

The leaders in our community, both local & nationally, have encouraged me to expound on prior harassment, retaliation, and attacks since my work start date, June 21, 2021, at Haskell Indian Nations University as the cross country coach.

My position, from its start, to its premature end, April 18, 2022, was persistently and strategically undermined for the entirety of my employment with no resolution nor accountability haven taken place.

As a Native American coach and former collegiate runner, I have been interested in coaching at Haskell Indian Nations University for some time. I felt that Haskell was a place I could recruit the best and brightest in the United States while supporting their journey to a low-cost university education. This belief and faith led my wife, and our two newly adopted kids, 5-year-old Billy Littlewhirlwind & 6-year-old Ruby Littlewhirlwind, to uproot our lives entirely from California to Lawrence, Kansas to work at Haskell Indian Nations University.

I was informed before my start date that the “Gipp family” will create difficulties for my position by Gary Tanner, Aaron Hove, Jerry Tuckwin, Brent Cahwee, Dwight Pickering, Michael Daney, James Nells, and many others. Initially, I had no idea, nor could fathom, to the degree that the Gipp family were willing to go to undermine my position and family's livelihood in coaching at Haskell. I was unaware of the extent that the Gipp family permeated various levels within Haskell and the BIE:

- Al Gipp: Former Track Coach and former Cross Country Coach
- Freda Gipp, Al Gipp's wife: Works in the Office of the President, former assistant coach to her husband, Al Gipp.
- Judith Gipp, Al Gipp's sister: faculty member at Haskell, former Athletic Director, two times removed, and former assistant coach to her brother, Al Gipp.
- Aja McCormick, an aligned member of the Gipp family, hired by Judith Gipp: former Sports Information Director.
- Gerald Gipp, former Haskell Indian Nations University's President.

Previously, I was involved in two investigations. One conducted by USPS, that was deemed a 'waste of time and money,' and should not have been involved per Haskell's AIB Report:

“The Postal Service Investigation should not have been involved as the allegations were not supported by any solid evidence and it appears that the only witnesses interviewed were those involved in the allegations, and it appeared there was little to no effort to obtain various viewpoints.”

• [Page 15 BIE AIB Report](#)

“Bottom line is a Postal Service level investigation was uncalled for and a waste of time and money, especially knowing they were limited in their capacity to interview key witnesses.”

• [Page 15 BIE AIB Report](#)

The second investigation was conducted over Haskell by BIE's AIB Board. AIB's report was withheld for 16 months, then further withheld in being switched out for USPS's report. These tactics to suppress the AIB report was in defiance of both a court order and an agreement to comply by the U.S. Attorney's Office to release the report.

The first investigation, USPS, involved ongoing retaliation and harassment by our Sports Information Director (SID), Aja McCormick and the aligned Gipp family members. Who continuously perpetrated false reports. Per BIE's AIB Report:

"In fact, the Board finds that there were other HINU employees and contractors involved that may have fabricated many of the issues reported [on Mayes]."

•[Page 15 BIE AIB Report](#)

Such reports led to the no-contact order and the USPS Investigation. As BIE's AIB Board confirms with the no-contact order and USPS's investigation:

"The Board believes the no contact order for Mayes became a useful tool to accomplish an underlying intent to get Mayes out of HINU coaching. If he could not be on campus or around students, he could not do his job. The Board could not find any justifiable reason to place Mayes on a no-contact order and must reiterate that there is absolutely no evidence he was a safety threat to any student or staff member."

•[Page 15 & 16 BIE AIB Report](#)

Dealing with such tactics began to magnify when I started reporting ongoing abuses and crimes being committed by the Gipp family members and their aligned coworkers. In one instance on October 5, 2021, I witnessed large-scale theft by Judith Gipp and Al Gipp, who loaded up their personal vehicle with 20-some boxes of pricey athletic equipment and apparel, and then driving off-campus with it, only to see their family and friends wearing it at events. As campus knows and has shared, the Gipp family and aligned coworkers have committed such crimes for decades.

Following October 5, 2021's theft report, McCormick began hosting secret meetings to create frivolous reports and did so with Al Gipp's, Judith Gipp's, and Freda Gipp's students. Their objective was simple, do whatever they want, when they want, to hurt whoever they want. "Rules for the, but not for me."

I requested a work orientation, Haskell's policies & procedures, but to no avail, all systematically withheld. Haskell's Human Resources Mona Gonzalez stated in email, "I am not the provider of policies," & my most recent supervisor, Steve Byington stated, "There's no good place to find them (rules)."

"Students alleged HINU illegally breached their coaches' contract through systematic harassment and false allegations. The Board believes Mayes was set up for failure, intentionally not provides policies or procedures, not provided a work orientation, and was harassed by [J. Gipp] and [Aja McCormick]. HINU Leadership and BIE HR Relations staff overreacted to mere allegations with limited or no direct evidence. Mayes's contract was eventually terminated without any evidence of wrongdoing."

•[Page 4 & 5 BIE AIB Report](#)

When I became aware of McCormick's meetings, I reported it to my supervisor and McCormick's supervisor, Athletic Director Gary Tanner. Tanner elevated and affirmed such reports to Haskell President, Tamarah Pfeiffer. Unfathomably, Pfeiffer proceeded to remove Tanner entirely from any acting authority, rendering him helpless per, "You're too close."

I was soon told on November 1, 2021, that an USPS investigation was to follow, and I was issued a “no-contact order,” as was my students, effective November 4, 2021. Such justification for the no-contact and its reports were withheld, but later known to be McCormick’s and the Gipp’s reports used to justify the no-contact. Such reports were wrongfully withheld from Tanner before and after his removal. The reiteration Tanner and I received concerning the no-contact, “it’ll only be two weeks,” an overt lie. The USPS investigation and no-contact order did not finish till months after my removal, all of such reports, withheld during my work time at Haskell. With all signs of due process being non-existent.

- The “no-contact order” barred me from communicating with Fall’s XC student-athletes I recruited to Haskell, even though these students had **zero** complaints and all such complaints were by McCormick, Gipp’s, and Gipp students.
- One of my reports concerning harassment, being bullied, fraud, and abuse was to OIG on February 1, 2022.
- February 23, 2021, OIG emailed, “*Your complaint information was provided to BIE for any action deemed appropriate.*”
- One day later, February 24th, my contract and pay was halted immediately per, “*Stop Work Order.*”
- Hours after the “*Stop Work Order*” was issued, my first call with the USPS investigation and the investigator came in.

Harassment and hostile confrontations magnified when Judith Gipp was promoted to interim Athletic Director on January 1, 2022, for a second time.

Years earlier Judith was removed as athletic director for mismanagement of funds. Sure enough, my budget dropped by 49,000 instantly, and 4 requests to discuss the disappearance of 49k was denied by Judith

I was regularly followed and stalked at work by Judith, she ransacked my desk two occasions, and then began going after all the students I recruited, issuing threats, conducting hostile meetings, used her students to bully them, and like me, began following them perpetually if full compliance and control was not met. Per AIB Report:

“[Mayes] students were intimidated, including their continued participation as student-athletes was threatened if they failed to comply with the no-contact order.”

• [Page 3 BIE AIB Report](#):

-AND-

“[Mayes’s] students were subject to bullying, intimidation and harassment — or at least treated differently for wanting to work with Mayes,” and the university’s “*management did not enforce the Department of Interior Anti-Harassment Policy when complaints were raised.*”

• [Page 5 BIE AIB Report](#)

-AND-

"This requirement appeared to be unprecedented," the report reads. "Students allege Tonia Salvini and others threatened and intimidated them into signing the no -contact order. Evidence supports this student allegation."

•[Page 3 BIE AIB Report](#)

During all of this, I sought assistance through the proper chain of command by first informing one of my supervisors, Steve Byington (CFO), in an attempt to resolve ongoing harassment, retaliation, and attacks towards my position at Haskell. The issues remained unresolved, as **25 of 25 emailed reports & requests** went unanswered. I was then advised to contact Haskell President Tamarah Pfeiffer to reach a more immediate resolution due to the urgency of the situation.

I emailed the Haskell President on February 9th, 16th and then on, 22nd. I noted all three times that I needed a meeting to discuss the continuous assaults and concerns I had. I received no response and was ignored as oppression continued. **All 6 of 6 attempts to report to the Haskell President went unanswered, minus December 2, 2021's email response and assertion she had to delete the reports I sent her.**

On February 24, 2022, I received a call from the Division of Acquisition that my pay and contract was halted, effective immediately. There was no warning, no reason(s), nor any sort of due process. Divisions of acquisitions noted that a current Haskell administrator contacted them, stating my contract obligations could not be fulfilled due an "ongoing" investigation "no-contact order" affecting my ability to hold practices. An investigation that was to be two weeks, was now on month 5. An investigation that was falsely said to be "independent." An investigation that continued to be stalled, manipulated, and twisted to continue perpetual abuse. Per BIE's AIB Report:

"The Postal Service Investigation should not have been involved as the allegations were not supported by any solid evidence and it appears that the only witnesses interviewed were those involved in the allegations, and it appeared there was little to no effort to obtain various viewpoints."

•[Page 15 BIE AIB Report](#)

"Management at Haskell engaged in efforts to limit the U.S. Postal Service investigation and 'produce the outcome they wanted.'" In part, that involved "pitting two factions of student athletes against each other to support their cause" and "limiting their list of witnesses to a specific few."

•[Page 4 BIE AIB Report](#)

Soon after, February 28, 2022, via call and reporting to the next official in my chain of command, BIE Director Tony Dearman, I was informed of reinstatement to follow.

Soon after, two meetings were arranged by Haskell's Vice President, Tonia Salvini, on March 11th and March 14th. I was assured reinstatement was to follow, and when I requested to know the contents of 11/4/2021 reports via 'no-contact order,' I was met with a crackling-like scream from Salvini, shouting, "YOU HUSH! THIS IS FOR YOUR BEST INTEREST!"

Following reinstatement meetings **more** fraudulent reports were **manifested** by Judith Gipp, her family, and aligned co-workers. The promises of my reinstatement were hollow and never honored.

April 13, 2022, OIG emailed me and informed me they forwarded BIE my 2nd OIG report (and a whistleblower report) on unrestrained abuse at Haskell. Five days later, April 18th, I was terminated via email by BIE for **“Sole Government Convenience.”**

Months later, July 9th, 2022, I was informed through a co-worker of BIE Director Dearman, and a long-time mentor, James Nells, Dearman “had my back, and his full support,” and he was going to reinstate me upon completion of Haskell’s investigation, which started two days later, July 11th, 2022.

Upon Haskell’s investigation and its completion, Dearman’s promises of reinstatement were unmet.