

From the desk of: Ms. Natalie M. Williams

Ali Shama
Assistant Principal of Science, Music, Art, Business and Technology
John F. Kennedy High School

October 20, 2005

Mr, Shama,

Regarding your 'failure to present lesson plan' letter to me:
I have filed a grievance against this letter to file and will attend a hearing regarding it on
October 20, 2005

Your file letter was hand delivered to me by yourself and Mr. Rashid Davis. It referred
your 'visit' to the end of my 8 period class the previous day.

My recollection the incidents are as follows:

On Thursday, you appeared in the doorway of room 676 during 8th period; I was engaged
in teaching my Living Environment Regent's Prep class. Since it did not appear as
though you would be moving; I asked you to enter the room. A student who was newly
programmed for the class needed to start her seed growth lab report project. I asked you
to stand in the front of the room while I obtained some supplies. (Since the students did
not know who you were, they might have taken you for a substitute teacher). I ran
through the hallway, as is my characteristic mode of transportation, and found my supply
of seeds and other materials in room 620. I returned quickly to the room after having
retrieved the needed items. The entire process took no longer than one minute (I timed
it). I then returned to teaching the class. You left from the front of the classroom and
went outside into the hallway. I thought that you had left. I continued teaching.
Students were engaged in a variety of activities. Some were setting up their seed
experiments. Others were writing their observations in preparation for their lab reports.
Others were working on an old Regent's Exam; still others were completing the previous
day's supplementary class work assignment. Students were coming to me to show me
their work so that I could record it in my grade book.

The students heard a bell ring. Some exited through the back door. I informed the
students which remained that those bells were for the other school. I told them that "our
bells will ring in a few minutes". I blocked the front door of the room so that they would
stay inside. Then, I saw you. You were lingering outside of my room the whole time.
The students stood and waited for the Kennedy bell. When it rang, they began leaving.
You walked up to me and said; " Ms. Williams; can I see the lesson plans for this class?
I stated that I have to teach another class 9th period and asked if I could give it to you
later. Within earshot of some remaining students; you said.
"Ms. Williams; I need to see your lesson plans right now". I was placing my materials on
my cart. I said; " I have to go to my next class". Your tone and insistence was
disconcerting. I collected my belongings and headed to my next class. You pursued me
out of the classroom after the bell change and repeatedly demanded my lesson plans.
You followed me closely as I exited room 676. You stated: "No, I'd like to see your
lesson plans right now. Can you show them to me?" I said "I have another class to
teach"; and I began to push my cart through a crowded hallway. You followed me closely
into the hallway. Again you persisted: 'do you have lesson plans for this class?' I then
saw Mr. Colón follow behind you as we passed the science office in room 670. Again, in
the hallway, you insisted. 'I need to see your lessons'. This last demand was overheard
by my 9 th period students. I informed you that I would provide you with the lesson plans
later. I unlocked and opened the door to room 666. It is just around the corner from
room 676. I placed my cart there and let the students in; I then ran through the hall to
room 620; where my file cabinet is located. I quickly found the handouts for the lesson
and ran back to room 666. Mr. Colon was standing in front of my classroom. You, Mr.
Shama waited in the hallway. I returned with the handouts in under a minute. The start of
9 th period bell had not even rung yet. Students were settling down to begin class. I
entered the room, bypassing a sinister look from you in the hallway upon my entrance.
Mr. Colon saw me and then left the room. I began instruction with the students. I
noticed that you stood in the doorway of room 666 'observing' me. I stated that I will be
closing the door because the air-conditioner is on. I closed the front classroom door.
You continued to leer through the door window pane. After my Anatomy and

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Physiology class had ended. I made copies of my lesson plans and went down to the Principal's office. I found you there. I presented you with my lesson plans and asked that you sign for receiving them. You refused to sign. Ms. Linda Faughn; school secretary was there to witness our interaction. You stated that I would have to check with the principal because I asked for your lesson plans then; not at the end of the day. Since you refused to sign for receipt I did not give you the lesson plans.

I then asked you whether you responded to a letter that I had written regarding Ms. Shama summoning me for a 'lateness' to a staff development meeting. I told you that on that day, I had informed you that I needed to move a cabinet and stated that 'your sister is making an issue of it. You looked at me and said that 'I don't recall the incident'. (You later admitted that you did give permission for me to retrieve a cabinet, therefore causing Ms. Shama's letter to file to be withdrawn).

The next morning (Friday), I returned to the principal's office and asked both Ms. Faughn and Ms. Vey to sign for receipt of my lesson plans. They both stated that they felt uncomfortable signing for it. I had the copies of my receipt request and the lesson plans time stamped and then placed them in Mr. Rotunno's and your mailbox.

During period 5 on Friday, September 23, 2005, you entered my Earth Science class unannounced to have me sign for a letter. Mr. Davis accompanied you. You called me out of the room. In the hallway, You stated that Mr. Davis was your witness. You presented me with a letter to sign. You then asked me to sign it. I commented; ' So, you want me to sign for you but you won't sign for me? I told you that "I won't sign it before reading it first. I also need a copy". Mr. Davis stayed with my class. I walked to the science office and read the letter in the hallway as I walked. You followed closely behind me. I signed and dated the letter when we arrived in room 670 and wrote a comment. I then proceeded to Xerox the letter. You stared at me so intently that I took the precaution of covering my hand as I punched in my code to the copy machine. I handed you the original letter and kept the copy for myself. You started to say something to me. As I was leaving the room, I said; "Mr. Shama, under the circumstances, I would prefer that all future communications with you be in writing". I continued walking back to classroom. You continued to follow me and got ahead to stand in front of me. You responded. Ms. Williams; I was about to say something positive. I said 'excuse me'. You then moved out of the way. You continued to speak, saying; "don't you want to hear something positive?" I walked away even quicker then.

In the letter, you claimed that I left the class while you covered it. You stated that you waited approximately 5 minutes for me to return with the seed supplies. You also state that the students left early. These are gross distortions of fact. You also criticize me for not having a 'Do Now' and Aim on the board. While I had not written the do now and aim; I had given the students verbal instructions at the beginning of class. They were engaged in those multiple activities when you 'visited'. You also stated that you and Mr. Colon waited approximately 5 minutes for me as I obtained handouts for my 9 th period class. Again, your timing is incorrect.

We met only two months ago. On September 7, 2005. You introduced yourself as the new Assisant Principal of Music, Art and Science. You described yourself as a former music teacher at Forest Hills high School and stated that you have ideas on how to improve things at Kennedy. You told us that you were brought in by Mr. Rotunno because you have a technology background. You then briefly described your path to Kennedy. In short, you became a teacher ' after the dot com bubble burst". As you failed to give us an opportunity to tell you about our backgrounds; allow me to introduce myself.

I am Ms. Natalie Williams. I have taught at John F. Kennedy High School for the past 11 years. I am committed to serving our largely Hispanic and Black student population. I have taught a wide repertoire of science courses here. (I currently have a teaching program with 4 different preparations). I hold a Bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago. I hold two Master's degrees from Columbia University Teachers College. My M.A. is in Applied Physiology. My Ed. M. degree is for Instructional Technology. I have attended many teacher training workshops and summer institutes. I enjoy teaching my students by using many hands-on activities. I have won teaching awards in recognition of

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the service that I have provided to my students. The past two and a half years have been difficult for us at Kennedy high school. I have a great concern for the welfare of the students and the teachers at JFK.

I would be most interested in hearing about your qualifications. I'll now ask what all of the science teachers in our department have not yet dared to. What qualifies you – a former teacher of music and art - to supervise me? A degree in Fine Arts is not, in my opinion, sufficient qualification to supervise science teachers. As you claim title to being the Assistant Principal of 'Music, Art, Science, Business and Technology'; I expect better credentials than that to merit your highly paid supervisor's salary.

It is my hope that your friendship with Mr. Rotunno (Principal) and your relationship to your sister (Wafra Shama; Assistant Principal of Organization) are not the only true 'qualifications' that you bring to the job.

Sincerely,

Ms. Natalie M. Williams
Science Teacher

Attachments;

Hand drawn map of 6th floor classroom locations

Bell schedule for the small schools housed at the Kennedy campus

Cc.

Ms. Diane Stillman; UFT Representative

Ms. Lynn Winderbaum, Bronx UFT District Representative

Ms. Wafra Shama; Assistant Principal of Organization

Mr. Anthony Rotunno; Principal

Mr. Robert Colón, Science Coordinator

Mr. Rashid Davis, Assistant Principal Programming and Attendance