



STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

WARNING

THIS FILE IS THE PROPERTY OF THE
WASHINGTON CORRECTIONS CENTER FOR WOMEN
INTELLIGENCE & INVESTIGATIONS OFFICE

CONTENTS MAY BE DISCLOSED ONLY TO PERSONS WHOSE
OFFICIAL DUTIES REQUIRE ACCESS. CONTENTS MAY NOT BE
DISCLOSED TO THE PARTY(S) CONCERNED NOR TO COUNSEL,
WITHOUT SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT.

CASE TOPIC: STAFF MISCONDUCT RE:CO COLLINS

CASE #: 02-006-04-F01

DATE OPENED: 2/2/04

DATE CLOSED: 2/10/04

sign and date at time of review or receipt

IN OFFICE REVIEW	CASE OUT REVIEW	COPY AUTHORIZATION
		<i>Copy - Discrepancy for v. Clarke 9/17/07 A. Kelly 10807 PDC 911</i>

CONFIDENTIAL

**Washington State Correction
Center for Women**



**Intelligence & Investigations
Case File
02-006-04-F01**

CONFIDENTIAL

**Washington Corrections Center for Women
Intelligence & Investigations
Investigative Case
#02-006-04-FO1**

February 10, 2004

TO: Belinda D. Stewart
Superintendent, WCCW

FROM: Steven B. Baxter
Investigator, WCCW

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE STAFF MISCONDUCT RE: CO ROBERT COLLINS

SYNOPSIS: On 2/2/04 rumors came to the attention of the WCCW I&I office that Correctional Officer (CO) Robert Collins was involved in a relationship with Inmate (IM) [REDACTED] housed in the WCCW Medium Security Unit (MSU). A preliminary fact finding investigation was initiated concerning the rumors. In the initial days of the fact finding investigation it came to light that numerous MSU staff had been talking to CO Collins about their concerns with his contact with I/M [REDACTED]. WCCW Superintendent Belinda D. Stewart was notified of the initial findings on 2/4/04 and I&I was authorized to continue investigation of the allegations.

INVESTIGATIVE INTERVIEWS:

Correctional Officer Joe Luckett – was interviewed and wrote a written statement (see attachment 1) that he had talked to I/M [REDACTED] several weeks ago, date uncertain in the MI Kitchen. I/M [REDACTED] told CO Luckett that CO Collins who works in MSU was spending a lot of personal time with I/M [REDACTED]. I/M [REDACTED] didn't want CO Luckett to talk with the officer yet, but a week later I/M [REDACTED] approached CO Luckett again and stated that the problem was still going on. CO Luckett went to CO Clover who talked to CO Collins. I/M [REDACTED] approached CO Luckett about a week after CO Clover had talked to CO Collins and reported that the problem was still going on.

Correctional Officer Karla Clover - was interviewed on 2/3/04 and also submitted a written report (see attachment 2) that stated CO Luckett had brought to her attention that CO Collins was getting a little too friendly with I/M [REDACTED]. CO Clover stated that she had been told that I/M [REDACTED] was afraid of retaliation from staff so was afraid of saying anything. CO Clover stated that she talked to CO Collins about this situation and that he has been speaking to Sgt. Smith about it.

Correctional Sgt. Richard Smith – was interviewed on 2/2/04 and also submitted a written memo (see attachment 3). Sgt. Smith stated that on 27 Jan 04 he had a lengthy conversation with CO Collins about the continuing conversations with I/M [REDACTED]. Sgt. Smith told him that he had observed him in numerous conversations with this particular inmate. Sgt. Smith stated that he had not ordered him to stay away from this inmate but that if he was seeing this "stuff happening" other staff and inmates are also seeing it. On 2/3/04 Sgt. Smith stated that after talking with I&I he had addressed the issue with CUS Turk and it was decided that CO Collins would be given a directive that all conversations with this inmate would be of a professional nature. Sgt. Smith also stated that he had informed CO Collins that this could result in his being moved to a different location. Sgt. Smith felt that CO Collins seemed to get the point that this was a serious matter.

CONFIDENTIAL

Page 2

Case #02-006-04-FO1

REF: Staff Misconduct RE: CO Collins

02/10/04

MSU CUS Robert Turk – supplied a written statement (see attachment 4) on 2/9/04 with the following information: On Monday, 2/2/04 at approx 1530 C/O Collins came into CUS Turk's office. Mr. Turk asked him how things were going and he stated, "Trying to stay out of trouble". CUS Turk had already had a conversation with CO Collins regarding some rumors possibly being spread by I/M [REDACTED]. CUS Turk asked if it was in reference to I/M [REDACTED] and he stated, "So you've heard". CUS Turk explained to him that he had heard rumors and at this point that is all they are and if nothing is found to substantiate, the individual will be dealt with. C/O Collins asked who had been spreading rumors about him and I/M [REDACTED] talking too much. CUS Turk did not specify whom and said that it is being looked into. CO Collins guessed that it was I/M [REDACTED] because I/M [REDACTED] was usually the topic of their conversations. He said that [REDACTED] often complained about [REDACTED] pursuing her and how insecure [REDACTED] is about his/her manhood. CUS Turk asked C/O Collins if he felt that he talked to I/M [REDACTED] too often. He stated that he supposes he does talk to her more often than any of the other I/M's. CUS Turk asked C/O Collins if his and I/M [REDACTED] conversations were on a professional level. He stated yes, for the most part and sometimes she talks about her two girls and other family. C/O Collins added that she is not a troublemaker and seems like a decent person. CUS Turk explained perception to C/O Collins and that if your conversations were limited to professional business, that you wouldn't need all this time to discuss those and therefore you may give the impression of sharing things on a personal level. CUS Turk directed C/O Collins to keep doing the great job in the unit and to limit his conversations with I/M [REDACTED] to professional conversation. CO Collins nodded OK and returned to the pod.

CO Shannon Hoover - supplied a written statement on 2/4/04 (see attachment 5), which related the following: In the past C/O Collins has stated that he hasn't done anything wrong and he just talks to [REDACTED] nothing else. From my observations he has spent a lot of time talking to [REDACTED] and he has been approached by myself and other C/O's about the fact that he spends too much time with her. As this situation has progressed and Collins and [REDACTED] have been talked to about the amount of time they talk, on one occasion Collins asked me if I had seen [REDACTED] to which I stated no. He said he wanted to talk to her to make sure she was ok.

Approximately a week ago Collins and [REDACTED] had stepped aside into the hallway between the Sgt's door and the staff bathroom to talk. Collins said he wanted to let her know that nobody was in trouble. They were in the hallway (visible to staff and inmates entering and exiting the unit) for approximately 15 minutes when I knocked on the window and gestured for Collins to go back in the pod. It was brought to his attention that that was a bad move on his part to talk in the hallway. He agreed.

OAS Amy Shanks – was interviewed and supplied a written statement on 2/5/04 (see attachment 6). During the interview OAS Shanks stated that for weeks that she and CO Collins had sorted incoming I/M mail. While sorting mail CO Collins would talk about I/M [REDACTED] on a frequent basis, saying things like she doesn't fit the inmate profile, she's different from the other inmates etc. Ms. Shanks was also asked by CO Collins to be in a meeting with him and I/M [REDACTED] when he asked I/M [REDACTED] if she was afraid of him.

CO Leslie Pine – supplied a written statement (see attachment 7), which related the following: for the past month she had noticed CO Collins and I/M [REDACTED] having many private conversations. At first CO Pine stated that she did not think anything of it because CO Collins stated that I/M [REDACTED] was having personal issues and needed someone to talk to. However, CO Pine stated that as time went on the conversations were becoming more often and seemed to last longer. CO Pine decided to talk to CO Collins about her observations, these included that she felt that I/M [REDACTED] was developing feelings for him and told him to be careful about the amount of time he spent talking with her. CO Pine stated that after the conversation those things did not change and that the two were still spending large amounts of time in conversation. CO Pine states that she continued to tell CO Collins her observations on what was happening

CONFIDENTIAL

And that inmates are watching them and are going to assume that something is going on. CO Collins told her he wasn't worried because he is not doing anything wrong. CO Pines continued to talk to CO Collins but with negative results. CO Pine then stated the CO Collins came to her one day and said that inmates were making up stories about him and I/M [REDACTED] and CO Pine asked if he was surprised because she had told him that would happen. CO Pine also wanted to add that she thought he was a good officer.

Inmate [REDACTED] - was interviewed concerning the allegations he had made to CO Luckett and gave the following responses: I/M [REDACTED] stated that she was a friend of I/M [REDACTED] and had hoped it could become more after spending time in church and the unit with her. I/M [REDACTED] stated that she became concerned with the time I/M [REDACTED] spent with Officer Collins and the image it conveyed to the other inmates. I/M [REDACTED] stated that it had come to the point that other inmates would not approach CO Collins if he were talking to I/M [REDACTED] afraid to interrupt their talk. I/M [REDACTED] stated that he had never seen them in any physical/inappropriate situation.

Inmate [REDACTED] - was interviewed and questioned about her relationship with CO Collins and Inmate [REDACTED]. I/M [REDACTED] stated that she had been friends with I/M [REDACTED] but when she began to pursue her in a romantic manner she began to talk to CO Collins to ask his advise on what to do. These conversations also ran to other personal matters like her crime, her children etc. I/M [REDACTED] also stated that she would ask CO Collins what he did on his weekends and they would talk about that. I/M [REDACTED] stated that there had never been any physical contact between her and Collins and would take a polygraph if requested. When questioned on two rumors I/M [REDACTED] responded as below:

- When asked why she was overheard saying "We are going to cool it until I get out, there is no sense in him loosing his job." I/M [REDACTED] responded that she was just talking with a friend and was saying that she needed to talk less to CO Collins because of all the rumors.
- When asked about the reason they were comparing hand sizes at the podium, I/M [REDACTED] said they were talking about her ordering a guitar and if she should order a small or regular neck for it.

I/M [REDACTED] was asked if they had ever talked about his private life, like was he married, did he have a girlfriend etc? [REDACTED] stated that she thought he lived alone with his mother. At the end of the interview I/M [REDACTED] stated yes when asked if she had developed closeness with CO Collins due to their conversations.

Correctional Officer Robert Collins - Officer Collins was interviewed on 2/2/04 and again on 2/5/04 about the allegations and rumors of his relationship with I/M [REDACTED]. During the first interview (attended by Sgt. Miller) with CO Collins the interview was more of what needed to be done to alleviate the rumors and to ascertain where they were coming from. CO Collins was questioned as to why he felt the rumors were surfacing and if there was any validity to them. CO Collins stated that he felt the rumors were coming from I/M [REDACTED] who had a crush on I/M [REDACTED]. Sgt. Miller stated that he had talked with I/M [REDACTED] who told him that he did indeed have a crush on I/M [REDACTED] and thought it might have developed sexually if it had not been for CO Collins. During this conversation CO Collins made several statements that prompted further investigation into the allegations these were:

- Something to the effect of - She's not your normal inmate/She's different from the other inmates
- I've looked her crime up on the internet
- I've checked her in the on-site log, she doesn't get in trouble

CONFIDENTIAL

- I've checked her in the on-site log, she doesn't get in trouble

Page 4

Case #02-006-04-FO1

REF: Staff Misconduct RE: CO Collins

02/10/04

At the end of this interview both Sgt. Miller and I told CO Collins to restrict his contact with I/M [REDACTED] to official matters to help stem the flow of rumors. On 2/5/04 an inmate approached me on the MSU walkway and asked when we were going to put a stop to the goings on between CO Collins and I/M [REDACTED] when asked when she had seen them talk she replied Wednesday in the Officers office. Later that day CO Collins came to the I&I office and asked what was new with the investigation. at which time he was asked if he had spoke to I/M [REDACTED] after we had spoke last. CO Collins stated that he had talked to I/M [REDACTED] in the atrium between the pods for about 5 to 10 minutes on Wednesday. When asked why he had spoken to her CO Collins stated he wanted to make sure she knew she wasn't in trouble. When asked if he didn't remember the suggestion to keep all contact on an official basis CO Collins stated that he guessed it wasn't a good idea to talk to her that night. CO Hoover confirmed this conversation between CO Collins and I/M [REDACTED]

Further questions were asked about the comparing of hands at the podium in the unit at which time CO Collins gave the same reason as I/M [REDACTED] that it had to do with buying a guitar. CO Collins denies any physical contact. CO Collins stated that he felt he was helping the inmate who was in trouble and didn't feel he had done anything wrong. When asked if he had given any personal information to the inmate CO Collins stated that he would talk about what he did on the weekends etc. I/M Collins submitted a written statement (see attachment 8) in which he states that the reason he spoke to I/M [REDACTED] after being told to keep conversations strictly business, was that he felt it was his responsibility to pass that directive in to her at the first opportunity. CO Collins denies anything is between him and Inmate [REDACTED] and feels that the conversations he had with the inmate were all part of being a good officer.

CONCLUSIONS: In the course of this investigation the following information has been developed:

- At least 7 individuals to include co-workers, Sergeants, CUS and Investigator attempted to discuss the apparent relationship with I/M [REDACTED]
- After being told to limit conversations with I/M [REDACTED] to strictly business matters CO Collins continued the conversations
- CO Collins did discuss personal information with I/M [REDACTED] to include outside activities, home and past jobs.
- CO Collins looked into I/M [REDACTED] history to include looking her crime up on the Internet and looking into her disciplinary files in the unit.
- CO Collins stated to several individuals that I/M [REDACTED] was different from other inmates.
- I/M [REDACTED] has stated that she developed a closeness with CO Collins due to their conversations.

7 Attachments

1. Written statement from CO Lockett
2. Written statement from CO Clover
3. Written statement from Sgt. Smith
4. Written statement from CUS Turk
5. Written statement from CO Hoover
6. Written statement from OAS Shanks
7. Written statement from CO Pine
8. Written statement from CO Collins

CONFIDENTIAL



Feb. 10, 2004

To: Steve Baxter

From: K. Clover

It was to my attention by C/O Luckett that C/O Collins was getting a little to friendly with inmate [REDACTED], this was brought to his attention by inmate [REDACTED]. Inmate [REDACTED] was afraid of retaliation from staff so she did not want to say anything. Inmate [REDACTED] has brought this to C/O Luckett's attention more than once. I spoke to C/O Collins about this situation and he stated that he has been speaking to Sgt. Smith about this.

Attachment (2)

Baxter, Steven B.

From: Smith, Richard E
Sent: Thursday, February 05, 2004 3:19 PM
To: Baxter, Steven B.
Cc: Turk, Robert J. Jr.
Subject: C/O R Collins

On Jan. 27, 04 I had a lengthy conversation with C/O Collins about the continuing conversations with I/M [REDACTED]. I told him that I had observed him in numerous conversations with this particular inmate. I did not order him to stay away just that if I see this stuff happening, other staff and inmates are also see this occur. That was his Friday and he had annual leave on Friday and Saturday. When I returned on Tues. 2-3-04 I had the conversation with you. I also addressed the situation with CUS Turk. It was decided that I would give him a directive that all conversations with this inmate would be professional in nature. I also told him that We had discussed moving him to a different location. He seemed to get the point that this was a serious matter and could affect his job. That was his Friday and I have not had a conversation with him since. If you require any further info just let me know.

Attachment (3)

Baxter, Steven B.

From: Turk, Robert J. Jr.
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2004 11:10 AM
To: Baxter, Steven B.
Subject: FW: C/O Collins

Got your message??? Here is what I sent you this am.

-----Original Message-----

From: Turk, Robert J. Jr.
Sent: Monday, February 09, 2004 7:28 AM
To: Baxter, Steven B.
Subject: C/O Collins

Per your request, I am providing the following information regarding my conversation with C/O Collins. On Monday, 2/2/04 at approx 1530 C/O Collins came into my office. I asked him how things were going and he stated "Trying to stay out of trouble". I had already had a conversation with you regarding some rumors possibly being spread by I/M [REDACTED]. I asked if it was in reference to I/M [REDACTED] and he stated, "so you've heard". I explained to him that I have heard rumors and at this point that is all they are and if nothing is found to substantiate, the individual will be dealt with. C/O Collins asked who had been spreading rumors about him and I/M [REDACTED] talking too much. I did not specify who and said that it is being looked into. He guessed that it was I/M [REDACTED] because I/M [REDACTED] was usually the topic of their conversations. He said that [REDACTED] often complained about [REDACTED] pursuing her and how insecure [REDACTED] is about his/her manhood. I asked C/O Collins if he felt that he talked to I/M [REDACTED] too often. He stated that he supposes he does talk to her more often than any of the other I/M's. I asked C/O Collins if their conversations were on a professional level. He stated yes, for the most part and sometimes she talks about her two girls and other family. C/O Collins added that she is not a trouble maker and seems like a decent person. I explained perception to C/O Collins and that if your conversations were limited to professional business, that you wouldn't need all this time to discuss those and therefore you may give the impression of sharing things on a personal level. I directed C/O Collins to keep doing the great job in the unit and to limit your conversations with I/M [REDACTED] to professional conversation. He nodded OK and returned to the pod.

Attachment (4)

Baxter, Steven B.

From: Hoover, Shannon M.
Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2004 7:25 PM
To: Baxter, Steven B.
Subject: Statement

On 02/03/04 I noticed C/O Collins and I/M [REDACTED] talking in the foyer between A and B pod for approximately 10+ minutes. I do not know what the conversation was about.

In the past C/O Collins has stated that he hasn't done anything wrong and he just talks to [REDACTED], nothing else. From my observations he has spent a lot of time talking to [REDACTED] and he has been approached by myself and other C/O's about the fact that he spends too much time with her. As this situation has progressed and Collins and [REDACTED] have been talked to about the amount of time they talk, on one occasion Collins asked me if I had seen [REDACTED] to which I stated no. He said he wanted to talk to her to make sure she was ok.

Approximately a week ago Collins and [REDACTED] had stepped aside into the hallway between the Sgt's door and the staff bathroom to talk. Collins said he wanted to let her know that nobody was in trouble. They were in the hallway (visible to staff and inmates entering and exiting the unit) for approximately 15 minutes when I knocked on the window and gestured for Collins to go back in the pod. It was brought to his attention that that was a bad move on his part to talk in the hallway. He agreed.

C/O Hoover

Attachment (5)

February 5, 2004

I was asked by Officer Collins to be a witness for a conversation with Inmate [REDACTED] regarding what was said about her being scared of Officer Collins and that that is why she talks to him all the time. She denied being scared of Officer Collins.

Officer Collins sometimes helps me with the mail in the unit and during our conversations he has mentioned Inmate [REDACTED] and how she does not fit the inmate profile.

Amy Shanks
Office Assistant Senior

Attachment (6)

To Mr. Baxter

I am writing you about C/O Collins and I/M [REDACTED] per your request. For about the last month I have noticed Collins and [REDACTED] having many private conversations. At first I did not think anything of it because Collins said that [REDACTED] was having personal issues and needed someone to talk to. However, as time went on the conversations were becoming more often and seemed to last longer. I decided that I better talk to Officer Collins about my observations. I first told him that it seems to me that [REDACTED] was developing some kind of feelings for him. I told him to be very careful about the amount of time he spends talking to her. Things did not change much and I noticed that they were still spending a lot of time in private conversation. I kept telling him the same thing over and over. I told him that inmates are watching them and they are going to assume there is something going on. Collins said he wasn't worried about it because he is not doing anything wrong. I said it doesn't matter because these inmates love to make up stories. It seemed to me no matter what I said nothing changed. Collins had told me other inmates were starting to make up stories about him and [REDACTED]. I said to Collins, "Are you surprised. I told you that would happen."

This is what the many conversations entailed. It seemed like we were having the same conversation over and over. I do want to say that Officer Collins is a very good officer. I do not feel that he would ever do anything inappropriate to jeopardize his career or family.

C/O Pine
Medium Security Unit

Attachment (1)

February 9th, 2004

Attachment (8)

Mr. Baxter,

Friday afternoon when we spoke, you stated that if I had anything I wanted to say, I could write a letter on my own behalf and it would be included in your report to the Superintendent. Thank you for giving me this opportunity.

The whole time the rumors and false accusations have been going on I've told myself that if I'm not doing anything wrong, then there's nothing to get in trouble for. I still believe this. Officers are being taught that Corrections is changing from the old 'knuckle dragger' mentality of yelling, barking orders, and sometimes roughing up inmates, to a more educated approach, utilizing communication skills, building a rapport with offenders and being a positive role model; someone that they can trust.

I have an easy going and approachable personality and I find that this works to my favor. Yes this does potentially open me up to manipulation, but I feel that if this were to happen, I would recognize it. With my personality I don't have many problems in my unit because I'm consistent with how I treat offenders. I have often been complimented on how good of an officer I am and how good of a job I'm doing. I've been told that it's my personality that has made me successful and the reason I fit in so well with the crew and the unit. I have also been told that not all officers do things the same way. Everyone finds a style that works well for him or her. I don't mistreat people, I treat them with respect. I am firm but not mean; I don't scream and yell; I don't bark orders unless the situation requires it. Therefore, I believe that I'm a fair officer who the offenders seem to respect and come to regularly.

It seems that now, I have come under some scrutiny for talking to one particular offender, [REDACTED] and that our conversations were not all strictly business. She initiated some and I initiated some. None of the non-business conversations were inappropriate. There are a lot of officers who have people that they talk to and have a rapport with, and they don't always talk about just business. I have worked hard to build and maintain a very professional relationship with all of the offenders I have supervised. I don't want them to be afraid to talk to me, so I do my best to make myself available to them if they need to talk. I know that because of this, there are a number of women in MSU that feel comfortable enough to talk to me about anything, (nothing inappropriate, or about me personally though - I don't allow that). Because these women are not afraid, I gain some very useful information, at times, about what is going on in the Unit, or with particular offenders. If an officer is told he/she can't speak to offenders in a casual non-business manner, then a very useful tool is taken away and it's very difficult to develop a rapport with the offenders.

When I was directed to keep all future conversations, with Ms. [REDACTED], to strictly business. Rather than wait, I felt it was my responsibility to pass that directive on to her at the first opportunity. Toward the end of my shift, I asked another unit officer to send Ms. [REDACTED] to me. I then passed on to her the directive given to me.

There are offenders in the unit that don't like the fact that Ms. [REDACTED] talks to me. False accusations are being spread about me that are untrue and very offensive to me. My superiors and co-workers don't believe any of them. All conversations between any offender and myself, has been out in plain view of everyone and an appropriate distance has always been maintained. I have done nothing wrong or inappropriate. I do understand the concerns regarding these situations and where they could potentially lead, (and where they have led for others). However, I am not 'the others' and have no intentions of allowing this kind of thing to happen.

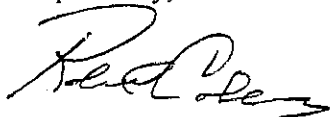
There are inmates in the unit that have romantic interests in Ms. [REDACTED] and some who have interests in me - and this is all known. I have done nothing to encourage any of this, but when I would hear a false accusation or rumor, I tried to address it by letting unit staff, my Sergeant and CUS know, and making sure that everything was brought out into the open. This is why I asked for Mr. Baxter to be present during a conversation I had with Sgt. Miller.

I know that offender [REDACTED] was placed in segregation to try and send the message that spreading false accusations will not be tolerated. I also have been told that there is now discussion about removing me from MSU, or even terminating me since I'm still probationary. At this point, I must ask, how will doing either look to the offenders, and what message will this send to them? It seems to me that it would only reinforce the idea that they are able to manipulate any situation to their own gain and that inappropriate or false accusations will be tolerated.

I love going to work every day and working in MSU. I enjoy working for Sgt. Smith and have learned a great deal from him. I also benefit from and enjoy my co-workers because we have a very family like working relationship.

I understand that this situation must be looked into, but I hope that when the truth is revealed, you will see that I've done nothing wrong and that I will be left in MSU where I am valued and belong.

Respectfully,



Robert Collins