie about things. She's just sort of purposely being vague and just refuses to tell me about her day. And I'm getting more and more tense. So she starts saying, "I can't tell you. You'll become angry." And then she acts like everything's fine and starts talking about other stuff.

And of course, I'm becoming more and more tense and angry, not sure what's going on or why she's acting in that way. She gaslights me for several hours until the evening comes around, until she's gotten me in a really dark and intense place.

And then she says, "I was out with this person." And it's this much older man that she would constantly talk about and imply that there was some kind of chemistry between them. And then she starts to imply that there's something going on. It was just pure gaslighting and lying. It's finally late in the night. And by that time I became totally convinced they were cheating on me... and you'd think I would have just walked away knowing better by then. But again, I still hadn't quite realized how adept she was at lying and manipulating me.

So late at night, being in a really dark place, having been lied to and gaslighted relentlessly for several hours at that point, I went to this person's dorm room at MSSD where he was living part time at the time and banged on his window furiously. Someone in the adjacent room heard me banging on his window and told me he was at home. This person also shared an apartment with someone I knew well. I went over to his home late at night. I wasn't thinking clearly at all. I just was so angry and confused at what I was being told and not knowing what the truth was.

This person opened the door and we talked for a while and he says there's nothing going on at all. And I don't know what to believe. I'm just in disbelief, thinking he must be lying. And he was sitting down. I shoved him backwards while he was sitting down. That's all I ever did. I never hit him. I never really wanted to hit anyone. It was one of those times when I just needed to expend some energy. This guy was much bigger than me. He's something like 6'5. A former Division 3 basketball player.

You would sort of think that he would have appreciated that I never even hit him even though he apparently was spending a lot of time with someone that was supposed to be my girlfriend. I never hurt him. All I did was shove him so that he fell backwards while he was sitting in a chair.

But still he made sure things were never the same between us after that. I sent him an heartfelt written letter explaining what happened and a genuine apology because I knew that I'd still gone too far and I just wanted to settle things between us and make things right.

You'd think that experience would have scared me straight and made sure I stayed as far away from that girl as I could. That experience absolutely did scare the hell out of me and I never

wanted to do anything like that again. I never wanted to become so upset with someone and lose control of myself like that again.

But for some reason, that girl was so good at relentlessly finding ways to manipulate me that we still stayed together in an on and off way for what must have been more than another year.

The saddest thing is this girl truly never wanted to be in a loving and monogamous relationship. It's like she knew and decided from the very, very start of our relationship that she wanted to continue to have relationships with other men.

It's so sad. I was at a time in my life when I needed the support of an amazing woman. Someone who could tell me, "Your drinking's out of control. Your behavior is terrible. You need to stop doing these things" And I would have absolutely listened to this person and tried to change. Because that's what you do for an amazing woman. You change what you can because you realize this person loves you and wants the best for you and the relationship and you realize this woman is so smart and she's seeing things you aren't necessarily seeing that can help you be a much better person.

Chapter 29

Back to the person who said he found joy in my son's death. My son's death was a life changing event for me as it would be for anyone else. I was so lucky to have the support of my family and be at North Stafford High School that time. So many people supported me during that time even though it was such a terrible year for me. Almost exactly a month after my son died, my favorite uncle, my mother's Deaf brother, also died in a terrible boating accident.

This is one of these stories I've told to my ASL students from time to time. Not often but I've shared it a couple of times, just to sort of help my students understand how direct Deaf people can be sometimes.

I was supposed to meet my uncle in Delaware for a fishing tournament. I left work that Friday afternoon to drive up to Delaware. Beltway traffic throughout the entire Northern Virginia, DC and Maryland region was terrible as it always is on Friday afternoons.

I finally reach the hotel everyone's staying at for the tournament late at night. It must have been after ten. I look around for my uncle's truck and boat and was puzzled when I didn't see either parked anywhere. I finally saw three or four Deaf people standing in the parking lot talking and I went up to them. One person knew me pretty well. But they're all talking like there isn't anything particularly unusual going on. And so I just stand around and start talking with them. I think we sort of just talk in a really odd way for a few minutes. Nobody says anything. It's just sort of idle talk. And then I finally ask, "Where's my uncle?"

This Deaf person I've never met before doesn't even let my friend break the news to me. He just says directly with a completely strong and emphatic facial expression. "Dead. He's dead!"

And I'm a bit confused at first. Just a little bit stunned. It didn't seem real. My son had died about a month earlier. So it didn't really seem real or completely register. But it was real. And then it hit me. Hard. I think I cried for three or four hours that night before finally falling asleep.

My uncle drove all night from his home in West Virginia and went straight to the boat ramp in the morning to scout around and find a few good spots for the fishing tournament. And he fell from the boat and drowned. He may have had a seizure. He would occasionally have seizures.

That was such a difficult time and year for me. I lashed out at some people at North Stafford that year, both faculty members and my students, and so many people there just tried to support me in the best way they could. That school really had some of the most amazing teachers and students I've met in my entire life. So many incredibly smart, compassionate and creative people.

Chapter 30

The gay related accusation. I've had gay friends for many years. Even when I was a young kid at Kendall and there were a couple of kids that everyone knew was gay. We would tease those kids and one of those kids was a beautiful black kid that was an amazing dancer. He was one of the most mature kids I've ever known in my entire life. This is what kids do. They tease others. And when we teased him, he would look at us with his old soul eyes and say, "You're so immature." And that would be it.

I've had a gay friend I have been very close to since my freshman year at Gallaudet University. This person has visited me at my home repeatedly. He has stayed at my home. He has borrowed my clothes. In Austin, we would go out to gay clubs all of the time. Austin had a couple of cool gay clubs when I lived there.

This friend, Don, would come to straight clubs with me and then I'd hang out with him at gay clubs. Those clubs were really cool in the way there would be a lot of straight and gay people just interacting and having a good time.

This is how close he and I were at one time. He had a particularly bad break up and I was the one who he reached out and wanted to talk to. That's how close we were. Just two really good friends who respected each other and had a lot of similar interests and could talk about a lot of different stuff easily.

We spent a lot of time hanging out in Austin. He came and visited me at San Diego. We've drifted apart a bit, but he was a very good friend of mine for many years and he knows the truth about my respect for the gay community and our friendship as do so many of the other gay people I have interacted with over the years in all kinds of genuine and thoughtful ways.

I have always extended the same kind of support to all of my LGBT friends, students and colleagues. My first year at Cuyamaca College, the president of our ASL Club was a transgender male. I hired the first ever gay person to teach ASL at Cuyamaca College, Shmuel Khorsandi. Throughout my entire time at Cuyamaca College, I have reached out to so many gay people to talk to them about teaching ASL at Cuyamaca. I have extended teaching offers to so many gay people. I've had numerous gay and transgender students take my classes at Cuyamaca College and the other schools I've taught at and I've supported every single person.

I have reached out to so many gay people I've known throughout my life just to connect with them, catch up on things and communicate in thoughtful ways. I have given every single gay student I've had throughout my entire teaching career the exact same kind of support I've given any other student.

At the same time, it's somewhat interesting to me that I learned about what it's like to be sexually harassed through interacting with the male Gay community. I've experienced physical and verbal sexual harassment many times from members of the male Gay community that I've almost never experienced with women. While interacting with members of the Gay community I find that they constantly push personal boundaries such as forcing people to hug them when they see you. And some of these people will completely press their bodies against yours even if you've tried to demonstrate that you're not so keen on having that type of physical contact or touch with some friends that could just as well be acquaintances.

Chapter 31

The interesting thing about the person that has attacked me repeatedly for many years is I actually saw him in Las Vegas a few years ago and spent quite some time talking to him thoughtfully.

Even though he said he found joy in my son's death. Even though he didn't understand he was attacking not only myself, but everyone else affected by my son's life and death by saying that. Even though he has attacked so many people I believe he may his life in nervousness or even fear because it seems as if people have talked about exacting revenge or justice for the way he has attacked others, I talked to him thoughtfully and patiently for fifteen or even twenty minutes because that was the person I was at the time and that was the manner in which I genuinely tried to interact with everyone. I have never wanted to hold malice or anger in my heart. It destroys you.

Chapter 32

It was important for me to make sure Mary Graham and Scott Herrin knew about these terrible comments that you would see online about myself. I did not want to come into Cuyamaca College, and then have someone say, "Look at these terrible online comments about you. You're not the right person for Cuyamaca College." I received replies from both Mary and Scott

assuring me that they were aware of these comments and that I had their support and the support of the college.

I still remember what both told me. Mary told me that it was a learning experience and that I could use these experiences to make a difference in my students' lives. Scott said something to the extent of that I did not seem to be the same person that appeared in these comments. I thanked both for their support.

I asked Herrin if I should talk to Dr. Zacovic about the matter. Scott told me that he didn't think I should address it with the president and that I should just focus on getting ready for my classes. And I left it at that. I continued to move forward with my plans to begin leading the ASL Program at Cuyamaca College in the Fall of 2013.

Chapter 33

The time leading to and my departure for San Diego was both exhilarating and bittersweet. Finishing up all of the little touches on my freshly renovated house, cleaning everything out, packing, and selling or giving away whatever I was not going to bring to San Diego with me seemed to be taking forever.

I also needed to work on getting my classes ready for the Fall semester. There was very little free time. I could only look at my house somewhat wistfully the morning I set off for San Diego in August and marvel at how beautiful it looked freshly painted. I felt somewhat wistful but I was headed to San Diego. San Diego of all places!

The drive along I10 through Arizona was spectacular. These expansive fields of Saguaro Cactus in Arizona that I'd only seen on The Road Runner and Wile E. Coyote cartoons as a kid were awesome. The drive was far easier than I expected it to be. Minimal traffic of any kind. Vast desert plains and vistas. Before I knew it I was in California climbing the very steep and aptly named Cuyamaca Mountains on Interstate 8.

Interstate 8 will take you all the way to the coast and eventually Pacific Beach. I needed to meet a friend who was able to pick up my apartment keys for me. That was my first real taste of San Diego, Pacific Beach.

I drove through Pacific Beach looking around in wonderment and amazement. I didn't know what to make all of those visibly older people that dressed like a teenager or had a general appearance of someone in their twenties. Those people were on skateboards or cruising around on bikes without a care in the world or sitting in a bar with the large windows fully open looking cheerful and happy. It seemed so remarkable to me.

I picked up the keys, may have had a fast dinner and a beer with this friend and then I needed to get back to my apartment. I'd signed a lease for an one bedroom apartment within walking

distance to Cuyamaca College in Rancho San Diego. I wanted to be close to the college. It was time to get to work. The start of the Fall semester was right around the corner.

Chapter 34

As eager and excited as I was about beginning my work at Cuyamaca College I had a vague idea I was walking into a potentially difficult situation with the ASL Department. Mary Graham had explained or sort of alluded that the position was going to come with a variety of unexpected challenges.

Mary shared that there was a person that everyone in the department expected to become the next full time Chair of the Department. This person was Kelley Nielsen. She was a part time teacher. Dr. Therese Botz had apparently been mentoring her for several years. Dr. Botz was a full time tenured member of the Cuyamaca Faculty. She had been initially hired to teach a different subject matter but apparently Cuyamaca relied on her knowledge of ASL to bring the Department into inception and she had stayed involved as the Chair of the ASL Department for many years before passing the responsibility of chairing the department to Nielsen.

Mary explained that it was possible the teachers wouldn't accept me at first and that I would need to win them over. And that sounded entirely reasonable at the time. I just wanted to have the chance to connect with each member of the department and show each person that I supported them. It was my understanding that all of these teachers had been at Cuyamaca for several years.

My Dean, Patrick Setzer, was as helpful as anyone could be. He had previously chaired the Music Department. It was kind of one of these really interesting and incongruous relationships. A music person working with a completely Deaf person. But Pat presented himself as a completely professional and organized person. He took the time to write many extensive emails about all of these things that I needed to know about as a Department Chair. He explained everything I asked about in an utterly detailed and thorough manner.

I also found it especially heartwarming that this was a person born and raised in Eastern Pennsylvania. Having been born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania myself and having such a strong connection to the area with all of the time I'd spent visiting my mother's family in Lancaster County, it felt like a wonderful touch of familiarity in a new and unfamiliar place knowing that Dean Setzer was also from the general area. I felt very fortunate that I had a Dean so willing to explain all of these things in such a detailed and thorough manner.

Chapter 35

Setzer helped me get settled into my new office. It was a nice and roomy space located outside of a short hallway that led to the ASL Department.

The ASL Department consisted of the end space of the first floor in Building B on the Eastern side of the college. There was an ample sized foyer, two classrooms and an office for the part time instructors and assistants.

Pat explained that Therese Botz used to occupy one of the desks in my office, and that Dr. Lauren Halsted, one of the English Professors occupied the other desk, but that Halsted would be moving into a new office.

Lauren had a bookcase full of an extensive collection of impressive looking books. I thought she had to be quite smart. I was both glad and disappointed at the same time to find out she would be moving to another office. Deaf and hearing interactions in small spaces that they need to share can be interesting, peculiar or even uncomfortable at times for both people especially if the Deaf person does not speak and the hearing person does not sign. It's hard to say or predict how these things go and how both people will coexist.

It was probably much easier for Lauren to move into a new office prior to the start of the semester than for us to find out that some of our communication issues or barriers may have led to any kind of tension when we both would need to occupy the office at the same time.

Maybe it was just that I was a male and she was a female and that was why she moved into another office. It could have been that simple.

Chapter 36

It was finally time for me to attend and participate in professional development week at Cuyamaca College. I went to several different workshops. Had the chance to participate my first ever college convocation. I had to stand up and sort of acknowledge myself to the crowd. Some people cheered and waved. I think.

The sort of amazing thing was... the other members of the ASL Department didn't want to sit at the same table with me. None of them made eye contact with me. I looked over at them briefly and sort of tried to make eye contact... and I did not receive or see any kind of acknowledgement. But that was ok. It was still early. I still hadn't really had the chance to talk with or connect to them yet.

At the end of the week, it was finally time for me to lead the ASL Retreat. This was when I would have the chance to meet and talk with the other instructors!

This was a collective group of ASL teachers that had worked together for several years and I was the newcomer. I definitely felt nervous about how the retreat would go. I really only wanted to fit in and for all of us to work together well and continue what was presented to me as being a strong and successful ASL Program.

Chapter 37

It was somewhat remarkable that every single person in the room for the ASL Retreat was hearing except for myself. I was the only Deaf person present.

It was 2013. It was certainly odd that the ASL Department did not have any Deaf instructors at all. With any language, you always want to have a number of native users teaching the language. Even more so with ASL which is an incredibly complex visual language in which the tiniest bit of difference in facial expression or a subtle shift in a sign can change the entire meaning of a complex language conveyance.

The department was composed of these hearing ASL instructors at the time. Therese Botz, Kelley Nielsen, Robyn Natwick, Patricia Walford, and Jennifer Smith. And there were two hearing assistants who led lab and tutoring activities, Jack Robertson and Delaney Kish.

Kelley Nielsen made sure to let me know they had recently and apparently very hastily hired a Deaf person to teach a Fingerspelling course, Oscar Robertson. But Oscar was not able to attend the retreat. There was supposed to be a deaf tutor, Angela Gorges, but I do not think she attended the Retreat. I may have met her briefly that day though.

Chapter 38

At the retreat, Therese Botz was effusive with her comments. She was the most comfortable signer and she talked extensively about her ASL experiences dating back to the time when she worked at Gallaudet College.

Most of the other people were somewhat subdued. They all seemed to be fairly good signers. Except for one person. I had a really difficult time communicating with Patricia Walford.

I kept on changing or modifying my signs to try to make myself more easily understandable to Walford, but she seemed to struggle with understanding everything I was signing. I wasn't quite sure what to think about that. She did not sign very much at all, even when I tried to engage her in communication using the most basic signs I could think of. That was really puzzling and I didn't quite know what to think about that.

I would like to say that I recall Jack Robertson being present at the meeting, and I believe I also had the chance to meet Delaney Kish briefly. At the end of the day, I felt that things went as well as they could. I wished everyone a fantastic start to the semester and told everyone I would look forward to meeting with them individually.

Chapter 39

I had no idea what was in store for me following that meeting.

I ended up being attacked in an utterly nasty and despicable way by everyone in the department for the better part of the Fall and Spring semesters.

It eventually became clear the majority of the department decided from the start that they were not going to work with me and would not give me the slightest chance to succeed.

I truly hoped that I would be able to build a solid relationship with Kelley Nielsen because she had been at Cuyamaca for so many years and she clearly had extensive relationships with many people at the College. I tried everything I could to build this relationship. There was just an utter refusal on her part to work with me professionally.

Nielsen was somewhat helpful at first. She had a number of documents that I needed to review such as course outlines. She sent those my way. But that was about it. I kept on asking her if we could meet. I didn't want to pressure her, but I wanted to meet with everyone in the Department and she was clearly the most knowledgeable and experienced person in the Department. It was important for me to work with Nielsen successfully especially since it appeared that Therese Botz was going to retire at the end of the year and I wanted to have Nielsen's support. I felt that she was an invaluable part of the department.

However Nielsen kept on putting off meeting with me. When we finally met several weeks into the Fall semester, I tried to initiate conversation in several ways and I wouldn't say she refused to answer my questions, but she did so in the most short way possible. The meeting was not helpful at all.

After my meeting with Nielsen ended and I walked out of the ASL workroom where we met, I remembered something I needed to mention to her. I turned around and returned to the workroom. As I used my key to open the door I saw the adjacent door at the back of the workroom that led to one of our classrooms swinging shut. It became clear that Nielsen ran out of the workroom when she realized I'd come back to the workroom. I was in disbelief, just absolutely stunned that she would do something like that to convey how resolute she apparently was about not working with me in any kind of genuine way. I returned to my office deep in thought.

Chapter 40

My first semester at Cuyamaca was quite terrible. The majority of the people in the ASL Department did everything they could to make me feel as unwelcome as possible except for two people.

Jennifer Smith gave me so much support throughout that time. She went above and beyond anything that could have been asked of or expected of her in terms of supporting me. I was so grateful I had Jennifer in my corner. Jennifer was so helpful and did her best to support me to the utmost of her abilities. She gave so much of her time to the ASL Department.

Robyn Natwick was professional. I think she felt like she was stuck between a rock and a hard place. She clearly felt an allegiance to Kelley and Therese, but she also wanted to continue to perform in a professional manner and continue teaching ASL at Cuyamaca College.

However, everyone else in the department made it clear that they wanted to excise me from the college by any means possible. They really did.

One memory from that first semester comes to mind. I walked past Therese Botz's classroom while she was in the middle of teaching a class. Her door was closed but there was a small window pane in the door. All I intended to do was take a completely curious, harmless and innocent peek. I was the Chair of the department and it was only natural for me to be curious and wonder a little bit about how our classes were going.

I stood there for about a minute just looking through that window pane. I became puzzled when I saw Therese standing to the side of the classroom and sort of just observing. I could see that the students had their attention directed to the front of the classroom. I didn't quite understand what was happening. I finally realized Jack Robertson was teaching the class!

Robertson was our department's assistant. He was not one of our instructors.

Apparently one of the students noticed me looking through the window. This person said something to Botz. She turned and looked in my direction. And I was shocked, truly completely stunned when a completely outraged and angry look came over her face.

She said something angrily. I don't remember what it was, or even whether it was spoken or signed but I was in full blown retreat at that time just from seeing the utterly outraged expression on Botz's face.

I went to my office but I eventually had to come back to the other ASL classroom to continue my work. I noticed that Botz had covered the door's window pane with some paper so that I couldn't look inside again. And I went into the other classroom in such deep thought. I sort of felt like it would be reported to the Dean as if I'd done something wrong. And it was reported. I explained to Dean Setzer that I really didn't mean anything by taking that look, that I just couldn't help my natural curiosity and I really didn't think Botz would mind that the Chair of the Department was taking a fast look at how her class was going. Setzer was supportive and told me not to worry about it.

Chapter 41

Later on, I finally had the chance to meet with Patty Walford. I was in disbelief when I finally realized that she literally did not sign at all. She signed as well as someone who had been learning ASL for about a month or two. She had a very halting, unclear and basic vocabulary consisting of a few signs. Walford had been teaching ASL at Cuyamaca for more than two years.

Angela Gorges, our only Deaf ASL tutor was often around the ASL office or foyer. Being a deaf person, I felt a natural connection to her and tried to talk to her as much as I could. I thought I was succeeding at connecting with her.

It was pretty hard on me when I found out Angela was attacking me on social media. She was saying all of those absolutely nasty, terrible and untrue things about me. She was calling me all kinds of different names and saying all of those completely horrible things about who I was and what I was supposedly doing as the Chair of the ASL Department.

That was hard to take because I always took time to talk to her in a thoughtful way, not only about ASL but also college and life in general and she would act so nice and pleasant in return and it was really nothing but pure and utter fakeness on her part.

Chapter 42

During this time, every time I would walk through the ASL foyer and happen to encounter the students enrolled in Botz and Nielsen's classes waiting outside their classroom for their teacher to arrive or the start of class, I would smile and wave.

I would almost always receive stoic, unpleasant or dull looks in return. I wondered what was causing this type of reaction. I felt like this attitude had to be transmitted to them somehow from their teachers or the other members of the department.

It was one of these many things that wore on me. These feelings of hate, anger and resentment emanating from people that didn't even know me but wanted to learn my language and culture seemed so strange to me. I didn't blame the students. I just needed to continue to do my work the best way I could. That was what I kept on telling myself.

Chapter 43

Jack Robertson always impressed me with his signing. The more I watched him sign, the more impressed I would be. That was someone who truly understood how the visual nature of ASL worked beyond just having a good vocabulary. He was a really creative and visually clear signer. When he tutored students, he explained things clearly. He seemed to have a really good connection with the students. I saw so much potential in Jack.

But Botz and Nielsen were clearly determined to make sure I would not succeed as the Chair of the Department. They tried everything they could to attack me. At one time I was advised that I needed to attend a GCCCD Board meeting because they were planning on showing up and publicly asking for my dismissal. I wasn't clear about what I could possibly have done to be dismissed.

I was told that it would be advisable for me to be present at this board meeting just in case this happened. I sat at the meeting for two hours wondering if they were going to show up and

attack me publicly. Apparently, they were told that this was not a tactic that would work and they did not show up for the meeting. It still was a tense and uncomfortable night for me.

There was this time when I walked into the Starbucks next to Cuyamaca on the eastern side. The one next to the Petco store. It might have been late in the Fall Semester or early on during the Spring Semester. I placed my order for some coffee and then as I walked over to the end of the counter to pick up my order, I realized Jack Robertson and Kelley Nielsen were seated there and they apparently noticed me before I noticed them.

They acted as if they hadn't seen me, but their body language was tense and it was apparent they were furtively refusing to look in my direction. They clearly decided they were not going to talk to me. And they both stood up and walked right past me as if they didn't even notice me.

Chapter 44

I survived the Fall semester. And then the Spring semester came around. My second semester at Cuyamaca College. This is the Spring of 2014. A few weeks after the semester started, Botz, Nielsen and Walford submitted their immediate resignations. I was stunned. I did not have anyone to take on their classes.

I had made my first hire and brought on my first Deaf instructor, Brad Cohen. But his schedule was full and he could not take on any more classes based on the faculty contract at GCCCD which limits the amount of courses instructors can teach each semester at Cuyamaca or Grossmont College.

After talking about it with Setzer, and despite being full of nervousness and trepidation, I decided to take on two of Nielsen and Botz's courses just so we could keep these classes intact and give all of these students the chance to complete the ASL class they signed up for.

The only other alternative was to cancel these courses.

I had no idea what I was walking into.

Chapter 45

The first day I walked into Nielsen and Botz's classes, I saw their students sitting there staring at me with their eyes full of anger and hostility. They all were under the impression I had forced their teachers out which was the farthest thing from the truth. This was the exact reaction and welcome I received from both Nielsen and Botz's students.

I tried teaching those classes the best I could, but those students never gave me a chance. Some of them could barely sign too which was surprising. After maybe three or four weeks of teaching these classes, I told Setzer it wasn't working out at all and that I needed to find someone else to take on these classes. Luckily, I was able to hire someone on short notice to

take on both classes. The misplaced anger and hostility I experienced and had radiated towards me every time I walked into those classes was just too much.

Still, we had a bright spot coming up. It was time to start working on a huge production the ASL Department traditionally hosted in the Spring time with our neighboring High School, Steele Canyon. This performance was called ASL Rocks and it was composed of a variety of theatrical creations presented by the faculty and students. From what I understood about the event, it was a huge event and always well attended over both nights with a full audience of 350 plus attendees each night.

It was a very important event for Cuyamaca College, Steele Canyon High School and the local community. It did a lot to spread awareness about the ASL Program at Cuyamaca throughout the local community.

Having just lost three instructors who played a significant role in producing this show and making sure they would do their best to encourage student participation, I was feeling somewhat unsteady and uncertain about producing the show by myself. But I had an ace in the hole. Jack Robertson was very experienced at running the technical side of the show. He knew how to operate the lights and other important items of technology in the auditorium that none of us knew how to use. He had been involved in the production of the show for quite some time.

Jack Robertson was absolutely essential to the success of this show. I met with Jack several times to go over the plans for the show and he assured me that he was committed to the show. The closer we got to the show, every time I talked to Jack about one of the details, I would get sort of a funny feeling from him. It was like he knew something he wasn't really telling me.

And then... a week before the show, Jack comes up to me and tells he won't be able to make it to the show. Something came up.

I was unbelievably stunned. I tried to explain to him that if we didn't have him working with us on the performance it was possible we would have to cancel the show. I tried to get him to understand the impact it would have on the ASL Department and all of our students that had been rehearsing for the performance. It didn't matter to him. Robertson was resolute. He kept on saying he couldn't make it. And that was final.

Not only was I stunned, I was so disappointed and hurt. Jack was one of those people I wanted so badly to succeed at Cuyamaca. He could have been such a wonderful part of the ASL Department and I don't think there's any question that once he completed his degree, I would have wanted to give very strong consideration to hiring him as one of our instructors. But this was sabotage. It was utterly unreasonable and so unfair to everyone in the ASL Department and the local community that worked on and had high expectations for the show.

I shared the news with Setzer and I was truly devastated at the idea of having to cancel the show.

Setzer talked to our president, Dr. Zacovic. They determined that this was unacceptable and that this was clearly done to hurt the ASL Department. They felt it would be best to swiftly fire Jack Robertson. I believe they agreed that it would be best if Delaney Kish moved on too and she was fired.

I couldn't quite believe it. I couldn't believe that these people would attempt to harm the ASL Department and their students in so many hateful ways just as a way of trying to attack me.

I couldn't believe that none of these people had enough respect for their students to complete their professional obligations. They could have taught their courses until the end of the semester and moved on. Nobody was doing anything to them.

All they needed to do was teach the classes they agreed to. That was the bare minimum they could have done. Complete their professional obligations to Cuyamaca College and their students and then move on at the end of the semester.

Setzer supported me steadfastly the whole time. He kept on telling me that I shouldn't worry about what they were saying or doing. At the same time, it was certainly hard on me as it would be for anyone when someone or a group of people attacks you repeatedly or says completely untrue things about you and tries to destroy your reputation in a public way.

It hurt that these people never even tried to give me a genuine chance to work with them. But the support I received from Setzer made me feel as if I was on the right track and that I would continue to receive the support I needed to succeed at Cuyamaca.

Chapter 46

Just as I made it through the Fall semester, I made it through the Spring semester too. During the Spring semester, I brought in our second Deaf instructor, Shannon Engelhart.

Cuyamaca College's ASL Department finally had more Deaf instructors teaching courses than hearing instructors for the first time in the history of the program.

While our instructional issues seemed to be settled for the time being, I still had a recurring problem. Securing qualified ASL interpreters for the numerous meetings I needed to attend.

I have always had a very difficult relationship with interpreters.

Interpreters essentially become the Deaf person's voice. And when you have a terrible interpreter, it's not the interpreter who looks bad. It is usually the Deaf person who sounds stupid.

Many interpreters allow themselves to believe that they're signing or speaking well but that's often the farthest thing from the truth.

When you work with a hearing person closely for several years and communicate with this person often through email or written English, you will develop a really good, maybe even almost innate sense of how that person conveys his or her communication. It is amazing how a really good interpreter will manage to convey that person's typical tone and word choice and really pass on that person's mannerisms and personality.

On the other hand, when you have a bad interpreter, the interpreter will utterly fail to convey this kind of feel and familiarity you've come to identify with the hearing speaker. And this interpreter will often also find a way to present the Deaf person's communication in a chaotic and jumbled manner.

Communication difficulties involving interpreters certainly are not always the interpreter's fault. A lot of times Deaf people don't always communicate or sign in the clearest way. But for articulate Deaf people who have a strong vocabulary and grasp of written English, it's common for these people to find out that their interpreter does not have a similar appreciation for the nuances of English, and may not be as skilled or articulate as the Deaf person. This always hurts the Deaf person that has a tremendous appreciation for written English.

Chapter 47

This seemed to be my experience with interpreters throughout my first two years at Cuyamaca College. There were many frustrating and unclear communication situations facilitated by subpar interpreters. There were also numerous surprising and abrupt interpreting assignment changes that saddled me with stress and uncertainty about who would show up to interpret for me.

We had a contract with only one interpreting agency at the time, Network Interpreting Services. NIS was Idaho based. The founder and CEO, Cliff Hanks, previously lived in San Diego. And that was presumably why Cuyamaca College had a contract with NIS to provide interpreting services.

Not only did NIS repeatedly assign me interpreters I felt were underqualified or not a good match for my communication skills, NIS would also often change interpreting assignments at the last minute. There were times when I would be assigned an interpreter I had some familiarity with and trust in. I would feel positive and hopeful that communication would be facilitated well at the event. However, it became increasingly common for me to find out at a short time before the start of the event, or even at the event itself that my assigned interpreter had been reassigned and replaced by someone else I was not familiar with or did not appear to be particularly skilled or competent.

This was incredibly frustrating. The last straw came when I saw Cliff Hanks at a San Diego American Sign Language Teachers Association workshop. I thought it would be an amazing opportunity to talk to him briefly about the frustration I was experiencing with his interpreting agency. I tried to explain how all of these abrupt scheduling changes were affecting me and how I hoped to be able to secure interpreters that were a better fit for my communication needs.

I asked Hanks, "Is there any chance I could get a list of the interpreters you have under contract? Just so that I can talk to some other people I know and get a better idea of their signing and communication styles. Hanks looked at me smugly and said, "No. Why? We're not a registry of interpreters."

I could only look at him and try to blank out how stunned I was at that response, nod and try my best to mask what I was really thinking. I turned my attention back to the workshop.

I was not asking for a statewide or even nationwide list of interpreters. I was asking for the chance to know who he had under contract so that I could try to identify a small number of viable interpreters for my communication needs so that I could continue working with his interpreting agency in the best way possible.

What NIS apparently did not realize was that much like local markets are somewhat commonplace in most large cities, so are interpreting agencies. There were several other interpreting agencies in San Diego. It was time to put an end to the frustration and confusion related to trying to receive the best possible interpreting services I needed to do my job successfully.

When I went back to Cuyamaca College, I immediately talked to Dean Setzer about what we needed to do to secure a contract with a new interpreting agency.

Chapter 48

To Setzer's credit, he always communicated with me in a clear, thoughtful and thorough way.

We would often meet and communicate in different ways. We used ubi-duos which allowed us to type out messages to each other that would be transmitted by Bluetooth. These were clunky and older versions that did not work very well at times. There were times when we didn't have an interpreter and the ubi-duos would not work. We would write notes or type out messages to each other using our phones. Setzer would even use his ipad from time to time to type out messages. We communicated in a very successful way. It really did feel as if we communicated much more successfully through writing instead of using interpreters.

Setzer always made sure to involve me and listen to any input I may have had whenever a decision needed to be made that involved the ASL Department. I was grateful for that support,

and for the fact that he was so willing to use whatever tools we had at our disposal to communicate in the most efficient way.

I tried to return this support as much as I could. Even when Pat became unhappy with me, I couldn't stay upset with him because Setzer gave the ASL Department so much support initially. It was easy for me to overlook the times when he said or did things that were offensive or insulting to the Deaf community. I did not entirely feel like these things he said or did were intentional. Or I allowed myself to believe that, maybe.

I have always thought intent plays a huge part in the message someone sends. I am fairly sure I was the first Deaf person Setzer needed to work with in his life. I was just glad I had the chance to work with someone who communicated with me in a professional and organized manner and did what he said he would.

Looking at Setzer, I saw an older man that did not have much experience in interacting with Deaf people. I felt that through the nature of our interactions and communications, he would eventually gain a lot of knowledge about the Deaf community, and that was what was important to me. Nobody learns everything about a people or culture overnight. It takes time.

I worked with Patrick Setzer for three and a half years. He is the person, next to Teresa Greenhalgh that I communicated with more than anyone else at the college and this undoubtedly helped me earn tenure. At the same time, maybe it was Teresa who did more than anyone else to help me earn tenure.

Teresa Greenhalgh is this utterly amazing, kind, organized, thoughtful, intuitive and hard working woman. Every time I needed to know something or I needed some kind of administrative support, Teresa would do everything to support me in the best way possible.

Teresa is the kind of administrative assistant that every busy office dreams of having. She is someone who finds a way to complete every task that is placed in front of her while also supporting so many other people and organizations outside of Cuyamaca College through her dedication to professionalism and hard work.

I have always thought that Teresa Greenhalgh is the kind of person that would do the most amazing job being president of Cuyamaca College. The kind of person that deserves to be and would do a completely amazing job of being a clear, articulate, engaged and thoughtful leader. She's so smart and so organized and explains things so clearly with a rare and uncommon wit and sense of humor and compassion.

Chapter 49

Patrick Setzer became the interim vice president of Cuyamaca College in the Spring of 2017. I'd been at Cuyamaca College for almost four years then. I was due to earn tenure in the Spring of 2017.

During the Fall semester of 2016 at our Instructional Council meetings, later on renamed the Instructional Leadership and Advisory Team (ILAT), Setzer announced that the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences division would have an interim dean during the Spring semester of 2017, Dr. Peter Utgaard.

These ILAT meetings were usually composed of approximately 35 people. Most of us were Department Chairs. The rest of the participants were the Deans and a few other administrators. The Vice President of Instruction led these ILAT meetings. This responsibility now fell to VPI Setzer.

When Setzer talked about how Dr. Utgaard would now be the AHSS Dean, the crowd murmured or even chuckled in amusement. Mirth was clearly present in the faculty's response. Setzer made very sure to emphasize that "Pete" was the "interim" dean.

And this happened more than once. It happened two or three times at different meetings.

It was like everyone would find mirth in the idea that "Pete" was going to be the AHSS Dean and Setzer would show indication of the voices murmuring with mirth. Setzer would immediately repeat that "Pete is the interim dean" with emphasis being placed on the interim part.

I did not know anything about Dr. Utgaard, but thought it was a bit odd that Setzer would keep on reinforcing the idea that Pete was only an interim dean for a single semester. I figured I would learn more about "Petey-Pete" when we started working together.

Chapter

At the end of the Fall semester in December of 2017 I had my last meeting with Setzer in a Dean and Chair capacity.

It was a difficult time for me. I was feeling a bit home sick, feeling as if maybe Cuyamaca College wasn't the right place for me. And you know, for three and a half years, I kept everything with Setzer utterly professional.

But for the first time, I decided to ask him something more of a personal nature. I decided to ask him if he ever missed Pennsylvania. Because San Diego and Southern California is such a different place from Pennsylvania. It's an arid and inhospitable desert climate. There aren't any trees around, at least not the tall growing kinds with lush foliage. There's hardly any freshwater around, none of those beautiful, large and fast flowing rivers or large lakes you find up and down the east coast. San Diego has a handful of tiny lakes and when I say tiny, they are truly tiny. A lot of those lakes are under a hundred acres. You can see from one end to another easily. You aren't even allowed to swim in most of them. All of them, actually, except for one, I believe. They open in the morning and close well before sunset.

It wasn't only San Diego. I was also beginning to question my place at Cuyamaca College. I wasn't sure I belonged. I just wasn't sure it was the right place for me.

Even though I was due to earn Tenure that following semester which was absolutely remarkable for myself, and stressful at the same time, Tenure wasn't everything to me. It was difficult to build professional relationships at Cuyamaca College, and my personal life was rather subdued.

San Diego does not have a large Deaf community. I did not have the same type of friends I really enjoyed hanging out with in Texas. My friends in Texas were people who enjoyed the outdoors as much as I did. They generally fished, mountain biked, hunted, played or appreciated sports and seemed to have a lot more in common with myself.

Members of the San Diego Deaf Community had I would say somewhat different interests. One thing my friends did a lot in San Diego was go surfing. And that was amazing to me. I'd never lived anywhere close to the ocean before and I threw myself completely into surfing for a couple of years.

Even though I tried to surf as much as I could, my shoulder was beginning to deteriorate rapidly. When you surf, you're constantly paddling to get into position or to stay in position for a good wave. You're pretty much fighting strong currents and taxing your shoulders the entire time you're in the water.

I eventually found that I couldn't surf as often as I wanted to. My shoulder was beginning to fail. And I didn't know what I could do about it. My shoulder continued to deteriorate to the point where I just had to give up surfing. It was taking too much out of my shoulder.

When I talked to Setzer in that meeting, I tried to sort of indirectly talk about these things. I was hoping he would understand what I was alluding to, that I wasn't sure Cuyamaca College or San Diego was the right place for me.

Setzer didn't seem to be very happy with me at the time. He was somewhat short and brusque with me and only talked about how his wife was very happy in San Diego and that they weren't going anywhere. I tried to get to a point where I could tell him that I was thinking about leaving Cuyamaca College. But our conversation never got to that point. I walked out of the office uncertain what the Spring semester would bring for me.

Chapter 50

Utgaard became the new occupant of the Dean's office in the Spring of 2017. I did not know much about Utgaard. He was supposed to be a historian. And now he was the interim Dean of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences division.

Strangely enough, just like the way Setzer would occasionally do these nasty and completely tone deaf things, Pete did the exact same thing to the ASL Department. Except this surpassed anything Setzer had ever done to that point. It was such an incredibly offensive disruption and a complete and utter cultural insult to Deaf people everywhere.

We were clearly aware that Utgaard was not going to be in the Dean's office very long. This was clearly understood from how Setzer repeatedly stressed Utgaard was our "interim" dean and specifically mentioned that Utgaard would be in the Dean's office for only one semester.

Setzer was clearly conveying that Utgaard's responsibility was to take care of the administrative functions that the Dean's office has always handled. This was explained to all of us at Cuyamaca very clearly both directly and indirectly.

Utgaard and I exchanged several emails and also met in person. Utgaard sent out several emails to all of us Chairs in the AHSS division. These emails were generally about the work he was doing on improving the Open Educational Resources (OER) for the History department as well as the college. Improving our students' access to OER sources of information would allow our students to reduce their textbook costs. OER materials are mostly sourced online and they are supposed to be free of cost.

This was absolutely great and something I completely supported. Utgaard also sent many emails throughout the semester about setting up a small coffee shop in front of the B building.

We had a Starbucks in our Student Center but that was on the other side of the campus. This coffee shop Utgaard was proposing was meant to be one of these portable style stands. And it was supposed to be placed right in front of my office. That actually could have been a good win for the ASL Department. It would have brought increased traffic and visibility to the ASL Department. But despite the many emails Utgaard sent about the creation of that coffee shop, it never came to fruition.

At some point Utgaard sends me an email that stresses the importance of scheduling early morning classes. More specifically, classes scheduled to start at 8am. At the time I was not entirely sure about adding the class immediately.

By chance, current research I'd seen talked about in the news in the last few months leading up to that conversation suggested that a significant number of young students would be better off being able to wake up later in the morning rather than so early to attend school. The data and evidence indicated that a number of young people would be able to function better throughout the day if they were able to wake up later in the morning. That was absolutely fascinating to me because that was my personal experience too. When I was younger, I always had such a hard time going to sleep at night. I would stay awake late into the night reading books under the covers with a flashlight and have such an impossible time waking up in the morning. I'd feel tired and fall asleep throughout the day constantly in my high school classes.

But Pete didn't know that yet.

In one of my responses to Pete during our ongoing discussion about offering one or more ASL courses scheduled to start at 8am, I brought that exact point up, about how current research was showing that early morning classes may not benefit as many people as thought, just because I found it really interesting and relevant.

In the response I received from Pete, he appeared to exclaim excitedly that he was very aware of the research I mentioned and that it was wrong. And then he reemphasized the need and importance of scheduling an ASL course that would start at 8am.

Once Pete said that my position on the matter was wrong, also suggesting that I was not capable of evaluating the veracity of the research and other literature I had read about that matter, it seemed like he indicated he wasn't interested in learning more about what I understood or knew about the impact of the research I mentioned, let alone my personal experiences with getting a good night of sleep and waking up early in the morning. I was wrong, apparently.

I really had such an impossible time staying awake throughout the day during my teenage years. I would fall asleep in my classes so many times when I was in High School. It wasn't like I was out late at night doing anything crazy. You don't have a lot of freedom as a high school student and I was always in my room early at night. I just never slept well at all.

Once Pete said I was wrong, I didn't think he was really interested in the reason I found that kind of research so meaningful. It seemed like he wasn't interested in actually engaging in any kind of discussion or debate about the merits of the research or my position on the matter. I only explained again that I wasn't so sure about adding an early morning class to the schedule for the following semester, but it was something I would definitely keep in mind for the future.

Apparently Pete became... miffed or even upset at my reluctance to immediately add an early morning class to the ASL Schedule. And Pete apparently decided he was going to punish the ASL Department and extract an ounce of retribution.

At the time, all of our ASL courses had an enrollment cap of 22 students. One day three or four weeks after I had that email discussion with Pete about adding an early morning ASL course, I reviewed our ASL course offerings listed online. Something peculiar caught my eye. All of our ASL courses, except for one, now had enrollment capped at 30 students.

I was confused. Nobody had talked to me about changing our course enrollment caps. And this was an absolutely massive change for so many different reasons.

I emailed Pete in confusion and asked him about this. There clearly had to be a mistake.

I received a joyful response from Pete saying that it was not a mistake at all. He explained that he made this decision because it was in the best interests of the college to have higher enrollment caps. This was a change made in the best interests of the college!

This was something I completely understood. Our students brought in the money needed to keep the college and so many of our programs afloat. But as I read Pete's response in confusion and disbelief... I could only think about how this change was made was not only so discourteous and insulting to the ASL Department, it was such a culturally offensive move for a hearing person without the least knowledge or awareness of Deaf people and ASL to make without understanding the dynamics of ASL classes and the impact this change would have on our instructors and students.

Chapter 51

There were several very good reasons our ASL course enrollments were capped at 22 students. In fact, this was one of the American Sign Language Teachers Association's (ASLTA) primary recommendations regarding course design.

The smaller class sizes help with the visual transmission of the language. ASL is an extremely complex language full of so many physical nuances. It takes time for hearing people to become accustomed to not using their voices and communicating with their bodies. There are so many important cultural and language based norms that are practiced and passed on far more effectively and clearly both in the deaf community and in ASL classes that are appropriately sized.

Not only that, ASL instructors bring a myriad assortment of materials with them to their classes. This is a physical language and many teachers use a huge assortment of physical and tangible materials for hands on activities while teaching.

The change in enrollment meant our ASL Instructors would absolutely need time to adjust to how they would prepare for and teach their classes. Our instructors would need to put additional time into expanding their collection of materials and resources for the increased number of students that would now be participating in their classes.

And Dr. Utgaard.... This apparently highly educated man that has spent many years in education as a teacher never even thought once to ask me about how this change would impact the ASL Department as well all of our teachers and our students.

To not even communicate this change to the Chair of the ASL Department was nothing more than an utterly discourteous insult. A way of expressing displeasure based on such a small difference of opinion in a childish and disruptive way that impacted everyone in the ASL Department.

This was my introduction to bullying at Cuyamaca College even though I didn't really understand or see it that way at the time.

Chapter 52

I sent an email to Mary Graham about the matter. Mary is one of the English teachers at Cuyamaca. She also operates the Writing Lab at Cuyamaca. She has about thirty English/writing tutors under her overview. Mary is one of the most powerful and knowledgeable people at Cuyamaca and I felt lucky to have her as a mentor. Her office was not too far away from mine. We often exchanged emails about matters of all kinds. It felt like she genuinely wanted to see me succeed.

Graham talked to Utgaard and got to the heart of the matter. She explained that Utgaard apparently became offended at how I responded to his overtures about scheduling an early morning ASL course.

This wasn't just about me and a small difference in opinion about immediately implementing a proposed change by an interim Dean. This was about a huge decision he made that affected the entire ASL Department without showing the least amount of professional courtesy or regard for all of the instructors and students within the department.

Utgaard, to his credit, still signed off on my tenure that Spring. Would he have signed off on my tenure if it hadn't most probably come as a directive from Setzer. I wonder.

Even though that situation changed things slightly between himself and myself and he was not exactly friendly or courteous whenever I saw him around. I mean, Utgaard would bring his kids to work and I'd bump into him and his kids from time to time and he never even once introduced me to his kids. That was ok.

I was starting to become accustomed to that kind of treatment from some of the faculty members and administrators at Cuyamaca. For some reason, there were a few people at the college that would treat me in a fairly impersonal, disdainful or even nasty way whenever we came into physical proximity with one another. And you know, I would just let them have their space and just try to focus on doing my job the best I could.

Two or three years later, I bumped into Utgaard at the Westfield Mission Valley Mall right outside of the Target store. He didn't see me initially and he was with his kids, maybe one of them at least. I walked up to him to say hello. He seemed startled. I would say it's safe that he didn't even really respond with the kind of pleasant professionalism you would expect from a colleague he had worked with for a semester. I didn't really care about that.

I extended my hand and shook his hand, just to try to show him that all that was water under the bridge. I knew that we might need to work together on a college project one day and that I really didn't want to have any bad feelings between us, especially over a small difference of

opinion on whether or not it was the right time for the ASL Department to schedule an early morning course.

Not only that, I remembered that he had his fun with me and got a little dig in at me and that was it. We worked together professionally for the rest of the semester he served as Dean. That was why I shook his hand.

He went on his way with his kids that day and I went on mine. I felt that if we ever needed to work together, he would remember that moment and that I extended a genuine demonstration of courtesy and respect for all of the other work he had done for Cuyamaca College.

Chapter 53

Summer changed into the Fall of 2017. I was now a tenured faculty member at Cuyamaca College.

Did I feel like I really did enough to earn tenure? I asked myself that question several times. It felt strange, knowing that I had earned tenure after teaching for only four years at the college. It really was closer to three and a half years, being that tenure had been essentially approved and conferred midway through the Spring semester of 2017.

I guess I told myself that it felt like I really did earn tenure under the standards they had in place. I gave so much of my time to the college. I tried to support my students as much as I could, not only in my classes, but also outside of my classes through creating different events or experiences for our ASL students to participate in.

Designing or creating many of these signing or educational opportunities often consumed massive amounts of time. When we would host an ASL performance, I would spend many hours outside of my classes working with these students on their performances. It wasn't easy at all. It wasn't the time as much as it was trying to get all of the students involved on one page. So many of our students worked or had different commitments to tend to and it was very hard to get everyone together at the same time.

I tried to find different ways for our students to apply their signing skills in practical ways. One of the things I did was establish an ASL tutoring program with one of our local high schools. Every time a member of the local community reached out to me for some kind of ASL related need I did my best to support that need. There were so many different ways I gave my time to my students and to Cuyamaca.

Did I do everything perfectly? No, not all of my students liked the way I taught my classes. I know without a doubt many students loved my classes, but not all, for sure. That was ok. I tried to do the best I could to make sure I gave my students a wonderful and enjoyable experience in my classes. I wanted them to feel comfortable around Deaf people and that they left my course with the ability to sign and have genuine conversational exchanges with Deaf people.

I always made sure to meet with every single student as part of their final exam at the end of every semester to evaluate their conversational ASL skills. That was very important to me, being able to see the growth in my students' ability to converse in ASL. I wanted to confirm that every student could not only sign but they could also understand and respond to signed messages.

I did all of this because it felt like the right thing. I chose to devote so much time to these extraneous commitments because it was explained to me that these events and experiences were very important to the college and always helped raise the visibility of our college and ASL program within San Diego. And I was completely fine with that. It felt like I was doing everything that was explained to me as being important to the college and program.

As hard and time consuming as it was, it was completely fun and enjoyable. We had some amazing events such as beach day events in which many Deaf and hearing people came together, played games, swam and surfed and had some amazing food that we would cook over either a grill or a bonfire at dusk.

These events always took so much time to plan and put together but I thankfully had two wonderful ASL instructors who were always willing to give their time to these events. Jennifer Smith and Brad Cohen. These two people were not full time instructors and they really only needed to come in and teach their courses. That was all that was required of them as part time instructors, aside from attending a few hours of professional development at the start of each semester.

They still did this because they loved teaching ASL and wanted to support the ASL Department. And I was so grateful and thankful I had their support with these events. Our other instructors did not seem to have as much time to devote to supporting the department and generally only contributed by teaching their courses. We were a pretty small department and usually had five to six instructors teaching courses during most semesters.

Chapter 54

One thing that I tried to do repeatedly was create interdisciplinary relationships with the other chairs. I wanted to have our ASL students work with the students from the other departments on hosting different kinds of educational events for the community. I found that to be very difficult to achieve.

The chairs of the other departments appeared to have their own vision for their students and I felt like they weren't exactly sure how they could develop or merge their vision to include our ASL students. Some other times, it seemed like we would run into some logistical difficulties. That was ok. It really was my responsibility to continue to seek and create these experiences for our students and I tried to do that the best I could.

I really felt lucky and blessed to be at Cuyamaca during that time. This is a bit of a digression. In the Summer of 2017, I had been able to travel for several weeks through the Pacific Northwest all the way over to Wyoming, then Montana and back to the NW before heading south to San Diego. It was an absolutely amazing trip.

I remember not checking my work email for more than two weeks, maybe close to three weeks at one point during my travels. I needed that time to recharge. It felt like I deserved that time, having given so much time to the college during the previous four years and I knew that if anything significant or truly important came up that needed my urgent attention, Teresa, our administrative assistant would text me and let me know. It wasn't like I was skipping out on work or anything like that. I had the Summer off. This was my time off. I didn't have to answer emails or anything like that.

Naturally, as the Chair, you always want to be there for the ASL Department. You want the college to know that they can count on you to come through for them when needed. Teresa knew that she could text me any time she needed to for a fast response and her texts were always so warm, utterly professional, courteous and welcoming.

I felt very thankful that there was a very clear understanding between Teresa, Pat and myself about the use of text to reach out for quick inquiries or responses. We never texted each other unless it was urgent and I never wanted to text Teresa or Pat unless it was absolutely important and I did not have any other way to reach them immediately.

I am pretty sure that even though Pat gave me his text number very early on when we started working together, I texted him maybe a total of two or three times in the three and a half years he was my Dean. I never wanted to bother him outside of work and I tried to be as courteous and respectful every time I texted him.

I suppose I wanted to show him that I understood that the number he shared with me was his personal and private number and he didn't need to share that number with me at all. And that I understood he did so because he wanted to facilitate the ability for us to contact each other quickly when needed, especially if an urgent emergency came up that might have needed our immediate attention.

During my travels, I was surprised and quite relieved when I finally checked my work email and saw that I didn't receive a single email that needed my attention.

I absolutely had an incredible time on that trip. I hoped to catch a giant sturgeon out of the Snake River. That didn't happen. Still seeing so much of the North West and so many of these amazing areas such as Yellowstone Park for the first time was memorable. I had a pretty awesome paddleboard trip down the American River, putting in below the Natoma Lake where I would eventually have to navigate some pretty hairy stretches of water. I had no idea what I was getting myself into and I was just really lucky the water flow was at the right level. A little higher and faster and that cold and fast and swirling water with some nasty deep bank

overhangs and a gauntlet of slick ledge rock chunks I had to navigate partly on foot could've been some real trouble. But it ended up being an amazing paddle right into downtown Sacramento where I pulled out at the Watt Ave. Bridge, packed up my inflatable SUP and loaded up a really cool Uber with my fishing rods sticking out of one of the rear windows and got back to my truck. My travels went far better than I could have imagined. It was just a really peaceful, idyllic and uneventful time.

There was still the nagging thought in the back of my head asking myself, "What are you going to do about your shoulder?" And I didn't know. I'd seen San Diego's top shoulder surgeon, Dr. Christopher Wahl, a couple years earlier. He was the San Diego Padres' team doctor.

His prognosis was dismal. He said he did not know what he could do. My shoulder was continuing to fail. I did not have a completely natural gait any more when running or walking. It was somewhat awkward and different as a result of the shoulder surgery. My body now moved in a somewhat unnatural way and it was now also starting to affect my back and neck. My shoulder felt like it was tightening up and causing my shoulder, back and neck to stiffen up.

It was an uncertain time for me. It was one of those things where I needed to adjust and reacclimate my quite different feeling body and the way I participated in so many of these activities I loved that was important for my health in so many different ways.

I still came back to Cuyamaca College excited and energized for what the Fall would bring. We were going to have a new interim Dean.

Chapter 55

Our new interim Dean was going to be Alicia Munoz. She was one of Cuyamaca's long time English teachers. She was the Chair of the English For Speakers of Other Languages Department (ESOL).

My experience with her was very limited. I had the chance to communicate with her briefly a year or two prior when she was the Chair of the ESOL Department and I needed to resolve a very curious problem.

At the time we had two classrooms that only the ASL Department used for our courses. We did not share our classrooms with any of the other departments. But the ESOL program was growing and needed more space for their classes. Pat asked me if we could share our classrooms with the ESOL Department when we weren't using them for one of our courses. And I said sure, it wasn't a problem.

The Music Department and their Chair, Taylor Smith, had done as much for the ASL Department when we wanted to add a couple more evening classes that conflicted with classes already scheduled for our classrooms. Smith agreed to allow us to use his Music classrooms. It was the

least I could do for another department that needed a bit of extra space. I was happy for the chance to create a positive connection with another department.

But I never got any kind of contact from Munoz asking about the use of our classroom. That was a bit puzzling to me, just based on my communication style. I made sure to personally reach out to Taylor Smith to discuss how we would use his rooms. I never wanted him to feel worried or stressed out with how we would use and leave their classrooms. He had a very nice piano in one of the rooms and other music related equipment spread out. But that was ok with me. I didn't really expect or need communication from her at the time and I didn't really feel the need to reach out. I thought things would just be perfectly fine and that the ESOL Department's instructors would be professional in their use of our classrooms.

But there were a number of surprises.

Chapter 56

We always left an ample supply of white board dry erase markers in our rooms so that our teachers wouldn't need to worry about bringing their own. And for some reason, they were rapidly vanishing once the ESOL Instructors started using our rooms. We couldn't figure it out. Because our ASL teachers never took them.

Not only that, we had folding and rolling desks that needed to be put away after the end of each class so that the next teacher could arrange the class based on that person's preference. ASL is a visual language. Our students almost always sat in a semi circle so everyone would be able to see everyone else when someone signed or was conversing with someone else in the class. You can't see what someone is signing if that person is seated in a row that is in front of you and has their back to you.

So these markers were disappearing. Our supply of markers was becoming exhausted. Our classrooms were becoming a mess. We would find these desks spread all over the room in a haphazard manner. Our instructors would constantly have to use their time before our classes to put them away or reorganize the desks as needed. This was disruptive and interfered with the limited time each instructor had to set things up for the start of their class.

It was somewhat surprising. I didn't quite understand why these things were happening. When I and our other ASL teachers taught our classes in the Music Department's classrooms, I always made sure to remind our instructors to make sure that they returned the classroom to the condition they found it. I felt like it was a privilege being able to use the Music Department's classrooms and I did not want to do anything to make the Music Department or their Chair, Taylor Smith question the arrangement. I told Smith to make sure to contact me any time if there were any problems at all about how we were using his classrooms.

I needed to resolve these issues. I wasn't entirely sure what was happening. I found out from our Administrative Assistant, Teresa Greenhalgh, that I should email Alicia Munoz to talk about

the matter. I sent Munoz an email that shared these concerns about what was happening with our classrooms.

Munoz emails me back and tells me that she has told her instructors to stop taking the markers and then she told me to let her know if it keeps on happening. I emailed her back and thanked her for talking to her instructors about the matter. I never received any kind of response after that.

It was actually quite an odd email and response from her because it wasn't entirely warm or courteous at all the way people generally write emails the first time they communicate with a new person. It wasn't like she asked me to let her know if it kept on happening. She *told* me to let her know. That was so peculiar. I didn't really understand the tone of the email, particularly since we both were colleagues and Chairs of our respective departments, but I assumed she wrote that email hastily when she had the time to do so and I didn't give it much thought.

Chapter 57

The second time I actually tried to communicate with her.... was an in person and up close interaction that I will never forget as a Deaf person.

I will never forget that interaction.

I remember that so clearly.

It must have been the Spring semester of 2017. Setzer was the VPI at that time. I don't really remember why but I went up to the President's office for some reason. Maybe it was to see Setzer. His office was adjacent to the President's office.

I had a few minutes before my appointment and I happened to see Munoz seated at Debi Ridulfo's desk. Ridulfo was Setzer's administrative assistant.

For some reason, I thought I'd go up to her and say hello.

The thing is... I've so rarely tried to approach people at Cuyamaca College. I mentioned a lot of them weren't courteous at all or made it very clear in different ways they weren't really interested in talking to me.

But this was an English teacher. And I have usually had a really good relationship with most English teachers or people interested in writing and reading, just because I really enjoy writing and reading myself. I have usually been able to find interesting literature related things to share or talk about with most other like minded individuals. I try to find ways to write to these people in creative ways because they are usually able to appreciate the thought and care I put into crafting my messages.

So I approach Munoz and pull out my phone and start typing what I wanted to talk about on my phone because I cannot speak with my voice. I wouldn't be able to speak a single word with voice clearly enough to save my life if needed.

That is how I have communicated with hearing people in person for many years. By writing messages out on paper and then later on typing messages out on my phone and showing these messages to the people I need to talk to.

I don't even remember what I typed. It was something like, "Hi, I just wanted to say hello and congratulate you on the award you won." I think I had remembered that Munoz had been presented with an award several months earlier. Maybe it was something else altogether. I don't remember exactly. It was only then I noticed that she had her lunch set out in front of her. I really hadn't wanted to disturb her lunch and didn't see that at all until after I started writing out the message I wanted to share with her. She hadn't started eating though. It was a bowl of salad or something like that.

Munoz looked around and pulled out a pen and pad of paper from Debi's desk and then she wrote a note back saying, "Your students like you."

And I was... really puzzled. I didn't know what to say back at all.

I wasn't sure if I should thank her, or express curiosity about what she said because when people say something like that, they usually add a little bit of extra information to give that kind of statement some kind of proper context or a little clearer meaning.

I finally thought of something to say back. I start typing on my phone again... and then I stop typing in midsentence in disbelief as I start to realize what has happened.

Munoz had stood up and collected her lunch... and I am trying to finish typing my short message as quickly as I can and show it to her. And she just sort of gives me this... look that I don't even know how to describe... it was almost like a sullen scowl and a slight nod or change in her countenance with a very clear understanding of what she was doing or signifying... and she turns her back to me and walks out of the room.

And I am standing there in such stunned disbelief... I was standing there with my phone in my hands in mid message with both of my thumbs still extended in mid air. I was blinking in such stunned surprise.

She never even indicated she needed to return to her lunch. Never even made some kind of gesture to express she didn't have much time and needed to quickly eat her lunch or anything like that.

She just stood up, picked up her lunch and walked away from me in the most insolent way she could demonstrate.

I only hoped to partake in such a tiny and minuscule amount of her time and it was just so stunning to see her walk away. All I needed was a few extra seconds to finish typing what I hoped to communicate with her using my phone.

And for some reason, she thought it was so utterly beneath her to give me the tiniest bit of courtesy or time to share what could have been an interesting, beneficial or even important message for her from an academic colleague that would strengthen the college and our students in some way.

I could only tell myself that she must have had something important to attend to. I was in such disbelief. What she did at that moment was truly one of the most insulting, dehumanizing and debasing things anyone has ever done to me as a Deaf person in a professional capacity. Or so I thought.

Chapter 58

Alicia Munoz assumed the position of interim Dean in July 2017. Pat Setzer sent an email to all of the department chairs in the AHSS division an email announcing that she would now be our interim dean.

Despite being stunned at how Munoz walked away from me in the President's Office, I was still looking forward to working with her. I figured there must be something really smart about her for her to be appointed the Dean. She had won an important award from East County.

She absolutely had to be this amazing person in some way, I thought. Everyone has their own kind of rough edges and they're shown and expressed in different ways. Rough edged people have never bothered me. So many people have chosen to look past my own rough edges and given me a chance to connect with them for all kinds of meaningful reasons. There had to be something genuinely important and unique about her and I was looking forward to learning what it was.

We really needed to work together above all and I was looking forward to seeing what kind of leader she would be and the kind of fresh air she would bring to the AHSS Division with the same kind of creative and thoughtful ideas that had allowed her to succeed and win all of these different kinds of esteemed recognitions and awards throughout her many years at Cuyamaca College.

I was really eagerly looking forward to her introduction and learning more about her. You know how when someone comes into a new department or division, especially in education, they tend to send a message to the people they work with and just sort of try to establish clear lines of communication with the other people in the department. It's not uncommon for new leaders to explain their educational philosophy and goals even if only briefly.

That was what I tried to do when I became the Chair of the ASL Department. I sent everyone in the ASL Department a warm email, tried to introduce myself and sort of explain that I was here if anyone needed to get in touch with me for whatsoever reason. Just tried to establish that sort of familiarity so the other instructors would feel comfortable communicating with me.

That's what everyone has always done every time I've worked with someone new in the field of education. We find some common ground, establish some kind of familiarity and help give the other person or people an idea of how to communicate with one another since everyone has different communication and language understandings and needs.

But for some reason, that kind of message never came. Her first message was completely work oriented and related to completing specific tasks. It was an email sent to all of us Chairs in the AHSS division that summer. It was about these deadlines and work that needed to be done for the college. And that was fine.

The emails were well written but had such a peculiar and somewhat frantic nature to them sometimes. I didn't really understand why some of these emails, just from having worked with Setzer and knowing how prepared and thoughtful he was with communicating with us. Setzer was now responsible for managing Munoz and it seemed like Setzer would naturally continue to explain Munoz's responsibilities to her in the same kind of clear, detailed and organized way. I never received frantic emails from Setzer or Utgaard when they were the Dean of the AHSS and I was still trying to understand how to communicate with her in the best way.

Of course, I wanted to support Munoz. I wanted to do my part to make sure the division continued to operate smoothly, the exact same way I always tried to do everything to support Setzer when he was my Dean. I was there to make a difference for our students and the community in the best way possible. It was about trying to do that by working with the Dean. I understood that very well and clearly. The Dean ultimately is the person who has control of each academic department in their division and has the authority to make the final decision in each matter.

Chapter 59

I was looking forward to meeting with Munoz and explaining what we were trying to do in the ASL Department and get her up to speed and just sort of understand how to communicate with her in the best way possible. I still really hadn't exchanged any kind of meaningful communication with her at all about the ASL Department and I was not entirely sure how to initiate this communication.

I was trying to bring so many small things to her attention and just sort of develop a meaningful and healthy rapport. I remember the very first time I needed to ask her about something. It was late August of 2017. One of my ASL students from the Spring semester had contacted me and asked me to change his grade from a F to an Incomplete.

It was a difficult situation. The student was a very good signer but he went AWOL near the end of the semester and I tried to contact him several times to give him every chance to make up his missing assignments and to show up for the final exam and ultimately he did not show up for the final exam.

This student explained he had been having serious problems. I understood and empathized with that. I wanted to be as lenient and supportive as I could. I ultimately told him I didn't think I could do that, especially because I was pretty sure the time frame in which grades could be changed from the previous semester had expired, but that I would still check with my Dean. Just to see if there was anything within reason I could do.

That email I wrote to Munoz was one of the very first things I reached out to her about. I explained the situation. I specifically said in that email, "I have some very real concerns about this matter, but told the student I would still check with you to see if the grade change was possible."

I received an one sentence response back from Munoz saying, "Yes, of course!!!"

I was somewhat... surprised or even stunned. Because she wasn't even interested in asking me about or trying to understand what my concerns were. She had completely... skipped over that part for some reason.

It was as if all of the knowledge I had about the situation from working with that student throughout an entire semester and the relationship I'd built with this student over several months didn't matter.

Not only that, I was perplexed about how this student could get an incomplete, being that several months had passed since the end of the Spring semester. I was pretty sure the deadline for changing grades had passed. But Munoz was the Dean. I thought she must have had the kind of power required to make that change.

I was sort of bothered about how there was such an utter lack of interest in understanding why I wasn't entirely sure how right or fair it would be to change the student's grade. But Munoz was the Dean and I listened to her the same way I would listen to any other person in that kind of position. I wanted to be supportive and show her I was listening to her.

Chapter 60

I told the student that I would make the grade change and that he would need to come in to sign the grade change form. But then the exact same thing happened again that happened during the Spring semester.

The student sort of goes AWOL again. And then tells me he will come in to sign the form and doesn't show up. I think this happened twice and I had to sit in my office waiting for him to

show up. Three or four weeks later, he finally shows up and signs. I send the form over to our academic advisors and she tells me that... just as I thought... the deadline had passed a long time ago and that grades couldn't be changed any more.

I contacted Munoz to let her know about this. Just so she would be aware of this, especially since it ended up being tremendous waste of my time based on the information she gave me.

I don't really know what I expected from her. Maybe I sort of thought she would reply with something positive or courteous like, "Thank you for sharing that information with me." Or something like, "That's unfortunate but your student certainly appreciates you trying to do that." But.... There was nothing at all. No kind of response.

Then a week or two later, I remember getting some more information that turned out to be wrong too. I don't recall what it was. But it was just odd. It was so different. I wasn't really getting any meaningful communication from her that showed any interest in the ASL Department at all. Everything communicated was feeling one sided. Not just feeling, but it really was very one sided.

Chapter 61

Even when I went into the office in the Fall to drop something off for our administrative assistant, Teresa, and I would occasionally run into Munoz from time to time, I would give her a smile and a wave to say hello. And seeing her response would be so strange. She would have this air about her, as if she was deep in thought and couldn't really be bothered. She would give me a small and difficult wave as if she was troubled by having her thoughts interrupted and just walk into her office.

So... July passes... August comes and passes... And then September comes and sometime in the middle of September, I finally get my first email from Munoz. A direct email from herself to myself only.

I open the email eagerly, thinking that it's going to be some warm and thoughtful email that will finally give me the opportunity to communicate with her in some meaningful way about the ASL Department. Maybe it will be about finally meeting with her.

And when I start reading the email... the exact same thing happened when I approached Munoz when she was sitting at Debi Ridulfo's desk and stood up and walked away. I started to blink in confusion...

I had to compose myself. And then I went back and read the email for a second time. And I started blinking furiously again.

I didn't know what to think about the email at all. The email sort of had a really nasty and utterly discourteous undercurrent to it that just kind of ordered me to start posting my office hours outside my office.

it was such a small, such a tiny such a trivial matter. So tiny and small that I'd never posted my office hours by my office. Not once in four years. Not under two Deans who never once commented on the need to do that.

It was always explained to us that we absolutely had to have our office hours listed in our syllabi and to inform the Dean's administrative assistant about the office hours we would keep during each semester. But actually posting it by our office doors was a bit of an afterthought and I never did it in four years. I never once had anyone tell me to start doing it. I'd look at some of the other instructors' doors and notice how some of them wouldn't have their current hours posted either.

The utterly peculiar and confusing thing is... if it had been a thoughtful and professionally courteous request from Munoz I would have been happy to do it. It was such a small and tiny thing.

But I read the email again for a third or fourth time and while navigating my disbelief, I couldn't help but start to wonder why she wasn't even interested in talking or inquiring about anything I was doing with the ASL Department. That was such an important part of our relationship. This was a hearing person that did not have the least amount of knowledge of Deaf people or ASL. I was starting to become truly confused about why she wasn't interested in learning more about how she could support the ASL Department or building any type of professional relationship in which she was showing that she was approachable and interested in understanding more about the ASL Department so that we could accomplish both of our goals.

The email she sent me was so truly nasty and had such an disinterested and detached tone to it... I was just in disbelief about why she decided to communicate with me in that way for the first time. That email seemed to make me want to feel like I was so far beneath this person, that I was worth two cents, instead of a tenured member of the faculty that had given so much time to Cuyamaca College.

I didn't know what to think. I thought she must be having such a terrible day and maybe she needed to take it out on someone to make herself feel better. I didn't know how to respond to that email and thought maybe the best thing to do would be to act like I didn't get that email and give her an opportunity to send me another professional and courteous email with a much more thoughtful tone.

I got another email three or four days later from Munoz. And it was worded differently... but it had the very exact and same nasty tone telling me to post my office hours by my office door.

Again, there was absolutely no other mention of anything that would show any real interest in communicating with me about anything related to the ASL Department.

I can't recall what my response said. I know it was professional and courteous because that was how I always tried to communicate with everyone at Cuyamaca College. In disbelief and ultimately I posted my office hours on my office door. That was the last email I got about the matter.

So September comes and goes and I still haven't met with her. Still haven't had the chance to have any kind of discussion with her about the ASL Department.

Chapter 62

Sometime in the early Fall, I make another attempt to connect Munoz to the ASL Department. I needed to submit some curriculum changes to the Curriculum Committee. When submitting these changes, the Chair of the department needs to show up at a Curriculum Committee meeting to answer any possible questions the committee may have. If the Chair cannot make it, they need to find someone to show up for the meeting on their behalf.

I taught a class at a time that conflicted with the upcoming scheduled meeting they asked me to attend. I needed to find someone to stand in for me. Someone that could represent the ASL Department at the meeting.

At the time, I still haven't had the tiniest chance to talk about anything ASL related with Munoz.

She still hasn't shown the tiniest interest in asking me anything at all about the ASL Department.

I still asked Munoz to represent the ASL Department at the curriculum committee. I hoped she would see that as a genuine sign of support. I could have asked anyone else to represent the ASL Department but I thought that by asking her to do this, this would be showing her I was supporting her. It would show that I was trying to connect her to the ASL Department. It would help build our relationship and start a healthy line of communication about what we were doing in the ASL Department.

The other members of the curriculum committee and all of the other Deans would see that we were building a positive and close working relationship. This was something Munoz could be proud of and use as a springboard to help her understand more about the ASL Department and share this information with the other people she worked with and help connect our departments.

Not only that, Munoz was required to attend these Curriculum Committee Meetings. All Deans were required to attend these meetings. It would be a seamless part of her participation in the meeting.

So I ask Munoz if she could do this for the ASL Department. She sends an immediate response and says, “Yes, of course!”

It was an one sentence response that was almost... magnanimous in nature. I didn’t quite understand it. I wasn’t asking her to go out of her way at all. She wouldn’t have to do any work at all other than answer any questions the curriculum committee might have had.

Still, it was a step in the right direction. I forwarded the outline of the proposed changes to her.

And... that was it... I never received any kind of further communication from her. Some type of communication that would indicate she had given these very informative documents I’d spent a lot of time on the tiniest bit of review, curiosity or attention.

Chapter 63

In October Munoz finally contacts me. She finally indicates that it’s time to meet. And then during this same time frame, I can’t recall if this was part of the same email or sent as a separate email, she talks about the ASL Instructor evaluations I’ll finally be doing for the first time ever.

Faculty members at Cuyamaca are not allowed to evaluate other instructors until after they earn tenure. I’d never been able to evaluate my instructors, except for some limited times in which I sat in some of their classes and tried to offer informal feedback on some aspects of how they were teaching their classes.

I will explain more about the faculty evaluation matter after I detail my meeting with Munoz.

Chapter 64

This is what happened at my first ever in person meeting with Munoz in October of 2017.

I walk into Munoz’s office. The meeting starts almost right away. She sort of gets right to business without any kind of introduction or the least bit of informal communication to help us familiarize ourselves with our preferred communication methods or styles. And again, that was ok. I was happy to just sort of follow along and let our communication methods evolve naturally.

But then I became utterly confused almost immediately. Because the first thing she started talking about and pointing to was a piece of paper that all of the AHSS Department Chairs receive a copy of at the start of each semester.

It was an outline of all of the important dates and required actions we needed to adhere to early on in the semester such as the deadline to turn in our courses’ syllabi, etx... etx...

We received this handout at the start of every semester. The only thing that changed on this handout were the dates and the addition of some items of new or updated information, maybe.

Munoz had already talked about these things at the Division meeting she led at the start of the semester. She had already covered all of these things in detail. I didn't really understand why she was repeating everything. Still, I was sitting there listening intently and trying to mask my confusion and just see where she's leading me.

So she points out a few things on that form and just sort of keeps on pointing at it and just sort of goes through that exact same list she has already talked about at the division meeting.

And I'm nodding and listening to her. And then she stops midway, before she even gets through the entire list of items on that handout. She then asks me something to the effect of, "How do I get in touch with you."

And I'm now even more confused about the abrupt change in the direction of the meeting. I wasn't clear about why she was asking that question. I thought she must have meant to ask about how to get in touch with me in case of an emergency, the same way Setzer had asked me if we could exchange text numbers when we started working together.

I remember replying something to the effect of, "Are you asking about my text? You can text me at this number" and I gave her my number.

And Munoz looks at the note I've passed to her with my number on it.... And... then she stands up and extends her arms... and she has such an ingenuine look on her face that can be only described as being radiant and happy.

And I am sitting there... once again blinking furiously in disbelief and confusion as the reality of the moment begins to dawn on me.

I haven't even had the chance to explain anything about the ASL Department or the support I needed from her to move forward with my plans for the department.

Our meeting had lasted maybe fifteen minutes at that point. And I was sitting there blinking furiously, wondering if she would give any indication she recognized the extreme confusion and discomfort I was clearly expressing.

She stood there beaming, her eyes glistening, her lips shining wetly, and her arms outstretched.

And it's like my mind is moving in slow motion, in utter confusion. I was just in disbelief. My stomach was starting to contract as the situation was beginning to dawn on me.

This... person forced me to hug her.

I did.. did not want to hug her at all.

My stomach was really turning in the most grotesque way.

It felt like she tried to think of the most demeaning and belittling thing she could do to show that the meeting was over and that she wasn't really interested in learning about the ASL Department.

We hadn't even exchanged the tiniest bit of meaningful information about anything at all. I still didn't know the least thing about who she was at all or how we would work together.

It felt like such an intentionally debasing and dehumanizing action. This was an unattractive, heavy set and slovenly woman who hadn't showed me the least bit of genuine curiosity about the work I was doing on behalf of the ASL Department and how she could support the Department. And here she was, beaming as if she had done something wonderful.

Chapter 65

Munoz emails me a short time later telling me she has decided on the evaluation schedule for the pair of ASL Instructors we needed to evaluate. I looked at the evaluation assignments and I had a real problem with one of the course assignments.

Both instructors taught two classes apiece. One of our instructors was hearing and taught a class on how to teach hearing people to sign with their deaf babies.

This instructor had taught this class for a long time, but I did not feel comfortable evaluating this class. This instructor was Jennifer Smith and as mentioned earlier, she had done so much to support myself and the ASL Department when I first came into the college.

I felt that I truly needed to give Jennifer the chance to earn the best possible evaluation. I felt like it would be much more fair to Jennifer if I evaluated her ASL 1 class and Munoz evaluated her Baby Signs class. Munoz had many years of experience of conducting these evaluations. She would be able to develop a fair evaluation she felt comfortable with, I believed. Also, Munoz as a hearing person, would have a really good idea of what went on in that class with a large amount of information being delivered through the use of voice.

I reply to Munoz's email and explain my viewpoint about the evaluation assignments and how I am feeling uneasy and quite nervous about evaluating Smith's Baby Signs class.

I received a response essentially saying that she has decided on the assignments and they're set.

I wanted to accept this... but the more I thought about it, it didn't feel right at all and it was making me more and more tense. This was the first time I would ever evaluate any of our instructors and I did not feel comfortable evaluating the Baby Signs class at all. I emailed Munoz

again and explained all of this. And once again I got a response essentially saying the exact same thing.

Two or three days later, you know how you keep on thinking about something because it's eating away at you. I still didn't feel it was right for me or Jennifer if I were to evaluate the Baby Signs class and I was just really perplexed about why Munoz and I never even had any kind of discussion to talk about how we would conduct these evaluations.

I decide to go see Munoz in her office to talk about it in person. I thought if she saw how tense and bothered I was by the matter, she would think about trying to find a better solution to the matter.

I went to her office and may have needed to use my phone or an ubi-duo to type my message out. I really don't recall. But what I remember is that Munoz gives me the same spiel she has twice about the evaluations being set. I was getting kind of upset and then Munoz says in such a glib and quick way with an excited smile, "I don't have the time!"

And I'm staring at her in disbelief. She said it so quickly, it was as if she decided to pull that right out of the air right there and then. I couldn't do anything but stare at her in disbelief. Because I just sort of knew she was lying and she did it so glibly and easily. It was clear she never even really tried to take a thoughtful look at her schedule to see if this change could be made without impacting her other scheduled responsibilities.

Chapter 66

I am in disbelief and feeling quite terrible about having to evaluate the baby signs class at all. There was nothing I could do but proceed with my assigned responsibility and the scheduled evaluation of the baby signs class.

And just as I sort of thought, a few things with the class didn't go at all as they probably should have.

What I understood was that the evaluation scale at Cuyamaca goes from 1 to 5. The minimum passing grade for an evaluation is 3.5. If an instructor receives a 3 that means it was a subpar evaluation and there would need to be another evaluation conducted the next semester.

I did not know how to score Jennifer's evaluation. This was not her fault at all. This was how she and the other instructors had taught the course for many years. I had no idea voice was used as much as it was in that class.

Regardless, after thinking about it for a long time, I felt like the evaluation warranted a 3 just based on the parameters I needed to use to score her evaluation. At the same time, it didn't feel fair to Jennifer at all.

Chapter 67

I went back to Munoz and either emailed her or talked to her in person and told her about how I was really stressed out and unsure about how I should score Jennifer's evaluation. And then Munoz tells me just give her a 3.5 and that "you can just evaluate her again next semester."

And once she said that, once again I was a bit puzzled because I was pretty sure I'd seen that I could only schedule another evaluation for the following semester if that instructor received a score of three or below. But I didn't know for sure, and again I thought Munoz knew what she was talking about.

I gave Jennifer a 3.5. And I later on found out that I would not be able to reevaluate Jennifer the following semester. This turned out to be yet another thing of many that Munoz would quickly pull out of the air and tell me that would turn out to be very incorrect and mistaken.

Instead of taking the tiniest bit of time to double check with someone who could have confirmed whether or not the information she was giving me was correct, it was starting to feel like she was constantly just pulling these things out of the air that she didn't know anything about despite her many years of working as a Department Chair and a leading member of the Academic Senate at Cuyamaca.

Chapter 68

During this semester I happened to see Munoz come out of Brad Cohen's class after she completed his evaluation. I gave Munoz a professional and warm smile. I waved and she walks over to me while I was standing outside my classroom. And she says through the interpreter she used for Cohen's evaluation, "Your students like you."

Once again, I could only smile and try to mask my disbelief and confusion.

It was a comment that did not feel meaningful or genuine at all and I was becoming more and more unhappy about how there was a complete and utter lack of any kind of real and genuine curiosity involving learning more about ASL Department on her part.

Chapter 69

The Spring Semester of 2018 comes around.

January and then February come and go and I've still had only one in person meeting with Munoz. I still haven't had any kind of email discussion that allowed me to share my thoughts about the ASL Department. I still didn't know how to communicate with her in a way that would catch her curiosity or interest in the ASL Department.

I still tried to do my best to support Munoz. Once again I asked her to represent the ASL Department at another Curriculum Committee Meeting that I couldn't make it to. Once again I received a quick "Yes, of course!" in response. Once again, I sent her the outline that needed to be submitted and once again, that was the last of it.

Then once again I find myself treated in an utterly discourteous manner. It must have been March of 2018 I think. We were in an ILAT meeting. In these ILAT meetings which were scheduled for the first Monday of each month, the "Instructional Leadership" of Cuyamaca College or all of the Chairs, Deans and numerous high ranking administrators would come together to discuss and plan things that were important to the college.

In these meetings, Nancy Jennings, Chair of the Communications Department would sit next to me from time to time and we would write notes to each other. This was the case at that particular meeting

After that meeting ended, I had a tiny bit of time to spare. Nancy and I were seated next to each other and writing notes to each other.

Munoz walks over to where we were sitting and sits down next to Nancy and starts talking to her with what I was starting to recognize as a perpetual scowl on her face during these meetings. It was starting to seem like she needed to scowl in public to show that she was giving any kind of real thought to some kind of matter.

Nancy stops writing and starts listening to her. And I look up to just acknowledge Munoz... and you would think she would show a tiny bit of courtesy or some kind of acknowledgement, the way most people do in professional situations when they interrupt a conversation. But here was none at all. Zero acknowledgement of the way she completely cut into our conversation.

I was sitting there with my pen in my hand... wondering what Nancy's going to write to me.... And Munoz doesn't even look at me once. She's just sitting there just sort of blathering and yammering on and on with an intent scowl on her face... and this goes on for a few minutes. I finally stood up feeling really upset and frustrated. I had to leave to make it to my next commitment.

Chapter 70

About a month later or thereabouts, one of our ASL Instructors, Shannon Engelhart, asked me for something important. Her young daughter was now attending the Early Childhood Center (ECC) at Cuyamaca College. Shannon was having a hard time getting them to provide an interpreter for an important meeting that was supposed to happen at the end of the week. She asked me if I could arrange for an interpreter to attend the meeting since I would usually place the request for interpreters for any kind of ASL Department related business.

I told Engelhart I didn't know if that was permissible. Sometimes some departments need to pay for things out of their own budget. I wasn't entirely sure how that worked at Cuyamaca. I told Shannon I needed to check with Dean Munoz and ask about that first. I sent an email to Munoz explaining the situation. Munoz sent me a fast response saying that she didn't think it was permissible and that the Early Childhood Center would have to arrange for the interpreter. I relayed this to Shannon and felt bad we weren't going to be able to do this for her.

About a couple of weeks later I thought I should understand more about how the college pays for interpreter requests for Deaf people at the college.

I asked around and found out that what Munoz told me about ASL interpreter requests was very wrong yet once again. All of the ASL interpreter requests for the college came out of one budget and it would not have mattered at all that the request came from the ASL Department or the Early Childhood Center for Shannon's meeting.

That still would hardly be the last experience I would have with Munoz that would leave me in disbelief during that semester.

Chapter 71

During the Spring of 2018, my second semester of being managed by Munoz, I was having some serious physical problems. I needed to have a serious surgery that was somewhat embarrassing and not easy to talk about. I had an issue called a varicocele vein in one of my testes.

I have had this issue ever since I was a young kid. I found out about it for the first time when I signed up for a football league and needed to get a physical. The doctor diagnosed it when he examined my testicles as part of the physical.

He told my mother that I would eventually need to have surgery at some point to correct the issue. Somehow it never became a real issue until I reached my forties and I did not want to have surgery to deal with it until I absolutely had to. However one of my testicles was becoming rather swollen and there was an increasing amount of discomfort.

After meeting with a reputable doctor I went in for surgery. When the surgery failed after a week or so it sent me into a bit of a depression. I couldn't believe I had a terrible shoulder surgery that failed. And now I've had another surgery that was not successful at all.

The surgeon who operated to correct the varicocele vein was a doctor at the University of California at San Diego hospital system and they were supposed to be some of the best doctors in the world. This doctor assured me that it was a relatively minor procedure and he felt confident in his ability to operate successfully.

This surgery not only failed, it left me in physical pain for a month or so. It was not easy to walk. There was a tightness in my groin from the surgery and I couldn't walk easily or normally for quite some time.

I may have also partially dislocated my knee playing basketball. I really can't remember if that happened during that time too or later on. Regardless, I was walking around with a limp, clearly in discomfort. I was trying my best to mask it all and continue to show up for work and my teaching responsibilities in a professional manner.

One day I was walking towards my office with a limp. And Munoz comes out of the conference room that's between her office and the ASL Department. She must have seen me limping with discomfort evident on my face.

I will never forget her reaction.

An ugly look came across her face. It was more than just a scowl. And then she clenched her fist and shook it at me. It was like she was trying to show me that she was this tough and resilient person and she expected me to be the same. But it was so absurd and cartoonish I just couldn't believe it.

That really was mind blowing. I stared at her in disbelief. Was she actually trying to tell me to be strong? Without even understanding why I was showing physical discomfort when I was trying to walk in the best possible way.

I've had to be strong my whole life. Deaf people everywhere have to be strong every single day of their lives. This person hasn't had the least idea of what I've been through in my life and the kind of strength I've needed to draw on.

And this person... who still hadn't once showed the tiniest bit of interest in communicating with me with the tiniest smidgen of thoughtful intelligence or wisdom... apparently thought clenching her fist at me with a ugly scowl on her face was apparently going to... amaze me and convince me she had some kind of wonderful strength in which I could take confidence from.

Once again, I found myself in disbelief.... Not knowing what to think. And once again, she walked past me with an ugly look on her face without saying a single word to me. Without trying to communicate or articulate anything thoughtful or meaningful that I could understand or relate to.

Chapter 72

I was becoming increasingly unhappier and confused by everything that was happening. It felt like there was a complete and utter disinterest in supporting the ASL Department. It also felt like she had a complete disinterest in learning more about her own position and responsibilities

as the Dean. It'd been months and I still hadn't had a single genuine discussion with her about the ASL Department and any kind of planning.

It felt like she wasn't interested in extending the same amount of genial or professional courtesy to the people she was now working closely with that I'd always seen from Setzer and Utgaard and all of the other Deans.

I never even asked for an exhaustive amount of support. I would have been completely fine with communicating with Munoz through email. But there had also been a few times where my emails went unanswered. And you know, when someone's not really communicating with you when you're supposed to be working closely with that person, you can't help but feel unhappy and confused and start to withdraw more and more from the situation and seek people that are more interested in communicating with you and supporting the work that needs to be done.

I decided I really needed to talk to someone privately about it. And I didn't know who to talk to about it other than Setzer. Setzer and I had worked closely for three and a half years. Setzer was one of the persons clearly instrumental in bringing Munoz into the Dean's office.

I thought Setzer would help me understand the situation better. I hoped Setzer would be able to help Munoz understand how I was feeling too since I was starting to feel as if she really didn't want me to approach her in any way at all.

It's funny... at some point in the Fall or even very early on in the Spring semester, I actually thought Munoz was this amazing and hard working person. Just because she seemed so busy all of the time. And I told Teresa Greenhalgh, our Administrative Assistant that exact same thing in wonderment, "She seems like she works so hard all of the time." And Teresa nodded in a solemn way with such an interesting look on her face.

At that time I only wanted to support Munoz and help her grow into her position. Being Dean has to be hard and time consuming for sure. But I also needed her to understand that I needed her support too and I was struggling with how we were communicating.

Chapter 73

It was late in the Spring semester of 2018. I stopped by Setzer's office to ask for a meeting. I specifically said, "It's about Alicia."

Setzer and Debi Ridulfo, his administrative assistant, looked at each other and talk. Setzer and Debi show me what Debi typed into Setzer's schedule. They listed the reason for the meeting as "ASL Department Matters". I didn't know what to think about that. I specifically said I wanted to meet to talk about Munoz. I left Setzer's office wondering why I felt like he didn't want me to be entirely honest about the reason I asked for a meeting.

A week or so later, I finally meet with Setzer and I told him that I was having a really hard time communicating with Munoz. I told him about I was feeling really confused and uncertain about how to approach her. I told him about how she wasn't even responding to some of my emails. I finally told him about how I didn't even feel supported. And that was completely true. Because when you support someone or something you find ways to show genuine interest in that person or the matter.

Setzer listened intently and in deep thought. Then he told me repeatedly several times in a serious and intent way that Alicia and I really needed to meet in person. He said that there's often misunderstandings when communication is exchanged through email and I definitely understood and knew that to be true.

He kept on saying that Alicia really wanted to do a good job.

I sat there and listened to him... and I didn't really feel confident or certain in what he was saying at all. Because I'd never seen that side of Munoz, the side that showed any kind of genuine interest or awareness or understanding of how it was important to communicate with me even if only for the reason of supporting the ASL Department and the 220-300 students that typically pass through our program each semester and because it was important for herself as a hearing person making all of the final decisions on a huge department that's capable of impacting the Deaf community's language and culture in massive ways. You would have thought Munoz would have showed the tiniest bit of interest, just so she could have that awareness as the biggest stakeholder in the ASL Department. That was Munoz. Not me. I answered to her and ultimately she makes all of the final decisions that affect all of the people within the ASL Department, both Deaf and hearing.

I'd never seen that side from her when we met in person for fifteen minutes and I found myself forced to hug her in a grotesque and debasing way.

I initially asked Setzer to keep this conversation private. But Setzer was very insistent on talking to Munoz about my concerns. He kept on saying he would talk to her and Pat repeated this several times. He emphasized several times that Alicia and I really needed to meet in person and that he would talk to her.

And I left that meeting feeling like Pat would talk to Alicia and explain things to her from my perspective in a thoughtful way that would help her understand how I was feeling. It felt like Pat would tell the exact same things he told me to her, about how we needed to meet in person and discuss my concerns.

Chapter 74

I was trying to stay positive and optimistic and I was hopeful Munoz would find a way to show that I may have misunderstood the whole thing and that she really cared about being a genuine and approachable person.

I waited and waited... More than two or three weeks and I started to become unsure about whether Pat had talked to her. I felt like I needed to wait for some kind of indication that showed me Munoz had the time to think about the impact she was making on me with her approach and that she was going to be receptive to what I needed to share with her.

So I wait and wait... wondering when Munoz would reach out to me to show that she's ready to talk about our communication issues in a thoughtful way.

During this time there seemed to be a perceptible shift in Munoz's emails to me. It was as if her emails became more abrupt or brusque than usual. And I wasn't sure what to think. I'd gotten so many frantic and reactive emails from her throughout the last two semesters, I never really knew what kind of tone she would address me with. All I could do was continue to communicate with her in a professional and courteous way.

We were moving towards the end of the Spring semester. Teresa Greenhalgh was no longer our administrative assistant. She had found a new position and moved into a different sector at Cuyamaca.

The office felt very different. Teresa always brought an amazing amount of warmth, humor and professionalism to the office and now that was gone.

We had a new administrative assistant, Dalea Kanno. She seemed to be a very nice person but Teresa is one of those unique and remarkable people that's absolutely irreplaceable. I found it very surprising that Greenhalgh no longer wanted to be the AHSS administrative assistant and I could only feel that it had to portend something.

I finally get a short email from Munoz right around the time the Spring Semester ended in the middle of May saying we should meet. I got this email several weeks after I talked to Pat. The email never even said anything about why we should meet. The email was not warm or enthusiastic at all. But I was glad to get this email and see that she was finally ready to meet.

The meeting was scheduled for two or three weeks after the end of the spring semester. Once again, I didn't know what to think about this utter disinterest in quickly setting up a meeting with one of the department chairs, one of the people she was supposed to work with closely.

This was such a huge part of her job and responsibility, meeting with the Department Chairs and supporting them as much as possible.

Chapter 75

It was finally time to meet with Munoz. I walked over to the Dean's office and find that nobody's there. I went back to my office to continue working while keeping an eye on my email

notifications thinking that Munoz would email me or maybe even stop by my office when she returned to the office.

I sat there in my office... and sat there for more than an hour... and once again I started to sink into disbelief.

I could only think about how it'd been a full year since we've worked together and that we've had only one fifteen minute long meeting and that she still hasn't asked me a single question that would help her understand anything about the work I was doing with the ASL Department or allowed me to explain anything to her or initiate any kind of discussion with her. This meeting was clearly very important. I wondered if I would receive an email explaining why she didn't show up for the meeting. This email never came.

Chapter 76

It was still the Summer and I had an ASL course to teach for five weeks. Communicating with Munoz seemed to become more and more difficult. I had a hard time getting any information from Munoz about getting that class scheduled. I had to ask Munoz repeatedly if it would be possible for us to add a Summer course. I just wasn't getting a response from Munoz at all. I had to ask three or four times about adding the class. And when I would receive an email or response from Munoz, it would be increasingly brusque.

I couldn't help but wonder what Setzer talked to her about, just because Setzer was always able to explain things in a clear and thoughtful way to me. I felt Pat would be able to do the same with Munoz. He would be able to help her understand that I was asking for help with communication and that I did so in the most private way possible.

Munoz clearly needed support and guidance from Pat, just like anyone else in a new position needs time and support to succeed in their position while they learn how to handle their new responsibilities.

I guess I thought that maybe Setzer would be able to help her recognize these things about her communication skills that she wasn't able to acknowledge herself and give her the support and encouragement she needed to work on her communication skills. It's often a lot easier for people to be receptive to listening and taking feedback from people they have close relationships with and that was the relationship Setzer had built with Munoz over many years of working together in the same division.

Chapter 77

But that never seemed to happen. I taught my Summer ASL course. Sometime in the middle of the Summer, still feeling really confused about how Munoz was making it very clear she was not interested in showing she was approachable, I asked for another appointment with Setzer.

At that meeting, I told Pat, “Nothing has really changed. Her communication hasn’t changed, it’s actually becoming worse. I still haven’t been able to meet with her.”

Setzer looks at me in a way... the expression on his face was such a deep and somber one. I’d never seen that kind of expression or look on his face before.

Setzer says one or two things in a very short and somewhat restrained or clipped way. And then he says, “Ask for a mediated meeting.”

I look at Setzer in what I could only describe as a stunned way. I think I was hoping he would offer that the three of us could meet to discuss the whole matter. It felt like that was something that could have helped or should have happened. He was the person that oversaw both of us and he could have been a thoughtful mediator or interlocutor. That was his role.

I left Setzer’s office feeling confused and uncertain about what to do next. I never wanted to have to ask for a mediated meeting. I was in disbelief that Pat would apparently explain to Munoz that I was having communication issues and that this apparently meant nothing to Munoz. She was the person I needed to be communicating with clearly and successfully about the ASL Department.

I truly didn’t know what to do. I never wanted the situation to become bigger and bigger.

I decide that it’s best to continue to communicate with her in the way Munoz clearly prefers, through sending emails. Munoz was an English teacher. Her emails were grammatically correct. She clearly had an adequate vocabulary. I felt like I was a clear and articulate writer that could explain things clearly through email. I never had any problems communicating with Setzer through email. If this was what Munoz preferred, that would fine with me. I never wanted to cause problems.

Chapter 78

But it’s like I blinked... and the brusque and short emails she was sending to me.... quickly escalated into a nasty and violent form of relentless gaslighting of the most disruptive nature possible.

It was near the end of the Summer of 2018. I hadn’t had much time off that summer at all. I think I had two weeks off after the Spring semester ended before I started teaching a five hour long course every day for five weeks. I would have two weeks off after the Summer course ended before I would need to return to work for Professional Development that would lead to the start of the Fall semester.

During this time, Munoz’s emails started to become really curt and nasty. And it didn’t matter how professionally or courteously I tried to communicate or write back to her.

There was a period of time in which I was trying to write to her in the most cheerful, explanatory and positive way and I would always get some kind of really short and nasty response back that would just sort of cut me off or dismiss whatever I was trying to bring to her attention in the most nasty way possible.

Then right around the time my Summer course ends, I started to get these repeated texts from Dalea Kanno, our administrative assistant. These texts said the exact same thing almost every time. "Check your email."

This is exactly what these texts said every time, "Check your email."

The texts Kanno were sending me were nothing like the warm, professional and thoughtful texts I would get from Teresa whenever she needed to bring something to my attention. Teresa would make sure to share a clear and quick explanation of the matter. But these texts from Kanno were just short and abrupt reminders telling me to "check my email" without any additional information explaining what email I needed to check or how urgent the matter really was.

I was starting to become really confused about what was going on. I had been working the whole summer. I was checking my email regularly. I was checking my email every day in fact with us being so close to the start of the Fall semester.

I got three or four of these texts from Kanno in a span of a week and a half.

It was starting to feel like a form of harassment. It didn't feel genuine at all. There was a time I was working at my computer. My email notification flashed to show an email from Munoz had been delivered. And then I got a text from Dalea Kanno less than a minute later saying, "Check your email."

When I read the email from Munoz, I found out it was for something that needed to be completed and submitted in four days. It wasn't about an urgent matter at all. It really was such a discourteous, disruptive and insulting form of harassment. It felt like she was intentionally telling her administrative assistant to text me repeatedly on my personal phone.

Chapter 79

I sent a very thoughtful and long email to Dalea explaining that I had worked the whole Summer and that I had only two weeks of vacation time before returning to work for the Fall semester.

I explained in the most respectful and professional way that in the past Teresa had always sent me an email to my personal gmail address for semi-urgent matters and only texted me when it was absolutely urgent that I reply immediately, such as if something really needed to be resolved immediately or by the next day.

At the same time, the previous day I received an email from Munoz explaining that we needed to cut an under enrolled class from the ASL schedule from the Fall 2018 Schedule. We would need to reassign a number of instructors. Munoz needed to know how these instructional reassignments would be made. I replied to that email immediately with the appropriate changes that needed to be made.

The next day I found out that a class had been taken away from me and given to a hearing instructor with an AA degree without any kind of explanation at all. We were in an ILAT meeting during professional week when I found out about this change.

We actually had our ILAT meeting during the Fall semester of 2018 in the La Mesa Police Department conference room.

It was supposed to be a fun “retreat” but it wasn’t really a bright idea at all. We always had a day set aside for these kinds of meetings during Professional Development week. The only thing that changed about this meeting was the location. We essentially had to drive to La Mesa, several miles away, just to attend that meeting in a drab and nondescript room when we could’ve just had it at Cuyamaca College and been able to walk back to our offices to continue working after the meeting ended.

I read the email from Munoz informing me that a class had been taken away from me during lunch at the retreat. I wasn’t angry. I was having mental health problems at the time and sinking deeper into myself. It really started to feel like I was being attacked with all of these increasing disruptions. I still didn’t know why she took a class away from me and I sent Munoz an email explaining that I wasn’t clear about why she took a class away from me.

Munoz quickly emails me back and says something about how it is a settled matter. I went over to her in person. She was seated near me at the time. And I don’t remember what I said. I may have typed something out on my phone to ask her about why she took a class from me. I know there was a look of utter confusion on my face because everything was feeling really antagonistic and it was just so ridiculous. I was this small, tiny person at Cuyamaca with so many problems and she knew what she was doing to me.

Munoz gave me an excited and bright smile and says, “We’ll talk about this later.”

So I check my emails from her again to see if I’d missed anything that would explain why I had a class taken away from me. I saw that I replied to her email quickly and clearly. I sent Munoz another email that night asking if I could have the class returned to me.

The Fall semester was scheduled to start in four days. I’d already spent so much time on planning and working on the course that’d been taken away from me.

Munoz replies with, "No, we'll talk about it on Tuesday." The Fall semester was supposed to start that Monday. I email her for the third time and ask to have the class given back.

Munoz emails me back and communicates in a way reminiscent of a five year old. She said, "No, I will not!"

I'm in disbelief. These nasty and vindictive emails were starting to come one after another.

It was starting to feel like I was under siege and being relentlessly attacked.

I went to Setzer's office in person the next day asking why I had a class taken from me.

Setzer acted concerned and said he would reinstate the class to me.

I still didn't understand why this person, Munoz, a hearing person without any knowledge or interest in the ASL Department or the least amount of cultural awareness of Deaf people or our ASL Instructors at all was now showing herself to be very comfortable with making all of these decisions that directly affected the ASL Department in so many far reaching ways by herself.

These things really should have been made in collaboration with me, a culturally Deaf person and the tenured Chair of the ASL Department and just because it is how these decisions were supposed to be made between the Department Chair and Division Dean through my experience with working with my first Dean, Setzer.

These attacks were relentless. The previous day Munoz insulted and belittled me in an email involving several high level administrators and the Steele Canyon High School Assistant Principal, Paul Battle.

We were involved in email discussions on starting a Dual Enrollment ASL Class at Steele Canyon High School that would allow their students to earn college credit.

Munoz sent a response to everyone in which she gave me a directive to me speaking yet once again like a five year old to keep a Dean, Larry McLemore, involved in these communications. I may have mistakenly left him off the group email I initiated or took part in regarding us teaching ASL at Steele Canyon High School to their students for college credit. It was such a discourteous, unprofessional and intentional attempt to insult and belittle me in front of others. The comment clearly was something that could and should have been communicated privately.

Ariane Ahmadian, our Dual Enrollment Programs Coordinator, and one of our Deans, Larry McLemore were included in that email. Again, it was such an unbelievably insulting way to communicate with a member of one of our most important stakeholders, a vice principal at Steele Canyon High School. Paul Battle is one of the most genuinely warm and engaged people I know and it was just unbelievable that Munoz thought so little of the whole situation she felt

completely comfortable communicating in an utterly insulting, confrontational and discourteous manner just because she saw the chance to belittle me yet once again.

Chapter 80

It felt like I was being attacked in such an utterly relentless way. It really did. All of this was happening so rapidly. It was like I would blink, and I'd find myself being insulted, belittled or attacked yet again.

I tried to stay positive. But now Munoz was starting to absolutely refuse to answer my questions. It's like I would email her with some information or asking something only she could respond to as my Dean that would allow me to continue moving forward with the work I needed to be doing.

Munoz would send me a response to my email but she would refuse to answer the specific questions I needed her to answer. I would have to email her again and just try to explain the exact same thing that I needed to know from her. And she would sort of just refuse to answer the question again, but she would also make sure to give me a nasty order or directive. And I would have to email her again asking about what I needed to learn to complete my work.

Our email exchanges were beginning to become more and more confusing. I was not receiving the answers or responses I needed to move forward with my work and things were beginning to pile up. I never ever got a fast and clear answer from her. Every email would drag out and out and I would find myself still asking the same question again over again because I couldn't move on with my work without receiving the answer I needed one way or the other.

There was this time I was truly thinking Munoz may be suffering from some kind of mental decline because of her advanced age and inability to respond to my questions. Largely because I really still hadn't had any kind of genuine communication or discussion with her.

Munoz was completely refusing to answer my questions. I was doing my best to stay as professional and courteous with my communication. I was trying to be helpful and clear with my communication. I actually wrote an email to her once with bulleted items of information and questions. There were about 7 or 8 items dating from almost several weeks of asking questions about various matters that she was absolutely refusing to answer.

It felt like I needed to email her with this bulleted list, thinking it would really help make my points clear. I got such a nasty, insulting and hateful bulleted response back. Her email was written in the most derisive and insulting way possible.

It was relentlessly disruptive and insulting. There were so many nasty little slaps in the face. I never did anything but try to communicate with her professionally in the way she made it clear she wanted to communicate with me. She made it very clear she didn't want to meet with me.

That was fine. But now she was making it clear she didn't want to communicate with me through email either. And I was at a loss about what to do.

Chapter 81

I forwarded Setzer a copy of the email in which she belittled me. The one that involved Paul Battle.

Pat apparently must have admonished Munoz in an ingenuine way. Because then Munoz emails me yet once again talking in the way a five year old communicates saying, "Pat said I shouldn't have done that in an email involving people outside of Cuyamaca College." As if Setzer had talked to her and explained that it would have been ok to insult and belittle me in emails involving only Cuyamaca employees.

The funny thing is I was severely depressed at that time. I was starting to have more and more physical and mental health problems. I was becoming less and less grounded.

Chapter 82

I was starting to go for more and more massages. And this turned into such a terrible addiction. My shoulder, neck and back were starting to hurt more and more. I found that it was becoming more difficult to do all of these exercise related things I would to unwind at the end of the day such as play basketball, lift weights, surf or even go fishing.

Maybe it's the sort of the same thing for a hearing person that loses their hearing. So many hearing people love listening to music. They can sit in their car or go home and just sit and listen to music idly for an hour or two and let the stresses of the day melt away.

For me, exercise always did that. I'd always been able to go out and exercise for a couple of hours or more and I would come back home exhausted and feel great. But it wasn't as easy doing that any more. I would go and exercise. And then my shoulder, neck and back would begin to become stiff and really hurt at the end of the day. My shoulder seemed to become tighter and tighter. These massages were the only thing that really helped.

Sadly, some of these massages were becoming freakier and freakier. It was too easy to sort of just succumb to these women and what they were trying to do. These massages also became more and more normalized to me. I guess that's what happens when these massage parlors are all over San Diego and the vast majority of women working there appear cheerful and happy. Not all of them, but the majority of these masseuses did. What should or shouldn't happen within the nature of a massage starts to become more and more of a gray area the more you fall into a depression and start self medicating.

It still all felt so wrong to me. It felt like I was becoming weaker and weaker. It didn't feel morally right to me at all. It was such a terrible addiction. Being isolated can really help your

mind play tricks on you and helps you justify some things. But what I didn't entirely realize was that I was also sinking into mental illness.

The sad thing is I wish my friend had been honest with me in the very first place. Again, strangely this goes back to my relationship with Gay people.

One of my Black, Deaf and Gay friends who I've known for a long time also has been a long time ASL instructor. My last year or two in Austin, we talked about ASL matters related to his job at the Austin Community College. I was glad to have these conversations and his friendship. And I felt he respected me as a person and that's why we were friends. He told me about the position at Cuyamaca College and encouraged me to apply and I was glad for his support. He was glad when I got the position and asked to visit me for a week near the end of my first year at Cuyamaca College. I told him sure. I was glad to have him over. San Diego is an awesome destination city for a lot of people and if I could give him a place to crash on a vacation, I'd be glad to do that. So one night he starts talking about massages and how he wanted to go for a massage. I'd never gone for one at all. Never paid for a massage at all. I really didn't think it was a big deal. I had no idea what to expect at one of these massage parlors, really. It may be hard to believe but I really didn't know what they were about at all.

And the worst thing this person did was be dishonest and act like he didn't really know what went on at those massage parlors at all when that was the farthest thing from the truth. He was very aware of what happens at those places and the erotic nature of these massages. He should have explained this to me and been honest with me and maybe I would've never gone in for a massage at all. And he could've gone by himself and have had just as much fun. But that's not what happened.

These erotic massages became very normalized. It felt like a form of medical treatment at the same time and that helped me rationalize my behavior to myself. It really was the only thing that would stretch out my shoulder, neck and back and help me feel better at times.

Chapter 83

In September of 2018, while being relentlessly attacked and suffering from depression, I actually sent Munoz a long and thoughtful email at one time. One thing I specifically said was "We are supposed to be working together." It was feeling as if she was utterly refusing to work with me in the least way and I was in disbelief. I really wanted her to understand how I was feeling about how she was communicating with me.

Early in September, Munoz sends an email to all of the AHSS Chairs. She says that she has decided to have these monthly meetings with all of us Department Chairs and that it will be a chance for all of us to talk together. There wasn't anything specified about the nature of these meetings. No agenda listed at all. She said something about how there would be food and drinks at this meeting.

Again, I was in disbelief. This person was absolutely refusing to meet with me or show the tiniest interest in communicating anything in a way that would acknowledge what I was trying to tell her about the support I needed from her. And here she was, yet finding ways to show and make very clear that the other Departments and Chairs were important to her but not the ASL Department.

I truly was feeling besieged. I really was being relentlessly attacked. I hadn't even done anything. I hadn't even talked to anyone else at this point other than Setzer because I wanted to keep the matter private.

Munoz was the interim dean from 2017-2018. And then she was awarded the full time position. I never even did anything to her. I never ever suggested that she wasn't fit or capable of being the Dean. I never complained to the other Deans, contacted the union or our college president, Dr. Barnes. All I wanted was thoughtful and courteous communication from Munoz. I kept on looking for the tiniest thing to get her engaged in a genuine way and there was nothing at all.

There was no way I could attend this meeting, not with being relentlessly attacked. I sent a response to everyone in that email group which included two very important and powerful people at Cuyamaca College. Dr. Lauren Halsted and Dr. Taylor Smith. Halsted was the Chair of the English Department. Smith was the Chair of the English Department. These were two of the people I'd talked to or emailed from time to time about all kinds of matters throughout my time at Cuyamaca. Those two people appear to be among the smartest people at Cuyamaca College.

Chapter 84

The interesting thing about Lauren Halsted is that it was becoming increasingly clear that Halsted was mentoring or guiding Munoz. I would see this happen so many times. Munoz and Halsted would walk out of the small conference room next to the ASL Department or be walking side by side in that general area. Munoz would always have some kind of furrowed expression or scowl on her face as if she was having a hard time trying to understand what Halsted was explaining to her. Halsted would always have a cheerful and easy going expression on her face as if she was explaining something simple to a child. It was always Halsted speaking and explaining things to Munoz to help her understand how things worked.

Taylor Smith was Pat Setzer's hand picked successor to the Music Department. Taylor was Pat's special assistant for the ILAT meetings the last two or three years I was at Cuyamaca.

Taylor and I talked about going surfing together, imagine that. The same thing for Halsted and I. Halsted is apparently a good surfer.

My response to everyone, all of the AHSS Chairs and Munoz was "I am going to sit this meeting out. Thank you."

I was not asking for permission. I was trying to show the other chairs that I was having a quite serious problem with Munoz that I just didn't know how to handle and that I wouldn't be able to participate in these meetings.

Munoz emails me. It was unbelievable how nasty she was in the email. She doesn't even ask why I won't be able to attend the meeting. She sends me an absolutely nasty and vindictive email that *orders* me to attend the meeting.

And then I finally said, "No, I will not. You have insulted me. You've belittled me. You've attacked me. I will not meet with you until I feel sure that these attacks will stop."

This email also included our VPI, Pat Setzer.

And then Munoz says something else nasty. I don't remember what it was. And then she sends me a dismissive response saying, "I'm sorry you feel that way. We really need to (or should) meet in person."

And again, I am utterly in disbelief. It felt like she'd been attacking me for several months. Every single attack was a disruption of sorts. And now she says, "I'm sorry you feel that way." She clearly knows she's saying sorry for absolutely nothing. She's saying she's not going to stop attacking me.

And I finally say "No, I want a mediated meeting." Because that was exactly what Setzer recommended when I talked to him.

Munoz doesn't reply to the email. I spend the next two or three weeks in a haze wondering what's going on. Going to work every day with my stomach hurting in a way it's never hurt before.

Chapter

Two weeks later I get an email from Cheryl Detwiler in Human Resources explaining that I have been reported for insubordination related to refusing to meet with Munoz.

I believe the email also said I was reported for not posting my office hours outside my office. Because that was another point included in the report for insubordination. That I was refusing to post my office hours on which was not true at all. I'd never refused to do that. Not once.

My response to Detwiler was, "I refused to meet with Munoz because she has been attacking me."

I was just in disbelief... and I went to see Setzer. Pat knew exactly what was going on. I'd been emailing him about so many things related to Munoz's actions and communication at that time. The little insults. The harassing texts from Kanno even when I was responding to Munoz's

emails in a very quick and timely way. Taking a class away from me four days before the semester was scheduled to start. Belittling me in a group email involving Steele Canyon High School stakeholders. Refusing to answer my emailed questions involving college and ASL matters. There were so many things I was telling Pat about because they were continuing to happen repeatedly. So many disruptions.

Chapter 85

That general time was sort of a blur.

I saw Pat in person and I was stunned to see that Pat was angry at me. Pat actually said, "The trust is lost!" There's no more trust!" That was about the extent of our communication.

I left the office in disbelief. I didn't even have the chance to ask Setzer why I didn't get the mediated meeting I asked for. Setzer also said something angrily about how I refused to list my office hours by my office door, one of the other things I'd been reported for. That wasn't true at all.

This was not about trust. This was about my Dean acting and communicating with me in a professional and courteous way instead of instigating these relentlessly nasty and vindictive attacks and disruptions.

I asked Setzer for help several months prior and asking Munoz for a mediated meeting was the last thing I ever wanted to do. But that was what Pat told me to do almost two months earlier and I kept on trying my best to communicate thoughtfully and respectfully with Munoz because I did not want things to escalate. I was communicating with Munoz in the exact way she established communication with me, through email. But my emails were patient, respectful and pleasant. I kept on trying to communicate with her in a positive way for so long. And then I finally snapped at that moment she slapped me in the face by calling for a meeting with the other department chairs, and then again by apologizing in an intentionally derisive way.

Chapter 86

Oh Pat, did you ever talk to Munoz about stopping her attacks on me. What did you say?

Something like, "Alicia, you really need to meet with Dorian and talk to him in person. Dorian mentioned he's struggling with some issues. He mentions he is concerned about how the two of you are communicating. It would really be great if you two could meet and talk in person and resolve everything"

"Pat, did he really say he had communication problems with me!"

“Alicia, I think he’s just feeling like he needs a little bit of support. I was able to communicate really well with Dorian for three and a half years. Try meeting with him and talking about what’s bothering him.”

“Pat, he really said he had communication problems with me” Angry and indignant scowl starting to overtake her face.

“Yes, Alicia. Yes, he really said that. But I’m starting to see that it’s absolutely his fault for having communication problems with you.”

Chapter 87

Pat, what happened next? Did you talk to Jim Mahler, the powerful union president that wields the might of the American Federation of Teachers Union on behalf of the Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College District? Jim Mahler is the person everyone at Cuyamaca College includes in their meetings or discussions at the highest level. And this matter now involved a Dean. I can see exactly how that conversation went.

What did you say to Mahler? Something like, “Alicia and Dorian are having serious communication problems. Dorian is saying Alicia is attacking him.”

And Jim, appearing like the greasy used car salesman he really is must have replied with, “Pat, remember... sometimes it’s almost like Alicia has a mind of her own.”

“Yes, yes, that’s absolutely true... but what are we going to do about these attacks, Jim?”

“Pat, you know Alicia needs to stay motivated. This is going to... light a fire under her and energize her. She needs to stay busy somehow. Pat, you know it’s not like Alicia is capable of doing any kind of independent thinking. Lets not lie to ourselves about the role she serves. This is the person we created, Pat! Come on, Pat. You know how these things work!”

“Yes, yes, you’re absolutely right, Jim. Yes, it is what it is. Alicia just needs to do what she’s always done over the years. It’s really all Dorian’s fault. He should’ve been more aware of the Cuyamaca way. It’s all his fault, clearly.”

“So, it’s settled, Pat. Alicia will continue to be Alicia, however grotesque things become. And Dorian... will just have to figure things out on his own.”

“Yes, yes, Jim. Agreed. It’s really so unfortunate. I’ve spent so much time mentoring and guiding Dorian... and you’d think he would have learned to be as mindless and intentionally oblivious just like all of the other faculty members we have here. This is really my fault more than anything else.”

“You tried, Pat. You’ve learned the Cuyamaca way. You make all of us beholden to the Cuyamaca way proud, Pat. It’s time to make him learn the Cuyamaca way too.”

Chapter 88

I had no idea what to do about being reported for insubordination. Someone finally tells me to contact Jim Mahler. That was my first experience in dealing directly with our union leader and AFT Local 1931.

The only experience I had with our union was when I attended an union meeting during Professional Week my first year at Cuyamaca. I found the meeting so coarse and unsavory I never attended another meeting. One of the union representatives actually started screaming about something for more than ten minutes and it was just so bizarre seeing that happen in a professional college setting full of tenured faculty members. He had long hair and I had no idea who he was. I didn’t even know if he was a faculty member or only an independent member of the union. I didn’t really care or want to know.

I never filled out my union membership card. For almost three years Cuyamaca Union representatives would badger me, usually at Convocation, to fill out an union membership form and I never did until they became really insistent on having me do it.

I always thought that as long as I handled things with the ASL Department professionally I would never have to deal with the union. I never wanted to have to deal with the union.

But I now had to deal with AFT 1931. Just because I was told to. And I didn’t know how to handle this situation by myself. VPI Setzer clearly was supporting Munoz in this matter.

I contacted Jim Mahler. I told him I really wasn’t sure about having an union representative at the meeting. He said that I really should have union representatives present as in there would be two representatives assigned to my meeting.

I was still confused and in disbelief that VPI Setzer and President Barnes would allow Munoz to attack me like this, in such a deceitful and vindictive way. Even though Setzer told me to ask for a mediated meeting. Even though VPI Setzer and President Barnes knew Munoz had been attacking me for quite some time.

I find out that I am going to have two AFT representatives for my disciplinary meeting. One representative would be a faculty member from Grossmont College, the college that made up the other half of the Grossmont and Cuyamaca Community College District. This person would be Michael Golden. And the other representative would be an Academic Advisor from Cuyamaca College, Rachelle Panganiban.

Panganiban, interestingly enough, was the academic advisor assigned to the ASL Department. Panganiban actually took an ASL course with me the previous year. She did well in the class and

became a good signer. But she never became comfortable enough to sign with me in public. Panganiban was one of those people that persistently asked me to fill out my union membership card.

I did not feel comfortable having Panganiban as a representative because since she had been a former student of mine. I asked Mahler if I could have another Cuyamaca College representative. Mahler asked me several thoughtful questions. It felt as if he was trying to find out if I had any problems with Panganiban.

I only told Mahler that it was about having the best possible representative. Mahler sent me a list of Cuyamaca AFT representatives. I did not recognize any of the names, except for Rachel Jacob-Almeida.

Chapter 89

Setzer introduced me to Rachel Jacob-Almeida when she was hired at Cuyamaca. I had seen her a few times around campus. She presented herself as a thoughtful woman interested in social justice issues. I thought she would be as good a representative as any, but I hoped she would be wonderful and empathetic and possibly be able to help Munoz and myself communicate better. I asked Mahler if I could have Rachel Jacobs-Almeida as representative. He agreed to the request.

The disciplinary meeting was scheduled for late September in 2018. It was still very early on in the school year. Instead of focusing on my ASL courses during the busiest time of the year, the beginning of the semester, my focus was now on surviving this onslaught of relentless attacks that the Cuyamaca administration was apparently supporting. It didn't seem real or believable to me.

I had no idea of what was going to happen at this disciplinary meeting. I didn't even have the least idea of or know what these representatives' roles are going to be in this meeting or how they are going to participate in or support me through the meeting.

I have no idea how to prepare for this meeting. I kept on thinking that I never wanted things to escalate that far. I only wanted Munoz to stop treating me in this utterly insulting and demeaning way.

I decide to send Munoz another email three or four days before the disciplinary meeting.

I actually apologize to Munoz in the most heartfelt and genuine way for asking for a mediated meeting. That was the only thing I could think of that might help us move past our differences.

I explained that I got really upset when she said, "I'm sorry you feel that way." I explained that it felt like she was saying sorry for nothing at all and that prompted me to ask for a mediated meeting.

And then once again, I said, "I feel like we're having really serious communication problems and I really would like the chance to meet with you and try to work these problems out before this escalates any further because it feels like this is just getting bigger and bigger."

Munoz once again... sends me a completely nasty and derisive response saying something about how I am going to learn... what my place is at Cuyamaca College.

Once again, I was in disbelief at how confrontational she was. I replied in a completely courteous way and told her that I would look forward to meeting with her and talking about things at our meeting. I didn't know what else to say. Things were completely escalating regardless of what I said or tried to do to deescalate things.

Michael Golden, my AFT 1931 representative from Grossmont College reaches out to me through email. We agreed to meet about 15 minutes before the meeting with Munoz was scheduled to start to discuss things. Rachel Jacob-Almeida does not initiate any kind of contact.

I meet with Golden and I told him, "I just want a chance to talk with Munoz and explain why I was not responding well to her. That's all I ever wanted." And Golden says, "You will get to talk to Munoz. You definitely will." We then walk to the meeting in the conference room right next to the ASL Department.

Chapter 90

Rachel Jacob-Almeida, Munoz and Cheryl Detwiler from Human Resources were already seated. Jennifer Austin was present as my interpreter.

It was such a strange seating arrangement. I had Detwiler on my left and Munoz seated next to her. Golden was on the narrow end of the table on my right and Jacob-Almeida was next to him. Jennifer Austin, my ASL interpreter, was seated across from me on the other side of the table.

When watching Austin interpret I would not be able to easily see or identify who was talking. It was not the way I would have chosen to arrange the seating. But I did not want to be disruptive and I really only wanted to talk about resolving our communication issues. That was first and foremost on my mind. We needed to talk to resolve our issues.

The meeting starts. Munoz passes out a five page report to everyone detailing my "transgressions". I start reading the report while she's talking out loud. And then Munoz sees me reading the report, and then her face just changes.

Munoz sort of starts acting like she is mentally retarded and confused by what's happening. That is the best way I can describe her shift in attitude and appearance.

Munoz says, "Oh, you want to read first. That's fine. Lets read the report." And she's just talking in such an utterly different way with completely different facial and body mannerisms that I've never seen her demonstrate before. She's presenting herself as if she's really confused by what's happening and incapable of understanding what's going on.

We read the report Munoz has prepared. The more I read, the more I'm in disbelief.

Munoz kept on repeating how kind she was. She repeated that about herself three or four times in the report, that she was a kind person and that I was an angry person who didn't agree with the decisions she made as Dean and that was the source of our problems.

I start breathing harder and harder. For the first time in my life I was having an anxiety attack. It felt like I was being railroaded. I stare at Golden and Jacob-Almeida in disbelief. They were just sitting there quietly.

Then Munoz starts putting on this elaborate act in which she imitates a mentally retarded person. She starts reading from her report in the slowest way possible. It took her several minutes to get through the first page. And during this time, I am starting to breathe harder and harder.

This felt so wrong. I was in disbelief. Munoz continues reads slowly as if she's completely oblivious to the fact that I am having serious breathing problems. She reads and reads out loud slowly.

Munoz doesn't even try to have any kind of discussion with me at all. Or check with me to make sure I understand what she is saying.

I keep on checking my phone for the time. Munoz reads and reads from the report for more than twenty minutes and I still haven't had the chance to respond to a single thing she has read from her report.

By that time she was on the third page of the report, We still had two pages to get through.

I finally raise my hand and ask, "Can I talk?"

Munoz acts confused and as if she's mentally incapable of understanding what's going on. And she shakes her head as if she's trying to clear her mind and then she says, "Yes... yes, you can talk."

I tried to defend myself from these accusations.

I never even really got to talk. I told Munoz that she took a class from me and refused to give it back. While I was saying that, my interpreter starts signing and interrupts me. I was completely

confused about who was saying what. My interpreter, Austin repeats herself and signs, “I gave you the class back.”

I finally realize it’s Munoz who was talking and saying that. It didn’t register at all because that was a complete lie. I asked Munoz three times to give me the class back and she gaslighted me every time in her response until Setzer reinstated the class.

I said something about how I was really trying to communicate with her and resolve our communication issues. I brought up the same thing I said earlier in my email to Munoz about how I would have met with her if she hadn’t prefaced her meeting request with a dismissive, “I’m sorry you feel that way.”

I just wanted her to understand what was inciting these tensions within myself and my communication to her.

Munoz actually says in response, “I’m sorry you feel that way.”

I’m just sitting there in disbelief, wondering if she really said that especially right after I explained exactly how that came across to me twice, once in my email to her a few days earlier and right there in the meeting a few minutes earlier.

I’m just sitting there completely stunned at how I am being so blatantly gaslighted and railroaded at the meeting in front of AFT 1931 representatives and Detwiler from Human Resources.

I look over at Michael Golden and Rachel Jacob Almeida in utter confusion. My plea for support was so clear.

Golden is sitting there with a look of horrified fascination on his face, almost as if he’d seen this happen many times before. Jacob-Almeida is sitting there with the same bright, beaming wide and cheerful smile she always has on her face.

There’s a really strange and stunned silence for a minute... and I have no idea what to say or expect.

Chapter 91

After the long and awkward silence in the room, Cheryl Detwiler then says, “There’s a second notice against you.”

She pulls out another report from a folder and passes it out to all of us. This report explains that I was dishonest when I asked another instructor to cover a pair of my classes three weeks prior to the meeting so that I could go on leave and then the report goes on to say I will be *fired* if I continue to behave in insubordinate ways.

This was a complete and utter lie.

Michael Golden actually had to come over and point out the part where Munoz accused me of being dishonest.

In that matter, I asked Jennifer Smith to cover two of my classes so I could go on leave. And in return, I would cover two of her classes later on. This was done informally, without filling out an official leave or substitute instructor request.

Setzer and Greenhalgh had absolutely told me that it was permissible to do that when they were in the Dean's office. They said it was sort of a "gray" area and that I really shouldn't do it often, but if I absolutely had to, that it was ok.

And I don't think I ever did it while Setzer was my dean. I may have done it once. I really don't remember.

But while Munoz was attacking and gaslighting me relentlessly during the Fall semester and making sure it was very clear that she was utterly disinterested in communicating with me in any kind of genuine way, I needed to take leave. These attacks were really starting to wear me down and what else is there to do but to go on a break and try to recharge. I decided to go on a tuna fishing trip and I asked Jennifer Smith to cover two of my classes that I would need to miss so that I could receive the mental health treatment I needed of going fishing and getting myself away from these nasty, vindictive and relentless attacks.

I never wanted to miss my classes. I loved teaching my classes at Cuyamaca and I always tried to show up for every class. But I really needed to go on leave.

Jennifer Smith agreed to cover two of my classes. Before I went on that two day trip I put my email notice on "away" so that anyone who needed to contact me would know that I was absent and away.

I went fishing and when I came back, Jennifer told me that she had received an email from Dalea Kanno informing her that she needed to fill out a substitute request form. Smith wasn't the one who needed to request a substitute. I was as the instructor that went on leave, but Dalea sent the request to Smith instead of to me even though she should have included me.

I check my email thinking I must have missed something from Dalea or Munoz and I didn't see anything from either person about submitting a substitute request. I email Munoz and Dalea and ask both of them why Smith was sent a substitute request and I was not included in the email.

Munoz sent me such a nasty and hateful response saying that I was not allowed to go on leave in that way that and that I should never ever do that again and then she sends me the

substitute request and *ordered* me to fill that out. I was in disbelief. Why wouldn't she just contact Jennifer and I at the same time and let us know about this. Why wasn't I included in that communication.

I explained that it was Pat and Teresa who told me that it was permissible to do this from time to time. And then I get another utterly angry and hateful response telling me to never do it again. My response was professional and courteous, the exact same way all of my communication with her had been and I told her I understood and wouldn't do it again. I explained again that I believed it was permissible to do that and I specifically put my email auto reply on "away" so that people would know I was absent.

This was the kind of communication Munoz was indicating she wanted to receive from me. The utter disinterest in knowing or learning anything about ASL matters that she was transmitting to me were guiding my communication decisions with her. I was starting to modify my communication with her exactly in the way I believed she wanted me to. This is the leadership she was demonstrating and I was responding to it in the best way I could and nothing was working.

And now I was being attacked again at this meeting for being dishonest when it was Munoz that was lying.

I was sitting there at the meeting in disbelief, breathing hard, having an anxiety attack, and in mounting anger because she's relentlessly gaslighting me and then I communicate with her in the only way I think she's going to be capable of understanding.

I picked up that report and I crumpled it up. And while I was crumpling it, I looked over at Munoz, and she had such a *gleeful and excited* look on her face before she looked away.

She didn't even have the courage to maintain eye contact with me. This was a person taking pride in behaving in the most grotesque, nasty and vindictive way she could think of.

It was a look of glee and utter joyfulness, as if she had incited the exact reaction she hoped to when I crumpled that report into a ball because that was the only kind of communication I thought she would be capable of understanding.

The meeting was never about resolving our communication problems. It was just another way to attack me.

Cheryl Detwiler then starts talking to me in an angry way like a five year old would. She starts yelling me at me angrily and says with a very angry and ugly face that I must meet with Munoz and stop being insubordinate. She says this with her face a foot and a half away from my face. I could only look at her in stunned disbelief and I said to Detwiler, "Tell her that." I was so completely and utterly blindsided at that meeting. Nobody helped me prepare for that meeting.

I never brought any kind of written or prepared statement with me. I didn't think I needed to and again, I did not want things to escalate. It'd already been going on for so long.

The meeting ended shortly thereafter.

Chapter 92

Michael Golden is the only person to remain behind to talk to me for a couple of minutes after the meeting ended. He shakes his head and says, "She doesn't have the authority to fire you. I've only seen anyone talk about doing that one other time in my 20 years of being an union representative."

And then Golden tells me, "Make sure you continue to communicate with her. Don't refuse to communicate with her. Continue to do your job."

All I could do was nod in stunned silence.

I went straight to Pat's office. I showed Setzer the crumpled up two page report saying that I would be fired if I continued to "do these things" and Pat just sort of listened thoughtfully. I think he must have gotten a call from someone right before I went to his office because he didn't look surprised to see me at all.

At that point, I was utterly under siege and I didn't understand why these vindictive and disruptive actions were being condoned by the Cuyamaca Administration. Every single action or form of communication from Munoz was turning out to be a nasty attack or disruption of some sort.

Again, I never even brought any kind of written or prepared notes or emails with me to that meeting.

Back at my office later on that day, I read through the two page report I crumpled up. And I was in disbelief at what I was reading. She not only threatened to fire me if I ever was insubordinate again, she had also clearly decided she was going to dictate communication with a profoundly deaf person.

There was an order phrased in this very way, "He will meet with me using an interpreter."

It was not a thoughtful directive such as, "We will meet to discuss our communication needs."

She was ordering me to specifically meet with her using an interpreter.

After I had so many problems acquiring competent interpreters while at Cuyamaca. After so many meetings with Pat in which we communicated through using the best possible tools

available whether that was a pair of Ubi-Duos, our phones, ipads or through exchanging written notes.

Not only was this such a nasty, utterly discourteous and debasing insult to Deaf people everywhere who have had communication problems throughout their entire lives, requiring someone to meet with them using an interpreter meant I would not have the same direct access to Munoz all of the other chairs and faculty members would have with her.

These people would be able to walk into her office at any time to have a quick word with her if needed. The same way I had been able to do with Setzer and Utgaard and easily and quickly use some kind of mechanism or tool available to communicate in a clear and equitable way that Munoz was also perfectly capable of doing but very intentionally refusing to acknowledge. Everything was being turned into a nasty and vindictive dig or attack.

Munoz was saying that she was putting her office off limits to easy and accessible communication as far as deaf people are concerned. She was saying that I would have to request an interpreter and possibly have to wait three or four or five days until a competent and qualified interpreter became available for this meeting even if I only needed to talk to her for several minutes. Munoz was saying that she was utterly disinterested in facilitating any kind of discussion involving the least care or regard for my communication needs.

This was truly such an utter insult to Deaf people everywhere that have struggled to communicate with hearing people throughout their entire lives and have tried their best to fit in successfully with hearing people in order to be able to lead successful and productive lives.

This was coming from a privileged, well educated person that had a chance to attend The University of California at Berkeley that was at one time adjacent to the historic California School for the Deaf (CSD) at Berkeley that my father attended and graduated from shortly before California moved CSD to a new campus in Fremont where they to this day continue to provide education to the Deaf students situated in the northern part of California.

The amazing thing is... I would never have known Munoz went to UC-Berkeley if it wasn't for her introduction to Cuyamaca as the full time Dean of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Division. This was formally announced to the college at the Fall of 2018 convocation.

They always pass out programs at Convocation. When I picked mine up and started reading it... once again I was in disbelief. Munoz prepared an elaborate biography detailing her professional career and all of the awards she had been given. It took up almost two full pages on the program.

I could only sit there in disbelief and wonder why she chose not to share any of that information with us, the Chairs she was supposed to be working closely with as Dean. Because that's how you connect with people. You share experiences and your knowledge and your interests and you find common ground and that leads to a healthy working relationship in

which both of you know how to support each other based on your strengths, experiences or expertise. And that would've been an amazing way for us to build our relationship and helped me understand what she was most skilled or qualified at doing.

But she never did that once with me. Not a single time. Never shared the tiniest bit of professional knowledge or showed the least interest in learning anything about the ASL Department or sharing any information about her strengths or skills. And now here she was, bragging effusively to everyone at convocation about her extensive academic training and career. It was bizarre and disorienting.

Chapter 93

A day or two after the disciplinary meeting in which I was blindsided I sent an email to VPI Patrick Setzer, former teacher of the year, Dr. Julianna Barnes, President of Cuyamaca College, Jim Mahler, President of AFT Local 1931, The Assistant Chancellor in Human Resources, Craig Leedham, and the GCCCD Chancellor, Dr. Cindy Miles.

In this email I expressed my disbelief at how Munoz was relentlessly attacking me. This was the exact word I used repeatedly to describe how I felt. I said she was attacking me because that was what she was doing beyond a doubt. In this email I asked why she was absolutely refusing to engage in any kind of discussion with me about my communication needs. I told them I was in disbelief that these attacks were still continuing to escalate and intensify even though they were so disruptive in nature for the ASL Department and myself in so many ways.

Dr. Barnes was the only one to reply to my email. Her response was very short. But she said she would talk to Munoz. I was glad. I hoped their conversation would have some kind of positive or meaningful impact on Munoz.

Chapter 94

Craig Leedham in HR contacted me and asked me to send in evidence of these attacks. I spent many hours over two or three days printing and organizing emails and tying up descriptions of the attacks in each email. I detailed all of these little insults, gaslighting and complete and utter refusals to respond to my emails and work related questions.

There was one email exchange involving Munoz and myself that I specifically outlined. I told Leedham, "Look at this email exchange." The email asked such a simple question that Munoz could have answered easily with the authority and knowledge she had as Dean. Instead, she refused to answer my question for more than three weeks.

I had to send her three or four emails repeatedly asking the exact same question. And she would just refuse to answer the question and just sort of gaslight me by forcing me to ask that question again and again. And I had to wait for her response that would allow me to move forward with my work. This was work I was supposed to be doing for the ASL Department and

the students at Cuyamaca College. This was the work that she was supposed to be doing as Dean but very deliberately and intentionally refusing to.

Chapter 95

I asked the administration repeatedly for a mediated meeting with Munoz. I needed to be able to explain what I needed from her and for her to understand how insulting and debasing the things she was saying were for Deaf people everywhere.

Leedham gets back to me after he reviews these emails and he says he doesn't notice any evidence of attacks. And that he will talk to Munoz about meeting with me.

I go to Pat's office in disbelief and to talk to him about what's happening. I tell him that Leedham says Munoz hasn't been attacking me. Setzer gaslights me by saying, "Leedham is a lawyer. He knows what he's talking about. You must be mistaken. Munoz isn't attacking you."

I ask again and again for a mediated meeting. And then someone, Setzer, Leedham or Mahler, one of them tells me that Alicia is refusing to meet with me. That she's consulting with something called the board of administrators or something like that. I'd never heard of anything like it before.

So I wait and ask again for a mediated meeting. I wanted to resolve this immediately and just move on with my work. Munoz had attacked me pretty well at that HR meeting. She completely blindsided me. You'd think she would feel some satisfaction from that and yet at the same time, realize she needed to move on and remember her professional responsibilities.

I was truly thinking that at some point she has to realize and remember that it's her responsibility to be working with me successfully. She's supposed to be doing that. Not trying to be as confrontational and vindictive as possible in an attempt to destroy the ASL Department.

Chapter 96

I finally find out that I am going to have a mediated meeting with Munoz after all. Darrell Harrison is going to mediate this meeting. I had no idea who this person was and how he was employed by GCCCD but I was looking forward to finally being able to have a rational and thoughtful discussion with Munoz with a neutral bystander that would help both of us communicate effectively.

I needed to see Pat again. I don't remember why, but I went to Pat's office at some time. And I just remember being stunned when Pat told me one thing angrily. "I have told Alicia that if she feels threatened that she doesn't have to stay in the meeting."

And I was in disbelief. All I ever did was ask for the chance to communicate with her in a thoughtful and genuine way.

When Setzer said that, I felt like I was going to be railroaded again at that meeting. I just knew it. But I continued to be optimistic.

I think that mediated meeting was scheduled for the middle of October of 2018.

I show up for that meeting and I had a wonderful interpreter scheduled for that meeting, Suzanne Lightbourne.

I did not know who Darrell Harrison was at all and quickly realized that he is one of those thoughtful man who commands respect through his presence. Harrison was dressed impeccably in a beautiful and well cut suit. He had a satchel with the Marine Corps logo on it by his side. He had a leather covered notebook in front of him. The best way I can describe him is that he sort of looked like a much more polished and powerful version of Steve Harvey.

So I was sitting there quietly not entirely sure about how the meeting would start. I hadn't had the chance to explain my perspective or side of matters to Harrison.

Darrell introduces himself and tells us a little bit about himself. I assume that it's more for my benefit since Munoz probably knows him well. By that time I was starting to find out and realize Munoz had spent many years herself as an union representative and was very well connected to the AFT union.

Darrell talks about how being able to work for the California Community College system is one of the best jobs in the world and I nodded in agreement to that. That was absolutely true. It was amazing being able to work for Cuyamaca and still have the time, creativity and freedom to pursue other interests on the side.

And then Darrell sort of meanders from point to point. And I'm still listening, trying to figure out where he's going with these things he is sharing with us. Then a few minutes into the meeting, I don't remember exactly but he said something that Munoz responded to. Munoz's response was another huge lie and that immediately registers with me.

I blinked in confusion and my face contorted in slight discomfort the way Deaf people's faces naturally do. It's not like we use our voices to express ourselves. We use our faces to do that. In that moment, while Darrell was deep in thought, he was also looking downward and not looking directly at any of us while talking in the way hearing people do when they're trying to tread cautiously.

I looked over at Munoz in an attempt to make eye contact. I don't really know what it was. Maybe it was an emotional appeal to stop lying. It seemed like she was constantly lying about everything in such a glib way.

And you know what Munoz did when I looked at her. Her face contorts in this ugly and violent leer. She was clearly imitating the expression of discomfort I'd just shown a moment earlier but in the most derisive, insulting and threatening way because she saw that moment in which I was the only person looking at her and she knew it.

I was so completely stunned and in disbelief she would mock my facial expression in such an insulting way.

Darrell continues to hem and haw... and he asks us a couple of perfunctory or superficial questions that really didn't have anything to do with the heart of the matter. And the more he talked, the more I wondered when he was going to start taking notes in that impeccable looking leather covered notebook in front of him. It was just sitting there on the table unopened.

The longer the notebook sat unopened, the more my stomach started to sink. I sort of knew what was coming, but I would've still never believed what happened next.

After maybe ten minutes of not really getting anywhere, I finally felt like I needed to say something. I saw an opening, and I finally asked Munoz, "Why did you report me for asking for a mediated meeting?"

And then Munoz's face contorts and turns into this incredibly ugly caricature. She lies in the most ugly way possible and says she never got a request for a mediated meeting.

Then I said something about, "You've been attacking me. You took a class away from me. I responded to your email about determining class changes and assignments the day after you sent that email. You asked for a response by that Friday which gave me a three day window to send you a response. I still responded to your email the very next day.

Munoz with her face rapidly becoming uglier and angrier, says, "No, you didn't respond to my email in time."

And then I don't even remember what led to this. Things just sort of blew up so rapidly.

I remember saying, "You've been giving me so many wrong answers. That really bothers me. It really bothered me about what happened with Smith's evaluation and that I had to give her a terrible evaluation. And then to find out that I couldn't evaluate her again the following semester even though I gave her a 3.5 based on your recommendation. That really bothered me.

This was yet something else I found out earlier in September. That what Munoz had told me about giving Jennifer Smith a 3.5 for her overall evaluation score and still being able to reevaluate her the following semester was very wrong. I would have been able to reevaluate Smith only if I had given her a 3.

I remember saying to Munoz and Darrell Harrison, "There's been so many microaggressions. So many little insults."

And then Munoz's face contorts and turns even more ugly, there's such an ugly expression on her face, and she starts screaming at me in a violent and out of control way while I'm sitting there stunned at this show of anger and violence. And then she abruptly says, "I feel threatened. I'm leaving the meeting."

And I continue to sit there in stunned silence. This was a person that had been relentlessly attacking me for months and now she was doing the most cowardly thing she could do in front of an AFT appointed mediator that she was familiar with by saying she felt threatened as a way of showing me she was refusing to listen to me about anything I was trying to tell her at all about how her behavior was affecting me.

Once she said she felt completely threatened, that completely shut me down. I sat there in stunned silence, breathing really hard, having another anxiety attack.

Darrell sits there silently.

And then Munoz sort of composes herself. And you know what she did. Her face sort of changed once she saw that she completely shut me down. And then she went right back to gaslighting me.

She started talking nonstop for several things about nonsensical things. She was putting on a completely different act now. She started acting like some kind of confused and weak person and said something about how, "We won't be friends but we will work together." And then her face lights up every time she says something nonsensical as if she actually believes she's trying to make helpful suggestions.

And then she starts saying something nonsensical about how "Nothing happens on a Friday. Everything needs to be handed in and due by Thursdays." This was in regard to taking a class away from me because I didn't reply to her email fast enough. It was just relentless gaslighting.

She refused to even talk to me directly during that time. She was talking directly to Darrell Harrison for more than five minutes nonstop. And I'm just sitting there in silence and disbelief.

And then Munoz walks out of the meeting. The entire meeting lasted less than fifteen minutes.

Darrell looks at me quietly. And I sit there looking at this powerful, smart and polished man. I sit there looking at the unopened notebook that didn't contain a single note about the meeting. I sit there looking at his USMC satchel wondering about the experiences this man has had in the Marine Corps. I sit there looking at this thoughtful, interested, compassionate and kind man and just kind of sit there in stunned silence.

Darrell and I talk for a little longer. He asks me to send him the emails I have that would show:

I had asked for a mediated meeting.

The email exchange that showed I had a class taken away from me despite replying to Munoz's meeting in a timely manner.

The email that I said I had in response to Munoz's mistake in telling me that I would be able to reevaluate Smith again even if I gave her a 3.5.

A copy of Munoz's report from the Human Resources meeting that said I would be fired if I demonstrated any further forms of insubordination that also said "I would need to meet with her using an interpreter."

Darrell tells me that he is going to talk to Munoz and try to set up another meeting between the three of us.

I left there in stunned silence. I kept on thinking about the unopened notebook.

Once again I went to my computer and spent time pulling up and forwarding all of these emails Darrell Harrison asked for. I sent every single email he asked for.

I actually had to send a screenshot of one email. It was an email that I started on in response to the wrong information I got about being able to reevaluate Smith the following semester even if I gave her a 3.5 for her evaluation.

I explained to Darrell that I needed to send a picture of that email I started on instead of forwarding that email because it was saved as a draft and would show the time stamp on the email. It was a very important email that really showed I was so tense about communicating with Munoz that I felt I couldn't send her that email.

I sent or forwarded four different emails to Darrell. And I wait... and I wait.... And he doesn't reply to any of these emails.

I email Darrell Harrison yet once again asking if he is going to be able to set up another mediated meeting with Munoz and myself.

I still haven't been able to talk to Munoz in the least way about my communication needs. I still hadn't been able to talk to her about her utterly insulting and inequitable order to meet with her using an interpreter.

I don't get a response from Darrell Harrison at all. Not a single response to any of the emails I sent.

I'm in disbelief. Nobody is communicating with me at all.

Chapter 97

I email Setzer, President Barnes, Leedham and Mahler and explain that Munoz walked out of our meeting in less than fifteen minutes. I explain that I still haven't been able to talk to her about my communication needs.

Pat Setzer emails me back and tells me to move on. I don't remember his exact words. I email Pat and the others back and tell him that I need to be able to talk about my communication needs as a Deaf person. And Setzer just tells me the same thing again to just move on.

Chapter 98

Over the next two months, I only got two or three curt emails from Munoz about work related matters. The semester ends. I don't know what to think at all.

In the time, the Fall semester of 2018, Munoz shows me her true side again when she knows nobody else's around.

One afternoon I needed to walk to the top floor of the B Building using the exterior stairs right by the elevator. This was sometime in the late fall, November probably. I went up the stairs to the top floor and as I almost got to the top floor, I saw that Munoz was walking towards the entrance to the Art Department.

And I was pretty scared. I really was. Because it was one of those things I just didn't know how to handle. I was just walking up the stairs and I sort of come to a stop and look at her and I make eye contact. I know all of the nervousness and fear I was harboring was apparent on my face. The last time I'd seen her was at the mediated meeting with Harrison, other than at the October ILAT meeting, possibly and I truly did not know what to expect.

When she sees me, her face contorts into a hateful and vindictive look of fury. She gave me a such utterly hateful look. And then she just walks into the B building.

And I'm just standing there in disbelief. There was no mistaking the expression of nervousness and fear on my face. I was so utterly taken aback at the look of unmistakable hate and fury on her face.

Chapter 99

The Fall semester of 2018 ends with us only having very limited and curt email exchanges.

That was it. No more genuine, courteous or professional communication. No attempt to build the least semblance of a successful relationship. Munoz was perfectly fine with the way things were.

Chapter 100

I ask and ask the administration again for another mediated meeting to talk about my communication needs as a Deaf person and my professional needs as the Chair of the ASL Department. And Setzer again tells me to move on.

I was reported for refusing to meet with Munoz. And now she was absolutely refusing to meet with me.

I tried to stay positive. I told myself that at least she wasn't attacking me any more and that was an improvement over the last few months. I could live with the curt emails. At least she wasn't gaslighting me any more.

Chapter 101

The Spring semester of 2019 arrives. It's the first Monday of January and we're scheduled to attend our first ILAT Meeting.

What happened at the ILAT meeting was the most despicable and dehumanizing thing anyone has ever done to me in my life as a Deaf person. That experience that I am going to share with you... completely blew how Munoz walked away from me when I tried to talk to her for a short time using my phone totally out of the water.

I arrive at this very important once a month meeting that all of the Department Chairs and Deans at Cuyamaca attend that the college president and all kinds of other important people also show up at from time to time. I sit down at my usual spot in the semi circle of Cuyamaca's most important people on the Eastern side of the room.

I find out that it appears as if my interpreters are going to be late. Perfectly fine with me. I can sit there idly and contentedly until they arrive.

The meeting's about to start. VPI Setzer makes eye contact with me and I indicate that it's fine that my interpreters aren't present.

And I'm just sitting there looking around the room idly and passively, just passing the time until my interpreters show up.

And then someone taps me on my left shoulder and I look around and then up in surprise.

It was Munoz standing over me while I was seated.

Munoz is looming over me. Her eyes were glistening brightly and she had an utterly sad and sympathetic look on her face. Her face was brimming with what could only be described as a human like look of absolute sympathy.

Munoz had... apparently decided that she would walk over and show that she was concerned about my missing interpreters.

My stomach turned so violently. I have never had a feeling like that in my stomach before.

Munoz just looms over me looking at me sadly. She doesn't even say anything. She just stands over me looking down at me with her lips glistening wetly as if she had started to salivate with joy at being able to catch me in that moment and being able to loom over me and act like she was this concerned, caring and humane person in front of all of the 35+ Deans and Chairs at Cuyamaca College.

And then she walks back to her seat.

I sat there in silence, my stomach turning and heaving violently. I looked around the room. I saw Rachel Jacob-Almeida sitting straight across from me acting completely bright and focused on the speaker of the meeting as if she hadn't noticed anything amiss.

Rachel Jacob Almeida clearly saw the whole thing. She couldn't have missed it. When someone stands up in the room, everyone takes notice.

My interpreters arrived two or three minutes later. I thought about standing up and saying something about how despicable, dehumanizing, and intentionally abusive it was to do something like that.

I'd been asking for months to talk about my communication needs and she had steadfastly refused to give me the opportunity to once talk to her in a thoughtful and engaged way.

And now she was standing over me, appearing concerned and sympathetic in front of more than 35 other chairs, deans and administrators.

I sat there throughout the whole meeting in stunned silence feeling like I needed to throw up. I've never had that feeling in my entire life, truly.

I texted Tania Jabour after the meeting and told her about what Munoz had done. I told her exactly how I felt. I said that it was the most dehumanizing thing anyone had ever intentionally done to me.

I've been bullied and made fun of throughout my entire life. But it's easy to disregard that because these people never held any power over me. I could always extricate myself from these situations.

But this was turning into an abusive and utterly vindictive situation. Munoz was truly thriving on creating these nasty and incisive little disruptions that always felt like a complete slap in the face.

Tania Jabour and I texted back and forth. I don't know if Tania truly got or understood what I was saying. I didn't really want to text her too much about it. Because there was a point where I'd been texting her constantly about everything Munoz was doing to me until she sort of conveyed that she really needed me to stop doing that.

There was a time when I was talking to Tania so much about these attacks, Tania actually asked me if I wanted her to talk to Munoz about it. And I could only stare into her deep and soulful eyes and think about how I could never subject her to that same kind of abuse and violence Munoz was directing at me. It felt like I was talking to Princess Leia and having her approach Jabba The Hutt, this inhumane and grotesque person who enjoyed retaliating with mindless abuse and violence.

That was my experience with Munoz. I really was beginning to see her as an abusive and violent person.

Tania is an amazing person, kind and thoughtful and it felt like she really wanted to help. And it just got a point where I was telling her too much about what was happening. That was supposed to be Setzer, Barnes, Mahler and Leedham and Dr. Miles' job. To listen thoughtfully to what I was sharing. They were supposed to make these relentless attacks and disruptions stop.

Once again I emailed Setzer, President Barnes, Leedham, and Mahler about what happened.

I told them that it was the most dehumanizing thing anyone had ever done to me. For Munoz to absolutely refuse to give me the chance to have a thoughtful conversation with her about communication and for her to now act like she was sympathetic about my communication needs by looming over me and acting like she was genuinely touched and sympathetic about my missing interpreters in front of so many other people. It was just another nasty, insulting and debasing attack.

And Pat once again tells me to just move on.

And now I'm in disbelief. And it was one of those things where I was sinking deeper and deeper into my mental health problems and I guess I just decided to fool myself and tell myself that maybe since these attacks had stopped for two months, that maybe this was just an isolated event and that Munoz would actually just continue sending me these curt emails and we would have the space we needed to just coexist and do our jobs successfully.

But that's not what happened. Munoz starts attacking me again relentlessly throughout the entire semester by doing all of these nasty little things to gaslight me and make communication as difficult, hateful and disruptive as possible.

Constant gaslighting. Constantly refusing to answer my questions. Constantly flipping around the emails I would send to her. She would constantly give me a nasty order or directive to respond to and simultaneously refuse to answer my questions at the same time. Making constant decisions on matters that affected the ASL Department instead of checking with me in a professional and courteous manner.

She would constantly send me nasty and insulting emails. Every time I tried to talk to her in a thoughtful way she would find a way to dismiss or completely shut me down. She would find ways to belittle or insult me constantly.

I started emailing Setzer and Barnes repeatedly. I sent many emails to Mahler too. But nothing changed. These attacks were utterly relentless.

She started to send Dalea Kanno over to my office constantly to check on me during my office hours. That was just another way of letting me know she was policing every single thing I was doing at Cuyamaca.

There were endless disruptions. My work was starting to pile up between the constant orders and directives she was giving me and all of the constant refusals to provide me with the information I needed to complete so many of the administrative aspects that accompanied being the Chair of the ASL Department.

And I tried to handle all of this privately and silently. I never said anything about it to any of the other ASL Instructors. I never said anything to the other Chairs. I never said anything to the other Deans.

I never wanted to draw them into the matter. It wouldn't have done anyone any good. The only person I talked to about it was Tania Jabour.

I finally decided I needed to talk to someone else about it and I finally approached Mary Graham about it. Mary was someone who had been at Cuyamaca for many years. I felt like she had a very good understanding of how things worked at Cuyamaca and that I could get the support I needed from her to make these attacks stop.

So I explain what's been happening with Munoz to Mary Graham. Graham suggests that I write a long and thoughtful email to Munoz explaining how I've been feeling about our communication issues and what I needed from her in terms of communicating effectively. Graham says she would help me develop the best possible letter.

So I write a long email draft and send it to Graham. She makes some suggestions. I include her suggestions and recommended edits. And we go back and forth. And one thing I remember Graham pointing out very specifically was that I should not want to “threaten to take legal action” which was what I really was starting to wonder if I would need to do because Munoz was absolutely refusing to even indicate she was listening in the least way every time I tried to talk to her about my communication needs as a Deaf person.

After probably a week and half or two weeks of going back and forth with Graham on this letter I finally send the letter to Munoz.

And you know what Munoz does. She refuses to reply to my email. I wait and wait... and finally ask her about it and she just refuses to acknowledge anything I’ve said at all. She just continues to refuse to meet with me. Continues to refuse to acknowledge anything I try to tell her I need from her in terms of communication and supporting the ASL Department.

I tell Mary about this, about how Munoz is refusing to respond to my letter... but Mary Graham just sort of fades away from the situation. That was the end of Graham’s involvement. And once again, I feel increasingly alone and isolated.

Chapter 102

I was becoming increasingly isolated. I really was.

Every single time I tried to email Munoz about something I needed to do or wanted to do for the ASL Department, I would receive an absolutely nasty and hateful response that would completely shut me down.

I was starting to really, really hate communicating with her because every single email or response to an email I would send her would result in some form of gaslighting. She would do the exact same things again over again.

She would refuse to answer my questions, make some kind of belittling, dismissive or insulting comment or give me a nasty and belittling order telling me to do this or that in a really insulting way. It was relentless.

There were so many times when I would have to email Munoz in response to some kind of decision she would make that directly impacted the ASL Department without consulting with me on the matter in a professionally courteous way to receive the input from me that was absolutely needed to make the most thoughtful and knowledgeable decision.

She would completely exclude me from providing any kind of essential input she really needed to have as a hearing person without any knowledge of Deaf people or ASL because these matters would impact the ASL Department in so many ways, even with matters that used to be directly within my purview and responsibility and I would tell her, “I’m confused. I believe that

was supposed to be my responsibility.” And she would send me a totally flippant or dismissive remark and act completely oblivious to the intentional disruption she created. And then she would find a way to turn it into a nasty argument. I told her so many times, “I’m confused about how to communicate with you.”

It's like she would sit there in her office thinking... “You stupid, stupid Deaf boy. How dare you talk to Pat and tell him we were having communication problems.”

“You stupid, stupid Deaf boy. You’re going to learn that I am *kind*.” *Slap*.

“How dare you tell Pat that we were having communication problems. How dare you.” *Slap*.

“You’re going to learn, you stupid, stupid Deaf boy. You are going to learn.” *Slap*.

Every single form of communication with her felt like she was trying to incite some kind of nasty and hateful reaction.

Munoz never once consulted with me on anything that we were supposed to work on for the ASL Department.

This is a hearing person that did not have the tiniest bit of knowledge or interest in learning about Deaf people or ASL and she was constantly making decisions without checking with me and then I would need to speak up and stand up for the ASL Department and then she would send me such a nasty and hateful response.

After a while it felt like I was including Pat Setzer in every single email I sent to Munoz because that was the only way I would get a halfway professional or semi-courteous response.

Chapter 103

Spring semester of 2019.

At some point in the Spring semester of 2019 I believe, she started to stop including me in emails that she was sending to the other department members.

I don’t remember exactly what the first time was or why, but someone emailed me to let me know about something that Munoz really should have included me in. I let it pass because it was the first time and could just have been a mistake or oversight.

Then there was this curriculum related matter I’d worked on for over a month. It was an extensive and time consuming matter. I sent it to Munoz for final review on a Wednesday or Thursday.

I remember that matter very clearly because I went to California State University at Long Beach for an amazing symposium on Mexican Sign Language or Lengua de Senas Mexicana use and signed or family style communication in the Barrio with two colleagues the next day. It was a Friday.

I drove up there with Peggy Lott at the University of California at San Diego and Deniz Ilkbasaryan who was a doctoral candidate at UCSD. It was an amazing day. I made several new friends, met new colleagues. Some of the speakers shared their raw and authentic experiences about growing up Deaf in the Barrio. It was incredible having these people share all of this fascinating insight into their lives and experiences. We learned many new LSM signs and created many new friendships that day.

On the drive back to San Diego, Deniz and I talked almost all of the way about creating a literacy event for both Deaf and hearing families interested in learning sign language to use with their children that we would host at Cuyamaca College.

Deniz was full of energy and excited about what she could do to connect me to the people she knew at UCSD that she thought would be perfect partners and contributors to the event. It was an absolutely amazing day. I felt great about the literacy event. That was what I'd wanted to bring to Cuyamaca for quite some time, and it felt like I had the support and collaboration I needed from community partners to make it happen.

When I got home late that evening I checked my email.

I was utterly confused to see an email from Julie Kahler that included Tania Jabour and Munoz informing me that Munoz had forwarded my curriculum related work to them. Munoz told them to go ahead and process my work.

I was not included in that email. Julie Kahler emailed me to bring that to my attention.

Once again... I read Julie Kahler's email and my stomach started to sink. I couldn't believe I'd worked on that extensive curriculum matter for over a month, maybe two months without any input or involvement from Munoz at all and the only thing it meant to her was that she could use it to slap me in the face and create yet another antagonizing disruption.

Slap. "You stupid, stupid Deaf boy. You think I've forgotten how you talked to Pat and told him you were having communication problems with me?" *Slap.*

It was a Friday. Nothing was supposed to happen on a Friday based on what Munoz said at the mediated meeting with Darrell Harrison. Munoz clearly said she didn't work on Fridays.

And here she was, yet once again, finding ways to treat me in the most discourteous, belittling and dehumanizing way in front of other Cuyamaca College employees and colleagues.

I'd spent so much time working on that curriculum related matter and Munoz hadn't done anything at all. She hadn't contributed a single thing. And here she was, seizing my work from me and passing it onto other people as if I wasn't a part of it at all just as a way to belittle me and treat me in the most dismissive manner.

I sent a stunned response to Kahler that also included Jabour and Munoz saying how surprised I was at seeing that Munoz was working on a Friday. That was the nicest thing I could think of to say.

Munoz emails me back privately and says, "Dorian, I work every Friday." And that was it. Once again, she blithely found a way to do something utterly grotesque and vindictive in the most dismissive, disruptive and hateful way.

Chapter 104

Right around that same time in the Spring semester, we usually started to plan for one of Cuyamaca's biggest yearly events that would draw a massive crowd to the college. It was the Spring Garden event and it was a very important event for every department at the college. Every department was strongly encouraged to participate and represent their department at the Spring Garden event.

I never got an email about the Spring Garden event. I knew we were approaching the time we usually started planning for the event. I was becoming increasingly confused. Once again, I had to reach out to different people to ask about the event. I emailed Gwen Nix in the President's Office to ask about it. Nix explained that the Deans were supposed to share this information with the Chairs.

Slap. "You stupid, stupid boy. How dare you talk to Pat about our communication problems. You're going to learn. You will learn."

I emailed Taylor Smith about it and asked if he could forward the email that the other department chairs got from Munoz about the spring garden event.

Taylor forwarded the email he got from Munoz. And I said to Taylor Smith, "I wonder why I wasn't included in that email."

Taylor was noncommittal.

But Taylor... you knew exactly why I wasn't included in that email, didn't you.

Taylor... you're one of the smartest people at Cuyamaca. You're one of those precocious people, a musical genius apparently.

And Taylor... you were Setzer's right hand man.

Oh Taylor... you knew exactly what was going on.

Taylor.... Just imagine.... You made so many weepy facebook posts talking about your mental health issues.

And I was having severe mental health problems of my own at that time. And you never did anything to support me.

Oh Taylor... you precocious, precocious weepy and spineless musical genius. To think I tried to be your friend. To think I talked with you about going surfing several times.

And you never did anything to show any kind of support for me when I desperately needed support. Any kind of support would have been amazing. But no, there was nothing from you. Not the tiniest amount of professional support.

Chapter 105

I was starting to email Pat every week by that time. I was emailing Dr. Barnes almost every week too. I forwarded so many insults from Munoz to Mahler. And still, these attacks, insults and and disruptions were relentless.

I think it was during that Spring semester that my faculty evaluation was scheduled to happen. I asked repeatedly to have another Dean conduct my evaluation. I hoped that would make the other Deans aware of what was happening with Munoz.

Chapter 106

I asked repeatedly to be evaluated by a different Dean and the administration finally agrees to the request and assigns Dean Dr. Kerry Kilber-Rebman to conduct my evaluation.

Munoz sends me a blithe email saying that she knows I may have a problem with her doing my evaluation and that she's going to allow Dr. Kilber-Rebman to conduct my evaluation. As if it's not a real problem at all.

And Dr. Kerry Kilber Rebman conducts my evaluation. This is a very smart woman largely entrusted with leading Cuyamaca's tech oriented needs. I had the chance to serve on a committee led by Dr. Rebman and I've always found her to be a warm, thoughtful, kind and wonderful person.

At the time I was teaching my first online ASL class ever. This is a class I developed from scratch for the first time ever. Dr. Rebman would evaluate that class and not one of the other courses I was teaching.

I could have done a far better job on developing the class. I did not develop that class well. That was my fault. I should have done a much better job of doing so. I had also fallen behind in my professional responsibility to complete my online training. Again, that was my fault.

But really, was it entirely my fault? I wonder. I'm not too sure about that. I was being *relentlessly attacked*. I hadn't done anything to anyone at Cuyamaca at all. I'd done exactly what I was supposed to do. Instead of working on college related matters such as my courses with happiness, I was associating dread with most everything I was doing related to Cuyamaca. I really was hating going to work, or doing anything work related because I would associate work with Munoz. That was how relentlessly she was attacking me.

Chapter 107

I was hoping Dr. Rebman would find the fact that she was conducting my evaluation rather peculiar. I was hoping that maybe she would talk about it with me or even with Munoz as her colleague and try to understand why Munoz wasn't conducting my evaluation and deep down inside, I was hoping maybe Munoz would feel a twinge of embarrassment or somehow finally realize how unprofessional and disruptive she was being. She was now creating additional work for the other deans through her own incompetence. And she didn't care at all.

But nothing changed at all. Dr. Kilber Rebman never showed the least amount of curiosity about why she was conducting my evaluation instead of Munoz.

I was becoming increasingly isolated. Nobody was showing me any support at all. Even though everyone absolutely knew what was going on.

So many people knew who Munoz really was.

Chapter 108

Still, in the Spring 2019 I was determined to stay grounded. I needed to get the ASL Department back on track.

I emailed Pat and Dr. Rebman to discuss a significant need for the ASL Department. We truly needed a Lab Assistant that could help us develop technology based resources for our instructors and courses.

Online courses were beginning to soar in popularity. The writing on the wall was evident. We really needed to start offering more online courses. We needed to bring in a person with strong tech skills that could help us develop all kinds of tech based resources for our instructors.

Setzer clearly noticed that I did not include Munoz in that email and he sends me an outraged and scathing email telling me to include Munoz in this conversation. *He sent me a scathing email telling me to include Munoz in this communication.*

Yes, I did not include Munoz. I mean, why would I? Munoz was absolutely refusing to include me in so many forms of communication to other people in the college. She was making it very clear that she was not only not interested in communicating with me in any kind of genuine, helpful or supportive ways she was going to continue to find ways to relentlessly attack me.

And I needed to show that this was happening to the Cuyamaca Administration.

The email I got from Setzer was so furious, so scathing.

Again, I tell Pat about how Munoz was refusing to include me in so many emails as a way of creating nasty little disruptions and belittling and demeaning me in ways that included other Cuyamaca College faculty and professionals.

And you know what Pat says and does about that. Once again, absolutely nothing. He just fades from the matter and says absolutely nothing.

Oh Pat, you're so weak, spineless and cowardly. Just imagine. You're from Pennsylvania. Amazing. You're such a weak, small minded and cowardly person. To think I put up with so many insults from you. Oh Pat, I've got so much to say about you. Keep on reading, Pat.

Chapter 109

By that time I was asking repeatedly for a meeting with Munoz. I was emailing Barnes, Setzer, Leedham and Mahler almost weekly asking for a meeting with Munoz.

And guess what? They keep on giving me the run around. They refuse to call for a meeting. They're just letting Munoz attack me even though I kept on forwarding and sending examples of Munoz's insulting and disruptive emails and actions. Jim Mahler would always reply to my emails almost immediately. Unless it was about one of Munoz's insults or unprofessional behaviors or actions, and then he would not respond.

Chapter 110

Sometime in the Spring of 2019. I was starting to wonder why I hadn't received any kind of communication from the Dean's office asking if the ASL Department would like to offer a summer course. This was starting to feel like a repeat of the previous year.

I fully understood that it was not a given that we would be able to offer a summer course or more, but we always got an email from the Dean's office asking about our interest in offering any number of Summer courses so we could explain our position on the matter and why it would be important for the department and our students to be able to offer these courses.

At the time it was absolutely imperative that we were able to offer a Summer time course. We needed to maintain solid enrollment numbers throughout our higher level ASL courses and offering one or two summer classes would mean more students would be able to sign up for our higher level courses throughout the year. This would keep our program healthy and our enrollment numbers solid throughout all of our ASL courses.

We had finally added an Associate of Arts Degree that our ASL students could earn which was huge for us. Students were excited about it and many expressed interest in earning an AA degree in ASL.

Not only that, the previous year our summer courses were filled to capacity and that was great for the college. They would make money off the course instead of just breaking even or losing money. It was really important for our ASL program that we were able to do so again in the summer of 2019. At minimum, I wanted to be able to submit a request and explain why it was important for us to have at least one or two Summer time courses.

So I email Munoz and ask if she could give me an idea of when I would need to submit my request for offering Summer time courses. It was a very professional and courteous request. And she just refuses to answer my email. I email again. And then I email again. It's getting close to the end of the semester. It was really late in the semester to start adding courses to the summer time schedule.

And then I get this nasty and hateful response after the third or fourth email I've sent over the course of two or three weeks telling me that I could offer a course and to *immediately* get her the information about the course and who would teach the course.

That was one of the things she always did. She would refuse to answer my emails in a genuine and timely manner. But whenever she needed something from me she would tell me to do it *immediately in the nastiest way possible*. It would never be a thoughtful and courteous request that would clearly explain the urgency of the matter. It would be a dismissive and insulting email that would just order me to do something *immediately*.

And once again, I scramble to get the information she has asked for to her. And I ask Brad Cohen to teach one of the courses. I really was in such a frightened rush to get this information to her I had to rush Brad through it.

Brad was glad that I asked him to teach one of the courses and he immediately agreed to the proposed schedule for his course. And then the next day he got back to me and said he realized there was a bit of a problem with the schedule for his course and asked me if I could change the schedule.

And that was the first time I ever shared that I was having problems with Munoz with anyone else in the ASL Department. I told Brad, "No, honestly... I really would prefer not to have to ask Munoz to make this change..."

Brad looked at me and he understood there was something very wrong. He didn't know how seriously wrong things were, but he clearly understood I was not in the position to ask for the change and he said he would be able to make the schedule work.

That semester was so nightmarish with these relentless attacks and disruptions. Or so I thought. It was only the tip of the iceberg.

Chapter 111

My stomach was beginning to hurt every day I would go to work. I never went to work with a happy feeling any more. I was dreading every single form of communication that would come from Munoz and Dalea Kanno too, actually, because Kanno would participate in the gaslighting in the most cheerful way.

Kanno was too happy to participate in Munoz's attacks in the most oblivious way. It was like Kanno wanted to show herself to be this devoted, faithful and mindless acolyte who would absorb all of Munoz's belittling and dismissive insults adoringly and carry out all of Munoz's directives without question.

I always had a tense and pained look every time Kanno would come to my office to check on me about something completely meaningless that she could have communicated through email or dropped off in the ASL Department's mailbox.

It was starting to become very clear why Teresa Greenhalgh did not want to be the AHSS administrative assistant any more. Teresa's so smart and professional and I can only imagine how it must have drove her crazy trying to patiently and silently listen to all of Munoz's utterly stupid, demeaning and small minded comments.

There were so many times Munoz would send sort of nasty and unprofessional emails to others with phrases like, "I just want you to understand..." Or, "I just want to be clear..." And these statements would be shared in relation to the most simple and utterly clear things that nobody would have any problems understanding.

It was like Munoz needed to say these things to demean and belittle others purposefully to feel or believe that she actually was in a position of leadership and doing something meaningful.

Chapter 112

The Summer of 2019 comes around. By chance the American Sign Language Teachers' Association was going to have their biannual national conference in San Diego that Summer and so many of us in the San Diego ASL community were completely excited about attending the conference.

It really was a completely amazing experience being able to attend the conference for the first time and have all kinds of discussions with so many other colleagues in the ASL field.

The vast majority of the presentations and meetings involved some sort of thought or discussion about what to do with the increasingly huge shift to online instruction. There was a strong demand and preference for online courses and this demand was really starting to grow exponentially. This was profound and would require us to make many pedagogical shifts in our instruction to meet this demand and to compete with the other colleges that had well established online ASL programs. This was something I spent the majority of my time at the conference thinking about.

Chapter 113

One of my more enjoyable and interesting experiences at the ASLTA conference consisted of hosting a mini workshop myself with one of my colleagues I happened to meet in the most random way literally right in front of my grandparents' home in Pennsylvania when we both were teenagers. She was working at McDonalds as a cashier and I only ate at McDonalds very occasionally but by chance I went in for a meal once while my family was visiting. And thirty years later we now were both teaching ASL. So this friend and I started talking. One thing led to another and we decided to host a mini workshop on some of the things we encountered and needed to handle as chairs and coordinators of our programs.

It was an absolutely wonderful experience. The conference was in a hotel overlooking beautiful San Diego Bay. We ate lunch outside every day in the sun in wonderful weather with brisk and cool breezes blowing in from the ocean and bay. People constantly remarked about how beautiful and amazing San Diego was.

I had the chance to have a really great conversation with the keynote speaker at the conference, Dr. Octavian Robinson. We sat there one evening talking for more than an hour and a half about not only the ASL teaching field but all kinds of life related things.

But all good things end at some time. The conference and Summer passed and it was time to resume teaching at Cuyamaca.

Chapter 114

Fall of 2019. My endless emails to Setzer, Barnes, Leedham and Barnes about meeting with Munoz to discuss my communication needs were not going anywhere.

Munoz was still communicating with me in the most nasty and despicable way.

I kept on saying she was absolutely refusing to give me any indication she was listening to what I was trying to tell her about my communication needs and the impact her attacks were having on me. She was absolutely refusing to show any genuine interest in meeting with me.

But... still... at the start of every semester during Professional Development week, Munoz would find a way to approach me and act like she was completely cheerful and excited to see me.

She would gaslight me every single time I went to one of the college wide or division meetings by approaching me in person and she would force these in person and face to face interactions to happen.

The same thing would happen. She would walk up to me in front of everyone else or call on me at the division meeting in front of everyone else and talk to me with her eyes shining brightly and her lips wet as if she had an involuntary reaction to the joy of being able to abuse me in person. It really did seem like she would start salivating uncontrollably every time she had the chance to treat me in some kind of demeaning or dehumanizing way.

I still continued to attend the division meetings and she would gaslight me every single time. This had happened in some way at every single Professional Week event for three semesters.

At a faculty wide meeting during the Fall 2019 Professional Week, as I walked out of the meeting, someone runs up to me and taps me on the shoulder. And I turn around and it's Munoz. Her eyes are glistening and she's beaming and starting to salivate in an overjoyed way.

And my stomach turns violently. Munoz starts fumbling around with her phone, acting in that confused, weak and mentally retarded way again.

I could only stand there silently, wanting to just walk away and extricate myself from the situation, knowing that she's gaslighting me, knowing that she seeing that expression of fear and discomfort on my face and she's absolutely thriving from being able to attack me in that way. She fumbles around with her phone and finally types something up that's completely meaningless. It was so meaningless. I don't even remember what it was.

And I just walk away as fast as I can after she shows me what she has typed up. I don't remember what it was. It was something utterly meaningless. It was just another way to belittle me and treat me in the most abusive and dehumanizing way she could think of. She clearly saw the effect these interactions were having on me.

I continue to ask the administration for a meeting. The Fall 2019 semester starts and I'd been asking for a meeting with Munoz for several months to discuss my communication needs.

Everything, and I mean absolutely every single thing I tried to communicate with Munoz directly was being dismissed in the most insulting way possible.

Finally in October, the administration agrees that we will all meet.

Our meeting was scheduled for Halloween day.

This time I finally prepared a written statement that ended up being 11 pages long detailing my feelings and experiences in working with Munoz.

Cuyamaca College President Dr. Julianna Barnes, Vice President of Instruction, Patrick Setzer, Assistant Vice Chancellor Craig Leedham and American Federation Of Teachers Local 1931 President Jim Mahler and the Manager of the Arts Humanities and Social Sciences Division, Alicia Munoz were present. My interpreter for that meeting was Jennifer Austin.

Before I walk into the conference room in which we would meet, I saw Jim Mahler outside. He was waiting for me apparently.

I don't remember what he said. But I remember what he was wearing.

He had some sort of Halloween costume on. Some sort of ridiculous t-shirt that had some kind of Halloween theme on it.

And... my stomach starts sinking again. It felt like I was being set up again.

I still go into the meeting thinking that they're going to have to tell this petulant, vindictive and small minded five year old child to stop attacking the ASL Department. That's all I ever wanted. For her to communicate with me professionally and to stop attacking the ASL Department.

I couldn't have been more wrong.

I don't remember how things started, but I finally had the chance to read from my report. I read through the first page of my report. And when I got to the second page, President Barnes interrupted me.

And President Barnes started talking... and she talked... and she talked for a long time. Probably twenty or thirty minutes. Even though it was supposed to be my meeting. Even though I was supposed to finally have the chance to talk and to explain what I needed from Munoz in terms of supporting the ASL Department.

I remember two things Dr. Barnes said that stood out in particular.

The first was President Barnes clearly understood that Munoz was absolutely refusing to have any kind of meaningful discussion with me about anything, that she was very intentionally and purposefully refusing to show any indication that she was listening to me.

That was one of the things I said in my emails to Setzer and Barnes many times during the previous year, "Munoz is absolutely refusing to acknowledge anything I am trying to tell her.

This is one of the ways she continually attacks me. Because she does so many of these exact same things again over again even though I have explained how these things affect me in such a disruptive and negative way.”

President Barnes strongly and fiercely said, “You want to be heard.”

And I said, “Yes.”

Then Barnes again spoke strongly and fiercely and she said, “It ends now. It ends now.”

And that was when I finally needed to interject and ask a question and the question I asked was, “Why now?”

Up to that point, President Barnes was the only one who spoke at all. VPI Setzer sat silently staring off into space with such an odd, peculiar and detached look on his face.

Not literally. This is exactly what Setzer was doing. He had such a sullen and disinterested look in his face. I’d never, ever seen that kind of countenance on his face before. He was staring in the direction of the ceiling throughout the entire meeting.

Jim Mahler sat there indulgently beaming throughout the entire meeting.

Craig Leedham was the only person that actually displayed some semblance of seriously listening to what was being said.

But the moment I asked, “Why now?” Which was something I really needed to know, because Munoz was absolutely refusing to show any indication she was going to stop attacking me. And you know what happened. Everyone leaped forward and showed that they were actually paying attention. Everyone said at the almost exact same time, “You can’t ask that.” Not verbatim, but something to that effect.

And I stared at Barnes and told her about how there were so many times Munoz refused to respond to my emails, how she was relentlessly creating these disruptions. Even when it was about all of these truly important things that I needed to do for the ASL Department. Munoz was destroying the ASL Department.

But I didn’t get to ask the answer to that question.

President Barnes started talking and talking again and she talked... and the more she talked, the more she wore me down.

I couldn’t believe what was happening. President Barnes talked about how she understood I needed to be heard. And my voice was right there in that 11 page report I prepared. My voice was within my hands in that report waiting to be shared with Munoz and the others.

And President Barnes was still the one doing all of the talking.

Barnes completely wore me down.

And then somehow we finally start to talk about Munoz and I meeting to discuss my communication needs.

Munoz immediately gaslights me again. Munoz starts talking about the meetings with the other AHSS Department Chairs that she scheduled more than a year ago that I explained I wouldn't participate as long as these attacks continued to persist.

Munoz actually starts acting like she's mentally retarded and confused again. And she says, "I scheduled these meetings for you. These meetings were for you so we could all meet together."

And I have such an intense reaction to that I look away. My stomach's starting to really hurt again. Everyone acts like they didn't notice anything unusual about the fact that Munoz said she scheduled a meeting with the other Chairs instead of trying to talk to me privately about our very serious communication matters, as if we would really have talked about our communication problems with the other Chairs present.

Barnes talks and talks some more. And I start to completely break down. Then Barnes somehow brings the meeting to a conclusion by getting Munoz to agree to meet with me. Everyone agrees that Munoz will meet with me to discuss my communication needs.

I sit there silently with that 11 page report in front of me. I still haven't passed it out to the other people. And it was just one of those things where I was so worn down that I actually thought maybe it would just be better not to pass it out. I thought maybe Munoz would actually appreciate that I decided to withhold that report so it wouldn't be placed into her file.

I was having severe mental health issues and trying to manage my mental health issues the best way I could. I only wanted these attacks to stop so I could continue to build the ASL Department.

I sat there feeling utterly defeated. Everyone quickly left the meeting except for Jim Mahler. Mahler stayed behind.

Mahler talks to me in that indulgent and self satisfied manner he always seems to have. He tells me something about how he always dresses up for Halloween. I nod silently. And then he tells me to let him know if Munoz doesn't contact me for a meeting within a week. I nod silently again. He leaves.

I sat there silently for a little longer thinking about how President Barnes kept on saying she understood that I needed to be heard. But she talked the whole time. She never asked to see

the report I prepared for everyone at the meeting. She never got Munoz to indicate that she would stop attacking me. President Barnes spoke to me for most of the meeting.

Why? I wasn't the one attacking anyone. I was the one desperately asking for these attacks to stop.

I sat there utterly lost in thought, feeling as if the meeting really meant nothing to all of the participants. And I finally left the room.

Chapter 116

I wait a week. Munoz does not contact me to set up a meeting.

I wait another week. Munoz still does not contact me to set up a meeting.

I finally contact Mahler and just like he told me to, I explain that it's been two weeks and Munoz still hasn't contacted me to set up a meeting.

Mahler emails both of us asking about when we will be able to meet.

Munoz replies in the most hateful and vindictive way once again. She doesn't even refer to me by name, only referring to me as 'he'. The email was dripping with so much hate and anger and vindictiveness and I'm just in disbelief.

All she had to do was send me a thoughtful and professionally courteous email and I would have met with her.

I'd done so many things to show that I only wanted the chance to communicate with her in a professional and courteous way.

And I send a response that just shows how stunned I was. I didn't even know how to respond to that kind of hate and anger.

Munoz once again changes gears and pulls out the mentally retarded act and she makes an aloof, glib and completely dismissive email comment that yet once again dictated how I was supposed to communicate with her.

She wrote in reference to us meeting in person, "As long as I don't have to use my phone to type out messages."

"As long as I don't have to use my phone to type out messages."

And I was filled with such a terrible feeling at that time. I can't describe that feeling. It wasn't rage. It was such a terrible sadness of sorts. Because this was such an utterly small minded,

hateful and vindictive person that had been given the position of Dean and it meant nothing to her at all. Communicating with me in a thoughtful way and supporting the ASL Department meant nothing to her at all.

Munoz was showing herself to be exactly who I thought she was. An absolutely grotesque and small minded person that truly didn't care about doing the tiniest thing about working with me to support the students we were supposed to be serving.

She truly didn't care about showing that she was capable of communicating with Deaf people in a thoughtful and courteous way. This is the person she absolutely prided herself on being.

Munoz was showing me that she absolutely coveted the power that comes with being in control of people as a manager. She didn't care about being an intelligent, thoughtful and empathetic Dean. She wanted to be a manager in the most small minded way.

She only cared about wielding the power entrusted to her by Cuyamaca and Mahler and being able to control people in the smallest and most crude ways.

Once I read that comment about how she wasn't going to use her phone to communicate with me... and you know... Deaf people including myself use our phones to communicate with hearing people all of the time. Deaf people are usually so thankful and appreciative when hearing people have the patience and kindness to communicate with us in some kind of thoughtful way, regardless of whether it is using their phone, trying to speak in a clear way or anything else they may need to do including using pen and paper to write out what they might need to say or explain. I just didn't know what to say or do. We don't meet at all. Mahler and Munoz were completely fine with this.

It was so clear Munoz never intended to meet with me for the purpose of having any kind of genuine discussion with me.

I don't remember what happened for the rest of that Fall semester of 2019. I was having such serious mental health problems at that time. I really was sinking into a deep depression and state of confusion.

I was in disbelief *everyone at Cuyamaca* was apparently condoning Munoz's behavior.

Mahler, Barnes, Setzer and Leedham never once inquired to ask if we were able to meet and resolve our communication problems.

Chapter 117

It was such a dark and terrible place to be. This person was destroying the ASL Program at Cuyamaca. This person was attacking me and creating disruptions of all kinds. And this was

being explicitly condoned by the people that were supposed to keep this malevolent and mindless five year old child in line. All of these people knew exactly who Munoz was.

You know how I know?

Because at that time I was starting to reach out to more and more people, just trying to talk to them and get them to understand what and who I was dealing with.

And every time I would talk to someone and bring up Munoz, every single person would sort of become quiet... and they would mention something off hand about how she was a bully.

Not one single person said anything good about her. Not a single person said, "Oh she's great."

Every single person sort of quietly said, "She's a bully. She attacks people."

Apparently this was commonplace knowledge at Cuyamaca. That Munoz would bully other people at Cuyamaca in these crude and insulting ways. She would bully others in nasty and grotesque ways knowing that Jim Mahler was completely supporting her and encouraging her to cultivate that persona.

Nobody wanted to be attacked by this grotesque person and lose the support of AFT 1931.

Nobody told me the truth about Munoz.

Just think, Pat Setzer... teacher of the year... you lied to me. You never told me the truth about Munoz.

All you had to do was tell me in a honest and straightforward way, "Alicia is a grotesque bully. But she serves a purpose. She's the union's bully. Just let her feel like she's belittling you. That's all you have to do. Don't make things any bigger than they are. Just focus on developing the ASL Program."

But Pat, you didn't tell me that. You lied to me, Pat. You made it sound like Munoz was someone truly capable of having a thoughtful and meaningful discussion with. She isn't. This is a terrible, hateful and evil person.

And Pat, you know... I don't know what happened to you. I think you were a genuine person at one point. But you lost touch with yourself. You lost what it meant to be a grounded, genuine and hard working person from Pennsylvania. You became a self serving narcissist just like Munoz, Mahler and so many of the other people at Cuyamaca are.

Oh Pat, you lied to me. And then you told me, "The trust is gone." What trust, Pat? There never was any trust. I never wanted this to become bigger than it ever had to be. And this grotesque person decided it was utterly beneath her to reach out to me in any kind of genuine and

meaningful way to resolve the problems we were clearly having. And this was perfectly fine with you, Pat.

Chapter 118

The Fall Semester of 2019 ends and the Spring Semester of 2020 comes around.

Once again, it's time for another Professional Development week experience at Cuyamaca College that will lead to the start of the Spring Semester.

Once again, against my better judgement I decide to go to the AHSS Division meeting. Just because I wanted to stay connected to the other chairs and faculty members in my division.

So I walk into the meeting which was in one of our computer labs. I turn to my right and sign in at the back of the room and then I turn forward to find a seat.

And Munoz is beaming brightly at me and she says, "Dorian, hurry up, find a seat." This was signed to me through my interpreter while I was still walking to my seat.

And once again... my stomach sinks. And instead of walking right out of the room right then and there as I should have, I went to find a seat near my interpreters.

And then Munoz starts talking about this inconsequential stuff. And then she talks about absences and actually jokes that she doesn't want to know anything about it if any of the instructors need to have an "unreported absence" in which an instructor covers for another instructor, the exact same thing I asked Smith to do a year earlier. Munoz then she talks briefly to one or two people in the room and then... she shifts her focus to me.

And you know what Munoz does. She stares at me and she decides to start talking about how I have... three phones in my office.

For some reason I've had three phones in my office for six years. Actual voice phones that I've never needed to use.

I only use a videophone. I have that connected to a TV monitor so that I can sign to other Deaf people or sign to an interpreter. I had no use for those voice phones, couldn't use them to save my life if needed, other than to dial 911 and hope they would be able to track the call to my office if an emergency ever came up. They'd just been sitting in my office unused for six years.

And I respond with a "Yes, that's right." And I'm starting to have such a silent, such a dark and deep look on my face. Because I know what's coming. I know I'm being gaslighted yet once again in front of 30 plus faculty members present at the meeting.

Munoz looks at me brightly. And instead of moving onto the next person quickly as she had done with everyone else in the room, the expression on her face starts to change and then she starts acting confused. And the mentally retarded five year old child she was so good at transforming herself into appeared.

Munoz looks at me with a confused look on her face and then she starts questioning me about these phones, as if it was the most amazing thing that I would have three phones in my office.

She questions me repeatedly while I sit there silently, trying to remain professional and courteous.

And then somehow in the blink of an eye, she transforms back into the exact same glib, crude, insulting and grotesque person that she really is. She looks away to the rest of the audience and makes a fast joke about something that I didn't even understand at all.

Everyone starts laughing. Even my interpreters, one of them was Marquette Laquey, starts laughing. This was how out of touch Laquey was with what I was experiencing at the time.

I look to my left and see Rachel Jacob Almeida and Taylor Smith seated in the row directly adjacent to myself and they're laughing as strongly and heartily as everyone else. These two people knew exactly what was happening and they didn't care.

Munoz doesn't even look in my direction again to see if I'm laughing with everyone else. I was sitting there silently, the only person in the entire room that was not laughing. I didn't even have the least hint of a smile on my face.

I wanted to raise my hand and say, "Does it make you feel good knowing I see you as a violent and abusive person." I wanted to warn everyone and say, "Don't expect to have any kind of meaningful communication with this person or she will attack you relentlessly in the most dehumanizing way."

And then Moriah Gonzalez-Meek... who is one of Cuyamaca College's equity and social justice warriors, someone who preaches to people about social justice all of the time. And I mean *all of the time*. You know what she did? She decides to appropriate the Deaf experience and mock American Sign Language even though she has never shown any kind of genuine interest in learning about ASL or Deaf people.

My interpreter, Marquette Laquey, waves to me while I was facing the front of the room. And Laquey says, "Look behind you." And I just knew, I just knew I did not want to look behind me.

Because there was absolutely no reason to look behind me. Nobody in the room knew sign language except for my interpreters and they were both seated in front of me.

And I sort of don't even turn around to look behind me. But apparently this person was insistently waving to or speaking to my interpreters and asking me to look at her.

So I finally turn around and look... and you know what I saw? It was Moriah Gonzalez-Meek making an absolute mockery and caricature of ASL. She was pantomiming someone picking up a phone and answering it. An actual phone as a hearing person would hold it up to their ear and mouth. And it was just such an utterly crude, classless and discourteous caricature and mockery of Deaf person.

This person Gonzalez-Meek preaches and preaches about social justice and equity all of the time. We served on the same committee for a semester. I tried to support everything she proposed including a fairly stupid suggestion to start having students sign a pledge of some sort. Pledges had been around for so long they'd come into and fell out of vogue several times and everyone else in the meeting was sort of noncommittal but we all were sort of thinking the same thing. Two or three meetings later someone finally suggests that pledges were fairly antiquated and not very effective.

Moriah Gonzalez-Meek is a person that truly has zero respect for Deaf people or any kind of interest in understanding or standing up for social justice for deaf people.

I sat there silently for the remainder of meeting with my stomach hurting in the most intense way instead of walking out as I should have.

My mental health was eroding rapidly.

Chapter 119

My mental health continued to erode rapidly in the following days and weeks.

Munoz was still attacking me in all of these utterly relentless ways. She was still gaslighting me relentlessly through refusing to respond to any of my emails in a straightforward manner.

She was still flipping things around every time I tried to communicate with her professionally. Every time I emailed her with something I needed to know or run past her, she would continue to refuse to answer my questions. I would only receive a nasty and dismissive order to do something and yet once again, I would have to email her again and again to finally and hopefully get the answer I needed to carry out some kind of ASL Department function.

She was relentlessly destroying the ASL Department and my health.

I finally had to ask other people for help.

Chapter 120

I didn't know who to ask for help. President Barnes, VPI Setzer and AFT Local 1931 President Mahler had made it abundantly clear they gave Munoz carte blanche to continue these attacks.

I decided to ask the other members of the AHSS if they were being attacked too.

I did not hide this attempt to ask for help at all.

Chapter

At the time I was finally starting to realize and understand that Munoz was an abusive narcissistic and a pathological liar.

Everything I was starting to read about narcissists and narcissism pointed to Munoz being someone who was utterly disinterested in being a genuine, thoughtful and engaged leader. This was a person who had been utterly disinterested in supporting the ASL Department until I indicated we were having communication problems. And then she threw herself completely into destroying the ASL Department.

This person truly was demonstrating all of the tendencies of a raging, violent and abusive narcissistic. Someone who chose to hurt people instead of showing the least bit of genuine kindness or interest in resolving what could have been such a tiny and small matter.

I shared my 11 page report that President Barnes was not interested in reviewing at our meeting in October with a small number of the AHSS faculty and some of the Deans. I wanted to know if she was treating other people in a similar way. This was my right. I had the right to understand why this was happening. Her actions were completely destroying the ASL Department.

I did not use the email BCC feature to contact the people I sent my report to. I never wanted to hide anything. I only wanted to have an open and genuine discussion with the other faculty members and to see if the other people may be able to step in and give Munoz the support she so desperately needed to set her raging and violent tendencies aside and lead in a thoughtful, genuine, empathetic and rational way.

But the Cuyamaca administration apparently sent an immediate response to everyone I emailed that did not include me which told them in no uncertain terms that they were not to respond to my email.

I actually got one response from one of the faculty members responsible for teaching about the long time presence of Kumeyaay Native American presence in the Cuyamaca Mountains and lands that Cuyamaca College was now situated on saying he was not aware of that side of Munoz.

Chapter 121

I had such a severe mental health breakdown, or so I thought after I got a scathing email from Setzer telling me that I was not to contact Munoz and that I was being reported for insubordination or something along these lines.

This was when I had a severe mental health breakdown.

I checked myself into Kaiser for a mental health evaluation. I was put on medical leave from work for a week.

The administration continued to send me nasty emails ordering me to come in for a Human Resources meeting to discuss disciplinary actions.

I was placed on medical leave for a second week by the order of another Doctor.

The Cuyamaca administration continued to order me to come in for a meeting.

I sent several emails to the administration and Mahler explaining exactly why I had to do what I did regarding sending that email to the other faculty members to ask if Munoz was abusing them too.

Jim Mahler had some kind of legal counsel employed by AFT 1931 contact me. This person makes sure to explain that she is not a lawyer per se but that she is legal counsel. And again I find myself exhausted writing many emails explaining why I did what I did in my plea for help.

I specifically pointed to how Munoz continued to belittle and find ways to insult my communication needs and the communication needs of Deaf people everywhere in the most dehumanizing ways. I explained how Deaf people have to type things out on their phones all of the time to communicate with hearing people and for Munoz to mock and make fun of that in the most dismissive and oblivious way was just a way for her to be as grotesque and insulting as she could be.

The administration continues to send me nasty emails and order me to come in for a disciplinary meeting.

I go on medical leave for a third week.

My mental health was being destroyed. I didn't realize it but I hadn't had a real breakdown yet.

The administration continues to order me to come in for a disciplinary meeting.

My doctor evaluates me and agrees that I should go on leave. I forgot for how long exactly. I think it was for four weeks before I would need to be reevaluated to see if I was fit and able to return to work.

The administration was relentless in sending these nasty emails and ordering me to come in for that disciplinary meeting.

I tell them that I will not be able to come in, that I will be on medical leave.

Chapter 122

I email Dr. Barnes, Mahler, Setzer, and Leedham several times explaining everything I'd gone through in all of these repeated attacks. None of what I said or shared mattered to any of them.

It became very clear to me that the entire Cuyamaca administration decided I was wrong for trying to stand up for Deaf people everywhere. That I was wrong for asking for respectful, professional and courteous communication from Munoz. That I was wrong for not allowing the ASL Department to be destroyed.

Cuyamaca was making it very clear that Deaf people did not matter in the least way. That the ASL Department and the numerous students we served each semester did not matter. That Munoz was perfectly within her rights to be as abusive and dehumanizing to others as she wanted to be.

Chapter 123

I was sinking deeper and deeper into my mental health abyss.

I decide to pack everything up and to head for home in Pennsylvania where my parents lived.

I knew there was a chance I might need to come back to Cuyamaca because my leave was not for the entire semester. I was supposed to return to work with approximately three weeks left in the semester.

Did I really expect to return to work. I don't know. I was going to pack up as much as I could just in case I didn't return.

I pack and pack... and pack... and when you live in an apartment with a garage it is really sort of unbelievable how much stuff you end up accumulating over six years.

I spent several sleepless nights packing and throwing away stuff.

And during these late night trips to the trash bin located behind my apartment as I threw away so much stuff, I came into contact with some of the most fascinating members of the San Diegon underworld. These people seemed to be members of the homeless community.

These people would root through the trash bin for much of what I'd thrown away. These people were utterly fascinating characters. It's hard to exactly, but through the prism of my own mental illness, I was feeling a genuine and real simpatico with these people. Most of them seemed to have some kind of mental illness too. It wasn't overt, but then again, my mental illness wasn't overt either. The amazing thing is these people seemed somewhat satisfied and complacent with where they were in their lives.

Chapter 124

It'd been three or four weeks since I'd been on leave for Cuyamaca. I'd finally cleared most of my apartment out. I still couldn't believe it was time to leave San Diego. Things weren't in focus.

At that time I was just in utter disbelief that nobody had made these attacks stop. That Munoz had been absolutely allowed to destroy the ASL Department. That all I ever wanted was a chance to communicate with Munoz in a thoughtful way and I never ever got that chance, not once.

Chapter 125

It was time to leave San Diego. It was late February or early March. I had my truck packed, much of my apartment cleared out and I got on the road one day in the early afternoon.

I make the drive through the Cuyamaca Mountains on I8 and head eastward. I might have cried in disbelief. I wasn't crying for myself. I was crying at what Cuyamaca College had shown itself to be.

I drive and drive... and I cross over into Arizona in the evening as the sun's setting and I realize that I'm witnessing something incredible. There's this place on I8 near the Arizona border where you cross over into Arizona and descend down a mountain range that has the most amazing view of the sun setting. The edge of this range drops off sharply so that it appears as a steep wall. There's a bunch of gristly, narrow and jutting peaks along the ridge. As the sun sets in the West, it glimmers and radiates through these peaks in the most spectacular way possible. Somehow I'd timed things just right and had the chance to witness this beautiful moment.

It was an utterly bittersweet moment instead of a breathtaking one as it should have been.

The same record was still playing in my head and it was singing, "The entire administration at Cuyamaca allowed this grotesque and violent person to attack you relentlessly for almost two years and completely destroy the ASL Department. The entire administration preached and preached about equity and there was none for you. Zero equity at all for you and Deaf people everywhere."

I drive and drive and as it got darker and darker, so did my mind.

About an hour or two past sunset, my mind finally snaps and I have an unimaginable and severe break down.

I don't know how to explain it. It's just like anything else in your body that breaks.

Someone hits your leg with a bat long enough, it's going to break.

That's what happened with my mind. This person had relentlessly attacked my mental health and she made something break.

I start believing that I am going to die. I don't quite know how. But it sort of feels like I am going to die at that moment somehow.

I drive and drive and realize things are getting darker around me. It's my mind clouding things. The road doesn't appear as clear or sharp as it used to.

It feels like I am going to die at that moment.

And I say such a fierce and powerful prayer to one of the Gods and ask him for protection and to give me the strength I needed to survive that moment.

Chapter 126

I still believe I am dying at that moment.

I text my parents and sister and tell them I am dying.

My parents had just drove down from Pennsylvania to Florida the previous day to travel throughout Florida for several weeks.

My parents and sister were unconscionably shocked and frightened for me as anyone would be.

We text back and forth and they're frightened for me.

I take some time to just sit in my truck and breathe and things start to clear up just a little bit so that I'm finally thinking and seeing things just a little better.

I don't know what to do. I talk with my parents and sister for a while and things just sort of clear up more and more.

I finally decide I'm going to turn around and return to my apartment in San Diego. It's about a five hour drive back.

That just felt like the best thing to do. That was the most comfortable place I could think of. I knew I couldn't continue to drive to Pennsylvania which would take me several more days and I just didn't think it would be good for me to stay in a hotel.

Chapter 127

I drive back to San Diego and make it to my apartment late at night.

My parents immediately fly into San Diego the next day.

We spend a lot of time crying. My sister flies in the next day.

Chapter 128

My sister has to fly back home after a couple of days. My parents stay a week and try to support me in the best way they can. We spend a few days doing light hearted stuff around San Diego.

It takes a few days but things finally started to clear up enough for me to feel relatively stable again.

My parents stay for a week. I finally feel as if I can handle things on my own. It's time to try to drive back home again.

My parents fly back East. My parents' truck was still in Florida. They had no interest in continuing their vacation. But they needed to get their truck back.

I leave for Pennsylvania again. That pass over that ridge in Arizona the second time around wasn't as spectacular in the middle of the day. I decide to take the southernmost route and use I10 which would take me through Texas and then Florida.

It didn't feel fair that I was going to get to see more of Florida than my parents would. But it was what it was. I needed to get home one way or another and I'd always preferred the traffic and drive on I10 as opposed to using I30 or I40. These routes tended to have much heavier truck traffic.

I drive and drive... and I feel relatively stable and I get to see some of the Gulf Shores and Destin and Pensacola and find myself marveling at the beautiful white sands and clear water.

And I think about continuing farther eastward that would allow me to see more of Florida instead of taking a northward turn through Atlanta which would eventually lead me to the eastern corridor and Pennsylvania.

But the COVID warnings were becoming increasingly urgent. Everyone was being told to stay at home. Businesses were being ordered to close down.

I decide that it's best to continue my drive home. I felt glad and lucky I had the chance to take a fast swim in the beautiful, clear and warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico in March and feel that it is really time to head home.

I continue my drive and by the Gods' will make it home safely. My parents are home safe too.

Chapter 129

In late March of 2020, the Governor of Pennsylvania ordered most of the state to shut down.

I found it utterly peculiar to see all of the local roads devoid of traffic whenever I drove to a local lake or river to fish for a while. Some people were actually spending all of their time indoors. I found it somewhat preposterous. I needed to be outside and to breathe fresh air.

Chapter 130

Munoz had done exactly what she hoped to. Completely and utterly destroy my health.

But my parents were doing everything they could to help me recover.

Setzer actually emails me in the late Spring and sort of acts like he cares about what has happened to me.

And I tell him about how I realize it's been complete and utter abuse on Munoz's part. That Munoz was relentlessly abusing me.

And Setzer is once again indifferent.

Chapter 131

I find out that Cuyamaca has decided to allow me to spend the rest of the semester on leave. That they're going to continue having these instructors they've secured to teach my courses in my absence throughout the end of the semester.

I could only think about how my absence must have completely wrecked any sense of continuity, comfort and familiarity with learning ASL or any other language that comes with having the same instructor for the entire semester and that the majority of my students most probably did not acquire the skills they would and should have if I'd been able to continue teaching throughout the entire semester.

It felt terrible. For my students, and for myself sitting at home for the first time in years not teaching.

I'd never taken a single semester off in my life. My whole life had been up to that point about education. From the time I graduated from High School and went straight to college. From the time I graduated from College and went straight into the field of education. I'd always been either teaching or studying something. This was the first break I'd taken from teaching or being in school in my entire life.

And now here I was, severely broken and destroyed because the administrators at Cuyamaca had allowed an utterly small minded, nasty and vindictive person to relentlessly attack myself and the ASL Department even though I asked for help repeatedly. I begged for help repeatedly.

And not one single person at Cuyamaca College or associated with AFT 1931 did a genuine thing to make these attacks stop or try to protect me from this violent and abusive person.

That was all I ever asked for. For these attacks to stop.

I contact a few lawyers and start thinking about bringing a lawsuit against Cuyamaca College for destroying my health and for all of the utterly discriminatory things they did such as utterly refusing to make sure I had the same kind of equitable and fair access to communication with my direct manager that all of the other Chairs and faculty members apparently did. This was an abusive and violent situation that I repeatedly asked for help with.

Chapter 132

During this time I think about all of the ways I remained silent for more than a year and a half while I continued to try to support all of these people around me.

Lauren Halsted. Let me tell you about Lauren Halsted, this seemingly articulate, thoughtful and successful writer and educator. Lauren Halsted is Alicia Munoz's confidante.

Lauren Halsted is a person who finally had the opportunity to teach a Deaf student at Cuyamaca in one of her English courses.

Lauren Halsted is a person who was so utterly incapable of teaching this Deaf student she and Mary Graham had to ask me to tutor this student.

Lauren Halsted, who apparently became so taken with this Deaf student's amazing third world experiences and stories of survival dating back to when she lived in war torn Iraq as a young child Halsted decided to appropriate this person's life by determining herself, a hearing person with such limited knowledge of Deaf people, fit to write a story about this person's experiences.

Lauren Halsted who apparently knew nothing about Deaf people or the Deaf experience or anything about ASL decided she was in the position to seize this Deaf person's story from her and her family.

Lauren Halsted is a person who asked me for advice on how to learn more about the Deaf experience so she could seemingly appropriate this Deaf person's life story in a passable and acceptable manner and took advantage of the thoughtful way I tried to support her in the best way possible. I sent Halsted several emails sharing my experiences as a Deaf person and recommendations for books and videos she could read or view to learn more about the Deaf experience.

Lauren Halsted is the person that acted like a deer caught in headlights when I innocuously asked her how writing was going more than a year after we had these conversations when I really was only asking her about the writing she was doing in general.

The most amusing thing was, I really was just asking about writing in general. And Lauren Halsted, this person had such a startled look on her face as if she'd completely forgotten all about this Deaf student and her plans to appropriate this person's experiences.

Oh Lauren Halsted... to think about all of the emails I sent you about writing. To think about all of the thoughtful ways I tried to connect with you.

Lauren Halsted, you absolutely knew what was going on with Alicia and myself. You absolutely did. You knew how mentally diminutive this person was and how much guidance and support she needed from you to help her understand her responsibilities.

Lauren Halsted, did you ever think about telling her about how I always tried to connect with you in the most thoughtful and genuine way. Did you ever think about trying to help resolve our communication issues? Because I always saw Alicia listening to you in the most thoughtful way in the hallways of the B building. I saw you explaining things to her in the easiest way so many times while she would be walking or standing next to you with a confused furrow across her face as if she was having the hardest time processing or contemplating what you were telling her.

Lauren Halsted is the person that is now the Dean of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences division and the person that has appointed a hearing person without any knowledge of or understanding of the Deaf community or ASL to lead and Chair the ASL Department.

Oh Lauren Halsted. Shame on you. Shame on you. You do not respect or value Deaf people.

Lauren Halsted, Deaf people mean nothing to you.

Lauren Halsted, I am directing you to never ever write about Deaf people.

Lauren Halsted, do you understand what I am directing you to do?

Lauren Halsted, I am telling you to never write about Deaf people.

Lauren Halsted. The Deaf community needs to remember this name. *Lauren Halsted*.

Shame on you, shame on you, Lauren Halsted.

Chapter 133

Reaching out to lawyers became increasingly stressful. I was utterly lost and uncertain about what to do. I tried applying for a couple of other ASL positions but it was utterly farcical and a charade. I knew I was not in any kind of shape to genuinely go after these jobs.

When you're lost, sometimes you're just sort of grasping at things and trying to stay grounded.

Tania Jabour actually said to me, "If you leave Cuyamaca, what will you do?"

It felt so wrong. It felt like I was supposed to make the ASL Department at Cuyamaca a better place and I couldn't allow this person to continue to destroy the ASL Department.

I needed to stay grounded. The entire country was pretty much shut down at that time.

The entire state of California had pretty much shut down. All of the classes from K through 12 and higher education were conducted online now.

I somehow fool myself into believing that the administration, knowing that I've had a severe mental health break down, would at least try to protect me in the tiniest way.

I think about how all of the classes are online meaning that I wouldn't actually have to return to San Diego in person. I could continue to stay at home and teach my courses.

I stupidly try to force myself to believe that Munoz would be warned not to attack me any more. I mean, I had a severe break down, she knows that. Munoz knows she has completely won. She has achieved exactly and everything she hoped for. To destroy my health. She's done a really marvelous job of destroying the ASL Department too.

To continue to attack me would be pointless and an absolute waste of time. I mean, you would think Munoz must have so many other important and meaningful things she would want to spend her time on. All of these special things that make life so wonderful. It would seem impossible that she's gone through life without truly understanding or experiencing all of these amazing things connected to nature, life and people that make living life so special. Or so you would think.

I decide that I am going to return to Cuyamaca.

Chapter 134

Summer has now become the Fall of 2020.

I return to Cuyamaca. Kind of. It's the middle of the Summer. I am still in Pennsylvania.

Setzer sends me an email saying that I am now allowed to communicate with Munoz.

I ask Setzer and Barnes to ask Munoz to include Setzer in all of her emails to me. I knew that was something that just absolutely needed to happen. I needed to have someone monitoring her communication to me. Because I just knew, absolutely knew she would start gaslighting me again.

And Setzer says, "No, I will not require her to do that. But you can include me in your emails if you want."

And I start to feel utterly abandoned. This wasn't real. I'd just returned from a severe mental health breakdown and once again I was asking for the protection I needed for my mental health. And Setzer was again telling me, "No, you're not going to be protected."

I wait and wait to see what's going to happen with the disciplinary action that the administration was going to mete out the previous semester but there isn't any mention of that.

Chapter 135

Resuming communication with Munoz.

I don't even remember who emailed who first. She may have emailed me first.

That part is blurry.

But what I remember is that I was mentally destroyed, pretty angry and upset at Munoz. Because this was a person that chose to attack me relentlessly and mock me or completely dismiss every thing I said every time I tried to talk to her in a genuine way about how her communication was affecting me. And this person clearly knew she caused me to have a completely devastating mental break down that I managed to somehow survive that I was still trying to recover from.

Once again, I tried to get Munoz to understand how I was feeling and I was pretty angry at that time, I really was and deservedly so, I would think. I sent her an email saying, "You won't even

try to talk to me in a genuine way privately but every time we're in public in front of many other people you'll come over and act like you're completely interested in talking to me."

And then I said a few other things. I don't remember what they were. They were all in regard to all of the things she did to gaslight me prior to my breakdown.

And Munoz emailed me back.

And you know what the first sentence, the very first sentence of her response said?

"I'm sorry you feel that way," and she said it in such a glib and dismissive way.

I almost had another breakdown right there at that moment.

Slap. "You stupid, stupid Deaf boy. Did you really think I was going to stop attacking you." *Slap.* "You stupid Deaf boy, did you really think I was going to listen to you in the least way." *Slap.*

I couldn't believe it. I just couldn't. I emailed the Cuyamaca administration and the GCCCD board and asked for her immediate resignation.

I also emailed two Deans. Bri Hays and Jesus Miranda. Both Deans were entrusted with ensuring the college acted in equitable ways. That was what both of their job titles specifically said. These persons were appointed equity warriors.

I did not receive a response from Hays or Miranda.

I email Hays and Miranda again and explain about all of the dehumanizing ways Munoz had belittled my language and communication needs and ways she has picked away at and tried to destroy the ASL Department.

Once again, my emails go unanswered.

Chapter 136

Bri Hays appears to be a beautiful and cheerful woman. She always has a wonderful and cheerful smile. This person is responsible for institutional effectiveness which means she is supposed to be a jack of all trades when it comes to college matters. She is supposed to be an organizational maven full of knowledge and talent in solving unique matters.

And here she was, refusing to even acknowledge or give me the chance to have a discussion with her about equity for Deaf people at Cuyamaca College.

Let me tell you about Jesus Miranda.

Jesus Miranda is one of Jim Mahler's cruel, arrogant and small minded acolytes.

Do you know how stupid and small minded Jesus Miranda is?

Jesus Miranda is a Hispanic person that I believe is openly Gay. And you know what his auto email signature says.

"In solidarity we stand together."

Do you know where he got that quote from? From Jim Mahler the President of AFT Local 1931. Jim Mahler's email auto signature says exactly that.

Jesus Miranda... chose to include and make a white anglo saxon man's email signature quote as his own... instead of choosing a quote from one of the amazing Hispanic or Latino people or any other person from one of these minority groups that deserves to be recognized as a role model. Out of all of the amazing people of color that he could have chosen to embody and celebrate in his email signature, he chose a white man's quote. This is the Dean of Equity at Cuyamaca College. And he chose to celebrate and represent a white man's quote. Oh Jesus, you're so dumb and cruel, you really are. You're nothing like all of the warm and wonderful Hispanic people and culture I've known.

Jesus Miranda is someone that never, not once, ever tried to talk to me in the least way. He has had never the least interest in making any type of eye contact with me.

Jesus Miranda always walks around with an intense and sullen look on his face as if he's suffering from severe constipation and is angry about it.

He apparently considers himself a chosen union bully.

I wouldn't be surprised to see Miranda ascend to a higher position one day, either inside or outside of Cuyamaca by virtue of the dirty work he does for Mahler.

Jesus Miranda is a small minded and self serving person. This person hasn't done a single genuine thing to ensure equitable access for all kinds of people at Cuyamaca. And this person is somehow... the Dean of Equity at Cuyamaca.

Bri Hays... oh boy... What do I say about you Bri. Oh boy... I really wish I didn't need to talk about you.

You know... you refused to respond to any of my emails about the support and help I desperately needed.

But then you responded to my emails about the five year program review I needed to submit.

Your responses were so warm and thoughtful.

Why? Why didn't you respond to all of my emails including the ones in which I needed to talk about EQUITY.

I desperately needed someone's help and support.

And you... you were the Dean of Institutional Effectiveness. You had "EQUITY" in your job title.

But you did nothing to ensure that there was equity for Deaf people at Cuyamaca.

Wasn't that supposed to be part of your job. Yours and Miranda's.

Why did you think it was right to ignore and disregard my pleas to have a discussion about equity. Why? I desperately needed someone to come in with a neutral perspective and listen to what I was saying was happening with how the ASL Department was being attacked and destroyed.

And you... Bri Hays... the Dean of institutional effectiveness... and you, Jesus Miranda... Dean of Equity decided that doing so was not part of your job.

You two decided that you two wouldn't even meet with me or give me the chance to share my story about what was happening and how I needed support to make Cuyamaca an equitable place for Deaf people. Just amazing.

Chapter 137

I'm not sure what happened next with the emails between Munoz and myself. At some point she emails me and says she really wants to support me.

I've just had another borderline mental health breakdown. And the semester hasn't even started.

I try to talk to her in a genuine way. I'm hoping that she's just going to move on and stop attacking me.

I actually tell her the story of how I first arrived at Cuyamaca and I don't even remember why but I brought up the subject of how Botz kept on talking to me about Academic Freedom. I told Munoz how it felt like Botz brought that up as a way to make sure I wouldn't interfere with the other instructors' approach to their classes. It felt like a genuine and somewhat humorous way to try to... just connect with Munoz.

Munoz sends me a response that was noncommittal.

I was in such a bad place mentally. I almost decide that I need to go get myself checked out again. You know how when you have a deep pit in your stomach, knowing that something's just going to happen.

But there wasn't a Kaiser medical center near me with mental health services. The closest center was in Northern Virginia, almost three hours away.

I sort of try to get myself to believe that the important thing is I was at home and that I wasn't at Cuyamaca College physically any more.

I tell myself that I'm going to try to communicate with her in the best way possible.

What I didn't know was that Munoz would make me suicidal again by relentlessly burying me in emails and gaslighting me relentlessly through the entire semester.

Chapter 139

There had been a vast transformation in how things were now being done at Cuyamaca with the 100% shift to online courses. Everyone was working online. COVID was running rampant throughout California and the rest of the country.

Munoz doesn't even really try to get me caught up on any of these significant changes. She may have emailed me about this or that but these were piecemeal emails with limited information.

I was just trying to navigate my way through the severe mental fog that was encapsulating myself at the time and just trying to get caught up and understand what was going on.

There were so many changes to the requirements surrounding our online courses. There needed to be changes in the course verbiage and they all needed to be submitted to the curriculum committee.

Munoz isn't really explaining anything clearly at all.

At some point I find out from someone that I had mistakenly believed that even though our courses were listed as having specific meeting times, our instructors would be allowed to teach them asynchronously, meaning that the instructors and students would not need to adhere to the meeting times listed for the course.

This is actually something that I spent a huge amount of time discussing with numerous other ASL Instructors I met at the ASLTA conference in San Diego.

This was the focal point for so many of the presenters at the conference. They talked about how to design effective courses. There were other instructors who had develop a reputation as

being leaders in online instruction. I reached out to these instructors to talk about course design.

One thing every single instructor emphasized was the need for ASL students to have actual contact with a Deaf person, either the instructor or a tutor. They all said that it was absolutely imperative for that to happen and that was easily understandable. It was the only way to develop genuine conversational proficiency. It would be impossible for most students to accomplish that without having language exchanges with a Deaf or native signer.

As things were at Cuyamaca, we constantly struggled to hire and retain ASL tutors. It seemed like the tutoring center coordinator, Veronica Nieves and I had very different perspectives in how we wanted to design ASL tutoring services. Regardless, at the time, we actually had only one ASL tutor serving over 200 ASL students at Cuyamaca.

It was very, very important for our instructors to make sure they could make themselves available to meet with their students. It would be even better if they taught their courses in a synchronous manner which means they would appear in front of their students on Zoom on a scheduled basis and be able to actually sign with them and have conversational exchanges in which they could provide important feedback and scaffold their students' language use.

That was not just my perspective. It was virtually what every single presenter or person I spoke with at the ASLTA conference emphasized as being vital for a successful online ASL course. Everyone spoke about how students must have instructor or course designed live interaction opportunities with native or skilled signers. Some programs achieve this by having required meetings with ASL Tutors. It was not an option available for us with our current course design and our tutoring resources. This made it even more important for our instructors to be able to facilitate genuine signing experiences with their students.

When I found out that our instructors would need to teach their online courses in a synchronous manner, I talk with all of our instructors about this. Every instructor was fine with this except for Brad Cohen.

Brad Cohen said he would not be able to teach his course at the scheduled time. He shared that he had acquired two or three new teaching opportunities at other colleges. And I was glad for Brad. I really was. Every time Brad asked me to write a recommendation, I always wrote a wonderful letter for him because that was exactly what my experience had been with him as one of our instructors and I always saw how hard he worked and really tried to improve his ASL teaching skills.

But that didn't change the fact that this very abrupt schedule clarification was an existing course requirement. It was one of those incredibly important things Munoz could have explained. So many thoughtful and helpful things she could've tried to just make sure she did her job as my dean and explain things in a helpful, professional and competent manner. But there was nothing like that at all.

I explained this requirement again to Cohen and I told him I was truly sorry I was mistaken. I'd been on medical leave and there'd been so many changes and that I was still just trying to figure it all out.

I told Brad that he could schedule his course for any time he wanted to at all. This seemed to be a very reasonable solution.

Instead, Cohen got very angry with me and said that he did not have any time at all.

And I was stunned. I didn't understand why he became angry with me.

Cohen had been one of the people that worked on bringing the ASLTA conference to San Diego. He was someone who went to so many of the same workshops I went to.

I really don't understand why he got angry with me.

I'd given Brad Cohen so much support over the years. I was the one who hired him to teach at Cuyamaca. I was the one who wrote him several letters of recommendations every time he applied for a position outside of Cuyamaca. Brad and I actually were very good friends. When I bought a small Boston Whaler fishing boat, Brad was one of the first people I invited to go out into the Pacific Ocean to fish with me.

And this is not to say that Brad hadn't been a wonderful instructor for us at Cuyamaca. He absolutely had been great for us. Brad was very creative with uses of technology and his students enjoyed his classes. Brad was the only other person besides Jennifer Smith who always tried to support our ASL events at Cuyamaca by actually participating in these events with their students.

I felt like Brad had been short with me for a while. To be entirely honest, Palomar College in San Diego County had needed to hire a new ASL Instructor. And by chance, they hired one of our ASL Instructors, John O'Loughlin.

I feel like finding out that he did not get the position was very hard on Brad and he decided that he needed someone to blame for not getting the position even though that was the farthest thing from the truth.

I told Brad repeatedly that I would sit down with him for mock interviews. I asked him repeatedly when he wanted to meet to practice interviewing for the position because that was exactly what I felt helped me get the position at Cuyamaca. Brad decided that he didn't need my help and he practiced interviewing with someone else.

When I spoke with the representatives from Palomar about Brad, I gave him a glowing review. I told them that Brad had always been a great team player and that he always tried to find ways to support his colleagues and the ASL Department at Cuyamaca.

Really, the truth is Brad had had the chance to teach at Palomar College for a semester or two. He had the chance to make his best impression when he was teaching at Palomar. Brad not getting the full time job at Palomar had absolutely nothing to do with anything I said or did. I gave Brad my full support throughout the entire application and interview process.

When Brad found out he did not get the job and that it went to someone much younger than him, I think he took it really hard. That was understandable. Brad had put a lot of time and effort into studying for his Masters while also continuing to teach at Cuyamaca College and the other colleges he also taught at. I think he felt like it was his time to become a full time instructor and sometimes those things don't always go as expected.

This was not about Brad at all. This was about putting the ASL Department and our students in the best position to succeed.

What Brad did not really fully realize or understand, I think, was that this was the exact same situation as the one the previous year in which I asked him to teach a summer course and then I told Brad that I did not want to have to ask Munoz to change the class schedule Brad had initially said he would be able to agree to.

Brad didn't understand how much I'd become filled with fear and trepidation every time I'd have to talk to Munoz about something, even if it was through email.

I did not want to have to talk to Munoz unless it was absolutely necessary.

And this was very clear. It was a state mandate that this specific course that Brad was scheduled to teach needed to be taught on a synchronous basis.

Chapter 140

It also felt like we absolutely needed the chance to bring in some new ASL Instructors. It can be very, very difficult to hire ASL Instructors at Cuyamaca just based on the utterly peculiar hire rules put in place by AFT. GCCCD instructors can only teach up to ten units per semester. That is at one or both programs. It may not matter for hearing/spoken languages when there's tons of qualified instructors. But there's such a scarcity of qualified deaf or fluent signers available to teach ASL courses. Many times I would try to secure a new instructor and find that I wouldn't be able to hire them because they were already scheduled to teach two classes contract at Grossmont. Most of our ASL courses were four unit classes, meaning if someone taught two courses, that would compose eight units and they couldn't take on another class.

Brad said he did not have time to teach the course at a scheduled time. That was not a bad thing at all. He had several new courses to focus on and teach at other colleges. This was a chance for him to do well with these courses and come back to Cuyamaca later on when he had more time.

This was a chance for us to bring in a new instructor. The Chairs at Cuyamaca were responsible for hiring the instructors in their department.

I did not do this to hurt Brad in any way at all. This was just one of these things I felt was best for the ASL Department.

But Brad still got angry with me. I sent him another text telling him how sorry I was about this mistake, but that I still believed we need to move forward with assigning the class to a new instructor.

Brad did not understand the challenges that went with being the department chair, especially one in the very challenging and somewhat cutthroat GCCCD system in which instructors are coveted just because of the AFT hire rules stating that each part time instructor can only teach up to ten units at either college per semester.

This was actually one of my more stunning experiences coming into Cuyamaca. Nobody had quite told me about this rule. Not even Pat Setzer. It's really sort of strange. It's such a huge part of being a department chair at Cuyamaca or Grossmont College, managing hires.

So get this. I had no idea of the 10 unit rule for part time instructors for almost a year. I was working closely with Jamie Shatwell Gould, Grossmont's ASL Department Chair. She is a wonderful Deaf woman. She does great things for her ASL students, she's a wonderful instructor.

So, remember how I was attacked constantly by so many of the members of Cuyamaca's ASL Department my first year. But there was light at the end of the tunnel. I finally was able to hire two or three new instructors at the end of my first year.

They teach for us one semester, I think. I'm still trying to help the ASL Department grow and recreate itself in so many different ways, and I'm thinking how great it is that I've finally brought in some new instructors that are going to teach their classes in warm, caring and authentic ways.

I don't realize that if I don't add these instructors to the course schedule once they're entered into the system for the next semester, they can agree to teach at Grossmont. So Jamie sort of... just swoops in and "takes" two of my instructors from me. I learn this when I submit the request to add their names to the courses I told them they would be teaching next semester. These instructors apparently weren't exactly clear on the 10 unit rule either and agreed to teach at Grossmont, not realizing that meant they wouldn't be able to teach two classes for

Cuyamaca at a time when we were adding courses to the schedule and really needed these instructors to continue to teach two courses for us as agreed.

It was a little... messy there for a minute when it really felt like it should have been something that someone told me about in the very beginning. It felt like Jamie should have asked me about whether or not I planned to offer these instructors an extra course next semester before hiring them out from under me.

Not only that... right around that time... I found out that Grossmont hired Angela Gorges as an ASL Tutor. The same person who was saying these utterly terrible, despicable and untrue things about me and what I was doing at Cuyamaca. And I talked about it with Jamie in stunned disbelief. And Jamie said something about how she needed to support her tutoring programs and continue with the hire... and... I was kind of in stunned at that. If you'd seen the things Angela Gorges was saying about me in such a hateful way, after all of the times I tried to talk to her in a genuine and thoughtful way and really tried to keep her connected to the ASL Department.

It kind of put a bind in my relationship with Jamie. We still worked together very well and very professionally throughout our entire time as Department Chairs. She is a competitive person and she has done many really great things to help her ASL Department at Grossmont College grow and succeed.

Back to Brad Cohen

Brad did not reply to my text and I knew he was upset. I thought we would eventually talk about it but it was not the time. I was upset myself that he got angry with me. I felt like he crossed a line with what he said. That happens when personal and professional boundaries become intertwined sometimes.

Chapter 141

I spent almost three weeks trying to find a new ASL instructor to take on Brad's class.

At the time, there was very minimal communication from the Dean's office.

We were approaching the start of the Fall semester and I finally found a qualified ASL instructor to hire to take on Brad's class.

This person was a Cuyamaca graduate. This person was Hala Somo. This person was the person who inspired Lauren Halsted so much she decided she would appropriate Hala's life story. Hala Somo's family survived the destruction and aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq and was able to emigrate to America.

Rancho San Diego within El Cajon where Cuyamaca College is located has a huge Chaldean/Iraqi population. It seemed to be an amazing opportunity to bring her into the ASL Department. She would be an amazing role model for so many people in the community.

I send Munoz an email informing her that Brad had said he would not be able to teach for us during the Fall semester and that I had found an amazing replacement for Cohen.

I blink and Munoz immediately says I am wrong. She doesn't even try to discuss the matter with me. She decides that she is going to immediately fill out a special request to change the state mandated requirements for the course that are already in place so that the course can be asynchronous in nature. This means that Brad would not need to teach the class on a scheduled basis.

I am in disbelief. Munoz made all of those decisions immediately without even consulting with me or trying to get my perspective. And just sort of continues to gaslight me by absolutely refusing to show the tiniest effort in communicating with me in any kind of genuine or thoughtful way.

I try to explain my perspective on the need for synchronous class. I explain everything I learned in my discussions with the other ASL Instructors at the ASLTA conference.

Munoz completely dismisses everything I say and it immediately becomes an union matter.

What I found out later on from Cohen was that he informed Munoz about my decision to hire a new instructor... and Munoz never said anything to me. Not for three weeks. This was not about me. This was about Brad Cohen. This was about Munoz being professional and contacting me once she understood that there may be a problem with two people within the ASL Department.

But once again, she absolutely refused to make a genuine effort to initiate some kind of professional communication that could help resolve some kind of problem quickly.

Slap. "You stupid, stupid deaf boy. You really think I'd show the tiniest bit of genuine interest in talking with you in any kind of meaningful way. You stupid, stupid deaf boy. You're so utterly beneath me. You're going to learn. You will learn." *Slap.*

I mean... I'd just had a severe mental health breakdown. You'd think that when Brad talked to Munoz about the class, she would immediately talk to me and try to find a thoughtful solution to the matter. Instead, she said nothing... for almost three weeks... and just let the matter fester and become bigger and bigger... and that's exactly what happened.

Alicia Munoz said nothing about Brad Cohen's report that informed her I had taken a class away from him. For almost three weeks. Maybe more than three weeks.

This is nothing but mental violence on her part. She knows exactly how she's making me feel. She knows that I am dreading communicating with her. And this is a person who thrives and feeds on this kind of energy. She is showing herself to be a nasty, hateful and vindictive person who is once again absolutely refusing to communicate with me in any kind of meaningful way.

She will police me relentlessly and send me many emails, many, many emails and give me nasty little orders, but when something truly serious comes up that needs her immediate attention that should also be communicated with me, she just refuses to show any indication or awareness that it's her time to do something genuine and meaningful for the ASL Department.

She just sees another way to destroy the ASL Department.

Chapter 142

Once again, I find myself mired into an union matter. Once again I find myself being attacked by Munoz, but Mahler was making it clear that he was attacking me too.

And I was absolutely so defensive and angry. I immediately become defensive and much angrier that I should be. Because I know I'm being attacked again in the way Munoz would respond by absolutely refusing to acknowledge any of the genuine things I've been saying about the need to understand the issue of assessment and how to evaluate genuine ASL conversational skills with our online courses when an instructor does not meet with his or her students in any way at all.

Munoz would just find a way to shut me down and say that I was completely wrong for even trying to understand that matter better every time I said it was something we needed to understand better.

Munoz and Mahler both start to dog pile on me and tell me this and that and make it seem like I was stupid and unaware of AFT hire practices and rules. And that was not true at all. I absolutely followed AFT hire practices. I offered Brad a class based on AFT and course requirements repeatedly and Brad turned it down.

If Munoz had approached me in a thoughtful and interested way and asked, "Can you let me know about what's happening with Brad's course. He was upset and said that you decided to offer the class to someone else?" I would have been happy to have a thoughtful discussion with her.

That was what constantly happened over the last year and half, regardless of what it was that I brought to Munoz's attention. Regardless of how clearly or strongly I explained the value of doing something for the ASL Department, It's like she would decide to do the exact opposite, least beneficial and the most disruptive thing just as a way to attack me.

My emails to Brad were very strong. But I was being incited and gaslighted relentlessly. And it really seemed like Brad was not trying to understand my perspective either. It really felt like Brad was thinking about himself in a bit of a selfish and unfair way.

Brad, you chose to turn the class down. I did not take it away from you. You could have taught it at any time.

This is exactly what you were doing for the University of California at San Diego for Dr. Peggy Lott. You were teaching synchronous classes for UCSD online.

You never chose to attack Dr. Lott or the UCSD program for asking you to teach synchronous classes for them. But you attacked me and Cuyamaca College's program for having the same expectations for our instructors and students. Again, this was based on so much of the information I collected from so many people at ASLTA. This was what our ASL students absolutely needed at minimum.

This was really selfish and disruptive on your part, Brad. You were willing to teach synchronous classes at UCSD during this time, but chose to selfishly file an union complaint at Cuyamaca when I asked you to do the exact same thing in the best interests of our ASL students.

We did not have any Deaf ASL Tutors. This was not some decision I made on my own. This was based on all of the information shared at the ASLTA conference in San Diego about how important it was to make sure ASL students had conversational practices and exchanges with a native or fluent signer. This was something we both had discussions about several times, both with each other and with the other members of the ASL Department.

Brad, I still don't blame you for the way things escalated. You had no idea how severe my mental health breakdown was. You had no idea how severely this person, Alicia Munoz, was attacking me and how she was constantly trying to incite and escalate all of these nasty little tensions and reactions.

At the same time Brad, you did something very, very wrong. You started refusing to communicate with me. Even when I sent group emails to the department members talking about the transition to online learning and ways to support our students. I asked all of you to let me know how I could support your language contact opportunities with your students. This was not a requirement at all. I wanted to know what you were experiencing and needing support with. And you refused to answer to my emails about that.

We ended up having an union based exchange of emails with Alicia Munoz and Jim Mahler and Pat Setzer I think. Pat Setzer as Vice President of Instruction, the most powerful person at top of all of the instructional decisions that need to be made at Cuyamaca. The person that is supposed to lead these important and far reaching educational processes that result in important and impactful decisions being made just sort of completely vanishes from the scene. He was included in these emails but did not participate otherwise at all.

Munoz and Mahler just sort of start bullying me through email. Again, just sort of saying I did not follow AFT rules and that was not true at all. I offered Brad a class. He turned it down. Munoz once again seized complete control of the ASL Department just to undermine me because if it had been any other chair, that chair would have been supported based on the circumstances at hand and Brad would have been told that, "You were offered a class and you turned it down." And it would never have been an AFT matter.

Regardless, It's decided that Brad will have a class issued to him during the Fall semester of 2020.

Chapter 143

It was fine that Brad continued to teach for us. I continued to move forward with trying to do the best work I could do for the ASL Department.

Munoz during this time... was constantly emailing me. She wasn't talking with me per se. Just to me.

She would send me these blithe emails telling me about "how I needed support and a good team around me." While continuing to find ways to disregard every single thing I tried to communicate to her.

She actually tells me at one point that I will be able to hire two new ASL instructors for the Spring Semester of 2021.

Around this same time, she tells me that she has had a discussion with one of the Deans, Dr. Jessica Robinson who is the current president of Cuyamaca College. One of the people I worked with for almost two years that I never had a chance to have a conversation with for some reason.

Munoz says Dr. Robinson says we really should have a course on Deaf Culture. This is a course I never added to the schedule at Cuyamaca College for two reasons.

Grossmont College taught two sections of Deaf Culture online each semester. I personally did not feel it was right to teach Deaf Culture online. It seemed absurd to me to have a class about culture based on telling people about a culture and maybe having them read some books about deaf culture instead of having them actually see and experience it up close firsthand with a deaf instructor.

It always seemed that it would be very hard for us to have a well enrolled Deaf culture class at Cuyamaca as long as Grossmont continued to offer two online courses on Deaf Culture each semester.

It was one of these things that just seemed so peculiar to me and I was okay with letting our students sign up for the Deaf Culture course at Grossmont. They would still be able to earn and carry the course credit they earned over to Cuyamaca to meet their degree requirements.

But Munoz wanted us to offer a Deaf Culture course. And this was the first time in a long, long time in which she actually made some kind of meaningful and positive suggestion that could actually help the ASL Department.

It didn't even matter to me that it felt really strange that one of the Deans wouldn't reach out to me and include me in this discussion with Munoz that concerned the ASL Department. I mean, why wouldn't Dr. Robinson include me in this discussion. It could have been a quick and thoughtful email exchange that could have led to a new source of and exchange of better ideas for the ASL Department.

I couldn't dwell too much on that. I absolutely didn't have to offer the Deaf Culture class and if I wanted to be as selfish and destructive as Munoz, I could have said, "No, we're not going to offer the course." But then that would have just turned into yet another nasty and hateful discussion of some sort.

I told Munoz, "Ok, we'll add a course on Deaf Culture."

And then you know what? I told Munoz, "I do not want to teach this course. I will need to find someone to teach this course."

I told this to Munoz several times.

During this time, I hire Hala Somo and also LaTasha Clay. LaTasha was someone I quickly became friends with when she moved to San Diego. This is a black and deaf woman with a Masters in ASL Teaching. Hala was assigned an ASL 1 course. And LaTasha was assigned the Deaf Culture class.

So, it's a bit of a chaotic time. I am still communicating with the department, still sending group emails, trying to check on our teachers and make sure they're doing well with their online courses. This was such an abrupt shift for everyone with all of the COVID closings and the rapid transition to online courses.

During this time Munoz tells me she wants me to offer one of our instructors, Marla Marks a second course.

Marla is an amazing person. She's such a wonderful person. But Marla's strength comes from being a classroom instructor. We truly needed to hire a tech savvy person to teach for us. Someone who could work with all of us and help all of us make our online course designs as strong as possible in a team oriented way.

I told this to Munoz. I kept on said I wasn't sure about offering Marla a second course for the Spring semester of 2021 just because I felt we really needed someone new with strong tech skills.

During this time, I was trying to communicate with Brad. And he was absolutely refusing to respond to my emails.

I wanted to offer Brad a second class for the Spring Semester of 2021 and I emailed him to start a discussion about that. He refused to respond to my email.

I was in disbelief. Brad was harboring a very real and deep grudge. I feel like he completely forgot about all of the support I'd given him in so many ways up to that point for more than six years.

Munoz was doing absolutely nothing to help us communicate. You know when two people have tensions, sometimes someone neutral just needs to step in and help both people understand each other's perspective and help both people start communicating again. That was Munoz's job. But she was just doing nothing.... Nothing at all to help the situation.

Munoz tells me again that she really wants Marla to have a second course. And then she says that she's aware that Brad has AFT hire rights and that he could be upset that Marla got a second class and he did not.

I told Munoz that Brad was just refusing to communicate with me and that I tried to start a discussion with him about the next semester but he refused to respond to my email.

Munoz replies and says she will support me in not offering Brad a second course if I offer a second course to Marla.

This was exactly what Munoz said. And I didn't want to argue with her any more about whether it was the best thing for the department to give Marla a second course or not even though we desperately needed a new and healthy infusion and experience that would help us strengthen our technology and online based teaching practices. It was too exhausting to argue in a mindless way with Munoz. It never resulted in anything genuine or meaningful happening for the ASL Department.

So I tell Munoz, "Ok, I'll offer Marla a second class."

Marla gets a second course. Brad Cohen finds out about this... and guess what happens? Brad files a second union complaint with Jim Mahler.

This was Munoz's decision, not mine. Munoz was the only one with the authority to determine whether or not she and Mahler would stand behind the decision to give Marla a second class

and to deny Brad a second class. But once again, I find myself mired into another AFT mess that's being presented as being my fault once again.

Munoz could and absolutely should have checked with Jim Mahler about such a serious matter. Munoz and Mahler have worked closely for many, many years. It was clear that I was being set up and railroaded yet once again by Munoz and Mahler.

Once again, it becomes a huge union matter.

Once again, I find myself in an AFT union meeting with Munoz, Mahler, Setzer.

At this meeting, Munoz and Mahler just sort of completely bully and belittle me constantly and force me to offer a second class to Cohen.

I tried to explain repeatedly what Munoz told me and the devastating impact it would have on the ASL Department and our need to hire new instructors.

In disbelief, I explain repeatedly to Munoz that if we gave another class to Cohen that means we wouldn't have a class to offer to Latasha Clay. We would not be able to bring in our first black and Deaf ASL instructor. Munoz is completely oblivious to this. Mahler orders me to offer Cohen a second class.

The only class available at the time was the one assigned to Latasha Clay, the Deaf Culture course. I offered the course to Brad. It was a perfectly reasonable offer. I did not have anyone else to teach the class. Brad had told me more than once in previous years that he was very enthusiastic about teaching Deaf Culture. I did not entirely think Brad's strengths rested in teaching a largely literature based class, but I did not have anyone else to teach the class.

Brad refused to accept the class. Mahler tells me that the offer is "disingenuous" and forces me to offer Brad a different class.

I was in disbelief. It was a perfectly reasonable offer. Brad earned a Masters in ASL teaching. He had a vast trove of current resources from his recent graduate studies that he would be able to apply to the course.

Not only that, Brad refusing to teach the Deaf Culture meant that instead of just making one instructional assignment, we had to shuffle things around based on seniority and instructor availability. We had to make four changes to our schedule.

This was devastating and completely disruptive to the ASL Department. I had to tell Latasha Clay I was so sorry but we wouldn't have a class for her after all.

There was nothing I could do but immediately rearrange our instructional assignments and submit these changes to Munoz.

These changes were so simple. All Munoz needed to do was submit these changes to the scheduler and have that person input the new changes. Scheduling changes almost never took more than one day to process.

Three or four days later I check our schedule for the following semester to make sure the changes have been correctly entered and I was in disbelief when I saw that there'd been only one change.

Munoz took a class from me yet once again and gave it to Brad Cohen. This was not part of the scheduling changes I communicated to Munoz.

I email Munoz and ask in confusion why there was only one change made that did not correspond to the changes I sent to her. I only receive a blithe and noncommittal reply.

A few days later, one more change is made. A week and a half later, we still don't have the schedule set. Munoz was gaslighting me every time I emailed her in confusion to ask about why the schedule still hadn't been set.

It took more than three weeks for these four instructional changes to be entered into our system. Three weeks of emailing Munoz in confusion and receiving blithe and insolent and noncommittal replies or not receiving any kind of response for several days sometimes.

During this time I keep on trying to communicate to Munoz how important it was for our department to bring in Latasha Clay. I kept on trying to remind her that she said we would be able to hire two new instructors.

She just gaslights me relentlessly with confusing and unclear replies. Instead of hiring two new and talented instructors that could have helped our department grow tremendously, we were going to go into the next semester with the exact same group of instructors.

Somehow I found myself coerced, really pretty much forced to teach the Deaf Culture course. I'd just had a severe mental health breakdown. I did not want to have to develop a new course at the time. That was the truth. I needed to focus on recovering and getting better.

This meant nothing to Munoz.

Chapter 144

Even though the situation between myself and Cohen was rough, I was absolutely trying to communicate with him. Munoz's replies were so gleeful and excited every time I sent her an upset email about what was happening with Brad.

And then I saw what was happening. The exact same thing that happened with Munoz and myself. Everything was becoming bigger and bigger. Just because that was what she thrives on. Anger and discord and incompetence.

I had to take a new approach with Brad. I tried to communicate in a much more neutral and professional way. But Brad was still refusing to respond to my emails.

Munoz clearly saw the shift in my communication to Brad and she started to tell me in that blithe way that I needed to try to make things up with Brad.

I was fine with that. I thought she would finally get tired of the whole matter and encourage Brad to move on. Just because she must have so many other important things to work on as Dean. Who wants to be mired and embroiled in a petty and tiny dispute between two people.

I couldn't have been more wrong. Brad was refusing to communicate with me professionally and I thought Munoz would see what was happening and remind Brad of his professional responsibilities.

That never happened. Munoz would either gaslight me or shut me down completely whenever I tried to communicate with Brad. She never, ever once reminded Brad of his responsibility to continue working professionally as a member of the ASL Department. It was clear that she was thriving on how Brad was refusing to work with me even though this was such a massive and incredible disruption to the ASL Department.

The matter just continues to become bigger and bigger. I ask for a meeting with Brad repeatedly and he was absolutely refusing to meet with me. Brad at one point said, "I feel threatened."

And Munoz immediately leaps into the picture and acts like she's protecting Brad when she clearly was just trying to make the situation worse.

And during this whole time.... I'm in disbelief... thinking that this vile, hateful and vindictive person who doesn't respect Deaf people at all is actually being allowed to handle this matter.

Tammi Marshall who was the Math Department Chair at the time but is now the current Dean of the Math and Science Department at Cuyamaca was apparently "assigned" to support me when I returned to Cuyamaca. She became very involved in the matter between Cohen and myself.

I sent Marshall many, many emails explaining what Munoz was doing and how she was completely trying to destroy the ASL Department.

At some point I sent Brad two or three very extensive and genuine emails and asked him to remember how much support I'd given him. I encouraged Brad to meet with Marshall to gain a fresh perspective on the matter.

My emails went unanswered.

The situation continued to become bigger and bigger. We were well into November at the time and Cohen still was not communicating with me. This had such a devastating impact on the ASL Department and our ability to exchange information and hold discussions.

I sent Marshall so many emails that clearly showed my desperation and confusion about why this was happening.

Marshall finally tells me that I have to ask Munoz to remove herself from the matter.

I ask Munoz to remove herself from the matter and she refuses to reply to my email. Then she gaslights me by acting hurt and confused about why she should remove herself from the matter.

Then Munoz gaslights me again by sending a completely angry, hateful and derisive email to Craig Leedham in HR that warns me about something or the other.

Then she gaslights me again by suggesting that we should just wait to meet with Cohen during the following semester.

As if it would have been healthy for anyone in the department to have the matter drag on any longer.

I ask Munoz again to remove herself from the matter and she finally agrees to.

The completely amazing and remarkable thing is once Munoz removed herself from the matter, Brad and I were finally able to meet and have a really genuine and heartfelt discussion that helped us resolve our differences.

I do not think Brad knew how severe my mental health breakdown was and it was so unfortunate that he was led blindly around by Munoz and Mahler and used as a device to attack me.

It was a nightmarish semester. Once again I found myself buried in emails to and from Munoz.

The exact same thing would always happen. Her emails would be angry and confrontational.

When I needed a fast response from her she would completely refuse to reply to my emails for three or four days. There was one time when I needed an urgent answer from her about a very

important matter. She refused to reply to my email for a week and when I finally had to take some initiative and resolve the matter, she quickly responded to my email and undermined me.

She was so completely and effectively destroying the ASL Department.

Sometime during this time, Marshall informs me that Patrick Setzer who was due to retire at the end of the semester as VPI would be replaced with Munoz.

Munoz would now be the interim VPI of Cuyamaca College.

This angry, hateful, uninspiring and vindictive person was now really going to have such a massive bully pulpit. She was going to have the ability to bully people and crush their departments if she felt these people weren't responding to her bullying in the way she expected them to.

In confusion and disbelief I email President Barnes and explain that Munoz's still attacking me and that she has attacked two other Deaf members of the ASL Department. I explain in desperation how she gaslighted me relentlessly throughout the entire semester and created so many disruptions. I ask President Barnes for a meeting.

President Barnes responds to my email and says that she will not meet with me.

It was December of 2020. The semester was almost over.

Munoz had to get one last dig in.

She emails me a week and a half before Christmas and with the utmost ingenuine concern she explains that I have two or three courses that are underenrolled for the upcoming semester and that these courses may be cancelled. She asks me if there's anything I can do about these courses.

Right before Christmas. Right before the holidays. Right after a nightmarish semester.

I'd never ever gotten an email like that from Setzer.

It was just relentless gaslighting.

I respond with such a terrible sadness. I told Munoz I would wish for her to understand kindness during this time.

The semester ends.

Chapter 146

It's now January of 2021. Time for us to return to our teaching responsibilities. We have our first monthly ILAT meeting of the semester through Zoom. This was during the first week of February.

This meeting is always two hours long. Not this one.

Munoz does not make any kind of announcement. You'd think she would talk about something warm and inspiring. There was nothing.

She sort of talks about how she wants more people to have jobs. I remember that very well. Something really confusing about jobs. And then she decides the meeting's over. The meeting lasted only 40 minutes.

At the end of the meeting Munoz says something that shows the depth and degree of her megalomania and narcissism. She actually says that she's given us the gift of time. That's why the meeting was only 40 minutes long. Because she decided to give us the gift of time. Not because of her incompetence and derision for showing the least amount of care or regard for the work we were doing and the students we were supposed to be serving at Cuyamaca.

My sadness builds up and builds up. I wonder how this is possible. How someone like Munoz could be elevated to the position of VPI without showing any real or genuine leadership or care or regard for supporting the departments she supervised as Dean.

At our second ILAT meeting in March I decide I need to speak up for Deaf people everywhere.

At every single Zoom meeting I've participated in at Cuyamaca, people are always having discussions using the text chat feature. Sometimes people ask questions there to clarify things instead of interrupting the speaker.

I decide to speak up and I ask Munoz through the text chat feature which everyone can see about her utter lack of care and regard for Deaf people and how she'd been treating me in such an utterly dehumanizing way. Not in these exact words, but close enough.

I did not have ASL Interpreters present at the meeting. Nobody inquired about why I didn't have interpreters present. I could only communicate through typing my messages.

In disbelief, I find myself silenced by Rachel Jacob Almeida.

Rachel Jacob Almeida is so woke she broke down into tears during the February ILAT meeting and sobbed about how she was so tired, ostensibly from standing up for the BLM movement. She wept so proudly and openly and quoted Ibram Kendi's teaching and philosophies.

Rachel Jacob Almeida is a privileged and utterly stupid social justice warrior who refused to do anything to make sure Deaf people were being treated equitably at Cuyamaca College.

Rachel Jacob Almeida said to me in front of everyone on Zoom, "Now is not the time!"

Can you imagine her saying that to someone black during the BLM movement. She wouldn't dare.

This is what the woke social justice warriors and DEI experts at Cuyamaca College do. They act like they're passionate about social causes and when they're presented with the chance to make an amazing impact on Cuyamaca and the 10,000 students we serve each semester, there's nothing. Nothing at all.

I tried to talk about my experiences about being attacked relentlessly by Munoz.

Someone cuts off the Text Chat feature so that nobody can use that feature any more.

Everyone could still speak with their voices. But not me. I didn't have interpreters that day. I didn't have any way to communicate with anyone else at the meeting I was supposed to be part of. I'd been completely and effectively silenced in the most discriminatory and dehumanizing way possible.

I have a feeling it was Taylor Smith who did this. There were four people listed as the administrators of the meeting. Munoz, Taylor Smith, Bri Hays and Debi Ridulfo. He's the only person tech savvy enough to do something like that quickly. It might have been Debi though. And that's too bad because she's such a sweet person.

I submitted my immediate resignation from Cuyamaca College that day. Dean Lauren Halsted sends me a very angry email that directs me not to have any contact with my students.

Lauren Halsted, I am directing you to never ever speak to a Deaf person that way again.

Lauren Halsted, you do not deserve to be in a position where you're leading the ASL Department. You do not respect Deaf people.

Lauren Halsted. I am directing you to resign from your position as Dean immediately. You do not deserve to lead the ASL Department.

That afternoon, I received a call from one of the police officers at Cuyamaca that was supposed to be sort of a warning to me. The call sort of warns me not to try to do anything drastic.

I was relentlessly attacked for three years and nobody cared about what was happening to me and whether I may have had a severe breakdown that would potentially lead to me harming others at the college either intentionally or unintentionally. But now that I'd resigned, I was being warned. Just another slap in the face.

Everyone is supposed to fill out an exit statement when they resign from Cuyamaca.

I never got this statement. They did not want to have anything on record related to how I'd been attacked for more than three years.

Aftermath

It has been four years since I resigned from Cuyamaca College.

Since that time, the ASL Department has been completely and utterly colonized. I saw that Nancy Jennings who is the hearing chair of the Communications Department was also chairing the ASL Department.

Nancy Jennings does not know any sign language at all.

I've seen Nancy Jennings make many "empathetic" comments about communicating with others. She is supposedly an expert in grief and empathy and communicating with people.

You would think Nancy Jennings would understand that it was completely and utterly wrong for her to chair the ASL Department, not knowing any ASL at all.

But that's what the woke social justice warriors at Cuyamaca do. They see things that are wrong with other people. And then they try to change things that don't really affect them at all. But not themselves. There's no introspective reflection or evaluation about their own actions at all.

The ASL Department at Cuyamaca is in shambles. Very purposefully and intentionally so.

All of the other San Diego area colleges have two or more full time ASL Instructors or Professors.

My second ever hire at Cuyamaca College was Shannon Engelhart. She is now the ASL Department Chair at Southwestern College a few miles away from the San Diego and Mexico border.

Shannon Engelhart has two full time instructors working with her. Two very white instructors. It's somewhat inconceivable that she hired two white instructors during the height of the BLM movement. I can understand the first hire. This is a wonderful and really smart woman. But the second hire should absolutely have been someone of Hispanic descent. The vast majority of students at Southwestern College are of Hispanic/Mexican descent.

But they don't have anyone to look up to when they take ASL classes at Southwestern. The three full time ASL faculty members are two white women and a white gay male.

I tried to lead many discussions with Shannon and the rest of the ASL Faculty at Cuyamaca about being equitable with our students. And I am saddened and disappointed that she did not use her time at Cuyamaca College to become an equitable leader. I am saddened that she never participated in any of the department wide activities we tried to hold to attract interest to the ASL Department. Engelhart never, ever once participated in any of the performances or game days or any of the other activities we held.

I still wrote Engelhart a wonderful recommendation letter. I would not write that letter again for her today. She did nothing for us at Cuyamaca College except come in and teach her classes and she always arrived late for her classes. Often five minutes late. Often even later than that. And I always patiently reminded her how important it was to arrive to class early so that she could get everything set up and have class start on time.

I cannot believe that a huge college only a few miles away from the Mexico border can have three lily and snow white people leading their ASL Department.

Cuyamaca College. There is no longer a full time chair of the ASL Department. There is no longer a full time ASL Instructor.

It is my belief that there is such a pervasive and incredible amount of wokeness, audism and self serving narcissism at Cuyamaca College.

Everyone wants to act woke and empathetic but nobody really wants to be genuine and correct injustices when they see them happening right before their eyes.

I wonder if Cuyamaca College will ever have a full time ASL Instructor again.

I believe that I need to move forward with a lawsuit against Cuyamaca College for the way Munoz was allowed to relentlessly attack me for more than three years. Munoz completely destroyed my health. Munoz completely destroyed the ASL Department at Cuyamaca College.

That is the truth.

These people are responsible for destroying my health and the ASL Department at Cuyamaca College. Alicia Munoz. Jim Mahler. Patrick Setzer. Julianna Barnes. Craig Leedham.

