

KELVIN J. COCHRAN vs. CITY OF ATLANTA, ET AL.
Melissa J. Mullinax on 02/23/2017

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3	Exhibit 91	58
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7	E-mail dated 1/13/15 from Ms. Mullinax	
8	to Ms. Torres, Ms. Byrd, Ms. Taylor	
8	and Ms. Garland, Subject: Support on	
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21	to Ms. Torres, Ms. Garland and	
21	Ms. Shahar, Subject: Press release	
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22	Exhibit 98	69
23	Press Release	
24	(Also discussed were previously marked Plaintiff's Exhibits 13 and 49.)	
25		

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1 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: This is the
2 beginning of Media Number 1 in the
3 deposition of Melissa Mullinax in the
4 matter of Kelvin Cochran versus City of
5 Atlanta, et al., Case Number 1:15-cv-00477.

6 Today's date is February 23rd, 2017.
7 The time on the monitor is 9:38 a.m. My
8 name is Brandon Brantley. I'm the
9 videographer. The court reporter is
10 Suzanne Beasley. We are here with Huseby
11 Global Litigation.

12 Counsel, please introduce yourselves,
13 after which the court reporter will swear
14 in the witness.

15 MS. HOLCOMB: Christiana Holcomb,
16 Ken Connelly and Kevin Theriot for the
17 Plaintiff Kelvin Cochran.

18 MS. HINTON: Kathryn Hinton for the
19 Defendants.

20 (The signature of the witness to the
21 deposition was reserved.)

22 MELISSA J. MULLINAX,
23 having been duly sworn, was examined and testified
24 as follows:

25

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1 EXAMINATION

2 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

3 Q. Good morning, Ms. Mullinax.

4 A. How are you?

5 Q. I'm well, thank you. How are you?

6 A. Good.

7 Q. I'm Christiana Holcomb. I'm one of the
8 attorneys representing the plaintiff Kelvin Cochran
9 in this case.

10 Would you please state and spell your full
11 legal name?

12 A. Sure. It's Melissa June Mullinax.

13 M-e-l-i-s-s-a, June, Mullinax, M-u-l-l-i-n-a-x.

14 Q. I'll be taking your deposition today.

15 Have you ever been deposed before?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. And in what situation?

18 A. In a case involving an Indian tribe in
19 Mississippi.

20 Q. Well, I'd like to go ahead and go over a
21 few introductory matters, just so that we're on the
22 same page regarding the deposition and to make sure
23 you understand the procedure.

24 The court reporter and the videographer
25 will be recording both my questions and your answers.

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1 As a result, it's really important that neither one
2 of us talk over the other and that we -- that you
3 respond with verbal responses. She can't very well
4 record head shakes and nonverbal cues.

5 Also I'll try to wait until you finish
6 responding before I ask you the next question and I
7 ask that you do the same for me, wait until I've
8 completed my question before providing your answer.

9 And if I ask a question that's unclear to
10 you, please just ask me to clarify it. I'll be happy
11 to do so. And if at any point later in the
12 deposition you recall something that you would like
13 to add to your answer, please go ahead and let me
14 know, and we'll make sure you're able to do that at
15 that time.

16 You've got water. We have coffee
17 available. If any point you need a break, please
18 just let me know. I'll go ahead and finish that line
19 of questioning and then we can definitely take a
20 break. And I'll probably want one at some point as
21 well.

22 A. Okay.

23 Q. Now I'm going to ask you a couple of
24 questions related just to your condition today. How
25 are you feeling?

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1 A. Fine.

2 Q. Are you under a doctor's care for any
3 illness?

4 A. No.

5 Q. Are you taking any medication or drugs
6 that might impair your ability to respond accurately
7 today?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Have you ever been a party to a lawsuit
10 before?

11 A. No.

12 Q. You said you had been deposed before?

13 A. (Witness nods head affirmatively.)

14 Q. Have you ever testified in court?

15 A. No.

16 Q. And do you understand that you're under
17 oath today, and so the testimony that you provide is
18 of the same import as if you were testifying in a
19 court of law?

20 A. I do.

21 Q. Did you review any documents in
22 preparation for your deposition today?

23 A. I did.

24 Q. And what were they?

25 A. E-mails that I had sent and the ordinance.

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1 That's it.

2 Q. Did you bring any documents with you
3 today?

4 A. In my briefcase, in my bag.

5 Q. Do you have documents in your briefcase
6 related to the matter?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Did you speak with anyone about your
9 deposition other than counsel?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Now we're just going to move into some
12 general questions about your background. What is
13 your address? Just city and state is fine.

14 A. Atlanta, Georgia.

15 Q. And how long have you lived in Atlanta?

16 A. My whole life.

17 Q. Are you married?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Do you profess any religious faith?

20

21 Q. What's the highest level of schooling that
22 you've completed?

23 A. A bachelor's.

24 Q. And where did you go to college?

25 A. Agnes Scott College.

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1 Q. And what was your major?

2 A. Political science and religious studies.

3 Q. Did you pursue any post-bachelor studies?

4 A. I started law school, but didn't finish.

5 Q. Tell me about your employment history.

6 Just a brief overview is fine.

7 A. I started my own firm almost right out of
8 college and ran that until 2009, when I sold it to a
9 firm in D.C. called The Edison Group. And then I
10 worked for this Indian tribe in Mississippi until
11 2011, and then I came to work for the mayor in 2012.

12 Q. What type of firm?

13 A. It was a public affairs firm.

14 Q. So you began working for the City in 2012?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. In what position?

17 A. I came on as the women's policy advisor
18 and then moved into communications in the mayor's
19 office for two years. And then in August of 2014
20 moved over to become his senior advisor.

21 Q. Describe a little bit about your position
22 as the women's policy advisor, please.

23 A. At the time the mayor wanted to launch a
24 women's incubator, entrepreneurship incubator, and so
25 I came on to essentially put that program together,

1 the structure of that program. And I did that and
2 then moved into communications, so there was a hold
3 there.

4 Q. And what were your responsibilities in the
5 communications department?

6 A. I handled -- I was the -- sort of
7 amorphous because of just the nature of the office,
8 but the operational departments. Any major policy
9 initiatives or any complicated press requests would
10 come to me for the operational departments. I was a
11 planner and strategist and writer for the chief
12 operating officer.

13 Q. All right. And so in August of 2014 you
14 indicated you became senior advisor --

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. -- to Mayor Reed. Please describe your
17 job duties in that position.

18 A. Also somewhat amorphous, but I managed his
19 external relationships in certain communities,
20 certain constituencies, I guess, you'd say. I work
21 with him on all the appointments to boards and
22 commissions that he makes. I project manage projects
23 that are important to him that are not going well or
24 need a boost.

25 Q. So in talking about managing his external

1 relationships, you mentioned certain communities and
2 constituencies. Could you expound upon that?

3 A. Sure. The women's community, the LGBT
4 community, the faith community. It's really as needs
5 arise. Neighborhood, neighborhood groups, for
6 example, around Turner Field. Just -- it's
7 really -- it's not set. It's not defined. It's just
8 there are some relationships that he manages directly
9 and doesn't need outside support, and others where I
10 come in and others come in.

11 Q. And what relationships might he -- could
12 you provide some examples of relationships that he
13 would directly manage?

14 A. All of his national political
15 relationships. So when I say "external," I don't
16 mean the DNC and those kinds of things. That's what
17 I'm saying.

18 Q. How frequently do you interact with the
19 mayor?

20 A. Pretty often.

21 Q. Would that be on a daily basis, a weekly
22 basis?

23 A. Certainly weekly, you know, when he's in
24 the office.

25 Q. What would be your primary method of

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1 communication with him?

2 A. Talking with him in the hallway or in his
3 office.

4 Q. Do you use e-mail very much --

5 A. I do.

6 Q. -- when communicating with the mayor?

7 A. I don't.

8 Q. What about communications with his senior
9 executive team?

10 A. I talk with them all the time. I'm part
11 of that senior executive team. I'm not sure which
12 group you're talking about exactly.

13 Q. All right. Do you have any City-issued
14 equipment for use in your job?

15 A. I do.

16 Q. And what types of equipment?

17 A. I have a cell phone. That's it. I don't
18 have a laptop.

19 Q. Do you have a desktop?

20 A. I do.

21 Q. Do you have a City e-mail account?

22 A. I do.

23 Q. And what about a tablet or iPad?

24 A. I don't.

25 Q. Okay. Have you ever used your City-issued

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1 equipment for personal use?

2 A. I'm sure.

3 Q. Okay. And what type -- what examples
4 could you provide of that?

5 A. My children call on my City cell phone, so
6 I hear from them.

7 Q. So calls from family members on your City
8 cell phone. Have you ever sent personal e-mails from
9 your City of Atlanta account, e-mail account?

10 A. I'm sure.

11 Q. Do you have a Facebook account?

12 A. I do.

13 Q. Have you ever checked your Facebook
14 account from your City desktop?

15 A. Probably.

16 Q. Or potentially paid a bill online using
17 your City computer?

18 A. No. I never do that. I don't pay bills.

19 Q. Are you aware of any City employee ever
20 being disciplined for incidental use of City-issued
21 equipment?

22 A. Could you repeat that question?

23 Q. Are you aware of any City employee being
24 disciplined for personal use of City equipment?

25 A. I'm not.

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1 Q. How long have you known Chief Cochran?

2 A. Since I came onto the City, not -- I was
3 hired in March of 2012, so not right away, but very
4 soon after that.

5 Q. Tell me about your relationship with him,
6 interactions with him.

7 A. Professional and cordial.

8 Q. How often would you interact with him in
9 your official capacity?

10 A. I would see Chief every Monday at cabinet,
11 and during my time in communications, whenever there
12 was a, you know, bigger issue beyond what his
13 information officer could or should handle, we would
14 talk.

15 Q. What do you know about his reputation in
16 the community prior to November of 2014?

17 MS. HINTON: Object to form.

18 You can answer.

19 THE WITNESS: I don't. Not much.

20 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

21 Q. Reputation within the City of Atlanta?

22 MS. HINTON: Object to form.

23 THE WITNESS: I don't know.

24 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

25 Q. Just based on your personal perception.

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1 A. Of his representation within the city?

2 Q. Uh-huh.

3 A. Professional.

4 Q. When did you first become aware that the
5 chief had written a book?

6 A. I don't know the exact day, but it was the
7 day that Yvonne Yancy in late November brought it to
8 my attention.

9 Q. And how did she bring that to your
10 attention?

11 A. I don't remember exactly.

12 Q. Do you know what the title of the book is?

13 A. Who Told You That You Were Naked?

14 Q. Do you know when the mayor might have
15 become aware -- aware when Chief Cochran -- scratch
16 that.

17 Do you know when the mayor became aware
18 that Chief Cochran had written a book?

19 A. I don't other than when we all discussed
20 it.

21 Q. And when would y'all have discussed it?

22 A. After Yvonne brought it to my attention
23 and to others. Late November.

24 Q. Talk to me about that meeting.

25 A. Which meeting?

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1 Q. The meeting which y'all discussed the
2 book.

3 A. There was an informal gathering in the
4 mayor's office where Yvonne laid out what she had
5 read and discovered. People -- I remember there were
6 a number of phone calls from -- Councilman Wan was
7 mentioned. And there was, you know, sort of a
8 typical round-robin conversation about what do you
9 think?

10 Q. How was the meeting scheduled? How did it
11 come about?

12 A. It was not formally scheduled. It was,
13 Yvonne and Cathy came down there. They're on
14 different floors than the mayor's executive suite. I
15 am a few doors down from the mayor. His deputy chief
16 of staff, Katrina Parks, is next to me. And so it
17 was the mayor is available to speak now, let's have
18 this conversation. So it was kind of a gathering.

19 Q. Who was present at the meeting?

20 A. I don't remember everybody because I'm not
21 sure that Mike Geisler, who was the COO who was on
22 our floor, was there. I don't think that he was. I
23 was there. I think Katrina Taylor-Parks was there,
24 and Yvonne was there, the mayor was there. I believe
25 Cathy and Candace were there.

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1 Q. What did Yvonne say during the course of
2 that meeting?

3 A. I don't remember exactly what she said,
4 but she laid out what she had covered in the book.

5 Q. And what was that?

6 A. Well, that the book existed. That the
7 concerns about the content, the concerns about the
8 process. I don't remember exactly what she said.

9 Q. Sure. Just generally, do you recall what
10 she mentioned about the book's content?

11 A. That it was offensive to a wide array of
12 constituencies.

13 Q. Did she provide examples?

14 A. From the book?

15 Q. Provide examples, excuse me, of the
16 constituencies that might find it offensive?

17 A. Yeah, I think she mentioned women. She
18 mentioned, you know, the gay community. She
19 mentioned -- what I remember from the discussion was
20 women, the gay community, Jewish community.

21 Q. What about Ms. Taylor? What did
22 Ms. Taylor say during the course of the conversation?

23 A. I don't remember. There was a lot of back
24 and forth.

25 Q. Back and forth related to?

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1 A. You know, kind of shock that -- you know,
2 everyone, I think, felt like blind-sided by this. So
3 there was a lot of conversation about, you know,
4 where this came from, who knew about this, did Mike
5 Geisler know about this? So it was -- it wasn't a
6 structured conversation. It was, you know.

7 Q. Let me back up to Ms. Yancy. Did she
8 indicate who had provided her a copy of the book?

9 A. I don't remember.

10 Q. What about the mayor? What did he say
11 during the course of the conversation?

12 A. Not much. You know, he's very
13 deliberative. So -- and what he typically does when
14 we come together like this on lots of issues, he
15 wants to hear what all of his folks think. I
16 remember when I said that I was surprised by this and
17 that I felt like we needed to go slow and not react
18 in a knee-jerk fashion.

19 Because my experience with Chief Cochran,
20 particularly around gay pride events, was that he'd
21 always been very supportive and that, you know,
22 didn't really know how to place all this, but that I
23 knew that in our interactions around things that he'd
24 been supportive of gay firefighters and others
25 involved in pride, had always -- you know, all the

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1 resources of the fire department were available.

2 And I do remember the mayor nodding. I
3 felt like he heard that and agreed with that
4 assessment so --

5 Q. Were there other voices in the room that
6 shared your perspective?

7 A. Yeah, there were lots of folks in the
8 room. Certainly Katrina wanted to go slow. I mean,
9 I don't remember a lot of what Candace said, but
10 yeah.

11 Q. What about Ms. Hampton? What did she say?

12 MS. HINTON: I want to just provide
13 some direction since she is the city
14 attorney. If Ms. Hampton was providing any
15 legal advice to anyone in that room, then
16 don't touch that. If she's just speaking
17 about the facts --

18 THE WITNESS: I don't remember. I
19 don't remember what Cathy had to say.

20 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

21 Q. And Candace Byrd?

22 A. I don't remember specifically.

23 Q. Did Yvonne Yancy bring excerpts from the
24 book to that meeting?

25 A. I don't remember that.

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1 Q. Do you recall seeing excerpts in that time
2 frame?

3 A. I remember -- yes, at some point in the
4 days surrounding it, I saw excerpts.

5 Q. Was anything said at the meeting about
6 whether or not Chief Cochran had gotten approval from
7 the ethics board?

8 A. Yeah.

9 Q. What was that?

10 A. Well, there were questions about whether
11 that had been -- had happened. I don't remember if,
12 at that meeting, there had been a discussion with
13 Nina and if we knew anything. It was really kind of
14 the point of my comment, which is that we don't know
15 a lot right now, this is out of the blue and let's
16 see what --

17 Q. Was anything said about whether the book
18 was for sale?

19 A. I don't remember.

20 Q. Was anything said about whether the book
21 had been given to employees?

22 A. I don't remember that either.

23 Q. Were any documents given out during that
24 meeting?

25 A. No, not that I can recall.

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1 Q. What was the consensus at the meeting?

2 A. To be deliberate and to investigate.

3 Q. Were any specific action items discussed?

4 A. Not that I can remember.

5 Q. When you say the consensus was to
6 investigate, what was the plan to go about that?

7 A. I don't know what the plan was other than
8 the law department would try to uncover the, you
9 know, the timing of how this had happened.

10 Q. So the law department was tasked with
11 following up on the matter?

12 A. I wouldn't say they were tasked, but that
13 was my understanding of what next steps were. There
14 were no next steps for me. The next steps were for
15 the law department, as far as I recall.

16 Q. Did you take any notes at the meeting?

17 A. No.

18 Q. Did you observe anyone else taking notes?

19 A. Huh-uh. I don't think so.

20 Q. And anything else you remember about the
21 meeting?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Were you ever given a copy of
24 Chief Cochran's book?

25 A. I don't think so.

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1 Q. Did you ever purchase a copy?

2 A. I did not.

3 Q. When did you first become aware that it
4 was publicly available for sale?

5 A. Probably the day that Yvonne told me about
6 it, that it was available.

7 Q. Did you ever read the book?

8 A. I did not.

9 Q. And you indicated that you had seen
10 excerpts from it?

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. Do you recall who provided those excerpts
13 to you?

14 A. I think it was Robin Shahaar.

15 Q. And do you recall what those excerpts were
16 about?

17 A. They were about the -- I don't remember
18 exactly what it said, but it was sections around
19 LGBT. I guess the sinfulness of that, and I remember
20 something about bestiality. And I don't remember
21 much.

22 Q. How did you respond to the excerpts that
23 you read?

24 MS. HINTON: Object to form.

25 THE WITNESS: How did I respond to

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1 them? You know, somewhat shocked, but
2 not -- just somewhat shocked.

3 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

4 Q. Were you aware during the course of your
5 professional relationship with Chief Cochran that he
6 was a Christian, professed to be a Christian?

7 A. I don't think so.

8 Q. So going back to that meeting, that
9 initial meeting with Yvonne Yancy and others related
10 to the book, did you later discuss those meetings
11 with anyone else?

12 A. Not that I remember. You mean anyone else
13 besides who was in the room?

14 Q. Yes.

15 A. No.

16 Q. Did you ever have any additional
17 conversations with the mayor about Chief Cochran's
18 book?

19 A. Probably, but there wasn't another meeting
20 that I was in with him.

21 Q. What do you recollect the mayor telling
22 you during those conversations?

23 A. I don't recollect. I mean, it's likely
24 that we had conversations, but I don't remember for
25 sure and I don't remember content.

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1 Q. Did you have any additional conversations
2 with other employees about Chief Cochran's book?

3 A. Well, certainly Katrina and Robin and I
4 talked. I know I spoke with Yvonne. I spoke with
5 Anne Torres. As things unfolded, we had work to do
6 around it.

7 Q. Describe your conversations with Katrina,
8 please.

9 A. Well, there were lots of them.

10 Q. Start with the first one you recollect.

11 A. We had conversations about -- you know, my
12 job as the senior advisor would be to manage the
13 external reaction to this, so we talked about that.
14 I remember that she was -- you know, we both wanted
15 this to go -- to go slow and didn't want the chief to
16 be terminated immediately.

17 There was -- you know, there was a lot to
18 be investigated here to understand how this was going
19 to -- had impacted the department and would impact
20 going forward, so we had those conversations.

21 Q. Were some advocating that the chief be
22 terminated immediately?

23 A. I don't remember anyone advocating
24 directly for that, but that's, you know, certainly
25 always a possibility in chaotic situations. So --

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1 Q. What do you recollect about your
2 conversations with Robin Shahar related to
3 Chief Cochran's book?

4 A. Well, Robin was very -- very offended, and
5 was here -- as she -- in addition to being in the law
6 department, she was the mayor's advisor on LGBT
7 issues, so she was hearing directly from
8 constituencies and trying to manage those. So we
9 talked about how to do that and try to keep things
10 from becoming too inflamed.

11 Q. Can you describe with any more specificity
12 when you talked about how to do that, how to manage
13 those relationships? What did those conversations
14 look like?

15 A. It's three years ago. I mean, I remember
16 her having a discussion about Councilman Wan and
17 that -- you know, to make sure he understood that
18 there needed to be a full understanding of what
19 happened and had approval been asked for and
20 received, how this impacted the department.

21 So it was like, basically, just like let
22 everyone know that -- you know, at this point there
23 had been -- I guess the decision was made for the
24 suspension and the investigation. And so essentially
25 there was a process here and we weren't going to jump

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1 to any conclusions and to -- but she was hearing.

2 She was getting a lot of phone calls directly.

3 Q. What about your conversations with

4 Ms. Yancy?

5 A. Those were -- you know, I have less memory
6 of those because I sit next to Katrina and Robin came
7 to see me a lot. Yvonne I would talk to kind
8 of -- not in the hallway, but more like -- more
9 like -- so where we would -- any new information
10 today kind of things. I don't really remember.

11 Q. And Ms. Torres?

12 A. I started talking with Anne about this
13 because I had just moved over, you know, some months
14 earlier from communications so I was still on the
15 ATL Media e-mail. So I was still getting -- I would
16 see the communications that went around through that
17 department. And I still did a bunch of the writing
18 for the mayor for press conferences and those kinds
19 of things, so I was talking with her about that.

20 And then once the general assembly started
21 in January after the termination, then I talked with
22 her quite a bit about the press conferences that were
23 happening across the street at the state capitol,
24 both pro and con around the religious freedom bill,
25 not -- not our stuff directly, but state legislation

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1 that was getting woven in to what was happening at
2 the City.

3 Q. Do you know of any other City employees
4 who have written books?

5 A. I don't.

6 Q. When was the decision made to suspend
7 Chief Cochran?

8 MS. HINTON: Object to form.

9 THE WITNESS: I don't know.

10 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

11 Q. Do you know who made that decision?

12 A. To suspend him?

13 Q. Uh-huh.

14 A. I'd have to speculate.

15 Q. When did you learn that Chief Cochran had
16 been suspended?

17 A. I don't recall. I don't recall. I assume
18 it was the same day. I did know -- I knew that
19 Candace was meeting with him or with Bob Godfrey, and
20 that they were having a discussion with Chief
21 Cochran.

22 Q. When you say that "same day," in relation
23 to --

24 A. The same day that he was suspended. I'm
25 sure there wasn't a lag in time. I was --

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1 Q. So you were not involved in any of the
2 meetings related to the decision to suspend him? Let
3 me rephrase that.

4 You were not involved in the meeting
5 deciding to suspend him?

6 A. Right.

7 Q. Were you involved in any of the meetings
8 about communicating about the suspension?

9 A. I had -- yes, I was involved in several
10 meetings with Anne and with the law department about
11 how to communicate it.

12 Q. Tell me about those meetings, please.

13 MS. HINTON: And just to insert
14 another instruction, to the extent you're
15 getting advice from the legal department in
16 those meetings, don't speak to what that
17 advice is.

18 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. Ask me the
19 question again.

20 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

21 Q. So please talk to me about the meetings
22 you mentioned relating to communicating about the
23 suspension.

24 A. I really just remember what I looked at in
25 my e-mails yesterday, but it was, you know,

1 essentially that we were going to issue a statement.
2 I'm sure I edited the statement. And I remember
3 saying that, you know, we need to essentially try to
4 deescalate and let this investigation play out.

5 Q. Do you know who drafted the statement?

6 A. I don't.

7 Q. But you probably edited it?

8 A. (Witness nods head affirmatively.)

9 Q. Let's take a look, please -- hand the
10 witness Exhibit 49. I'll give you a minute to look
11 over that.

12 A. Okay.

13 Q. Do you recognize this e-mail chain?

14 A. I do.

15 Q. Do you have any reason to doubt its
16 authenticity?

17 A. No.

18 Q. When was the meeting discussed in this
19 e-mail chain held?

20 A. I don't know exactly. My memory is that
21 it was that day, the 24th, that Monday, in the
22 afternoon.

23 Q. Do you recollect who attended the meeting?

24 A. I can tell you that Michael Geisler didn't
25 attend the meeting. Other than that, I assume

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1 everyone else was there, but I don't remember.

2 Q. So here approximately in the middle of the
3 page, Robin Shahar cautions against saying anything
4 related to disciplinary action or ensuring that it
5 doesn't happen again.

6 Do you see what I'm referencing?

7 A. Uh-huh.

8 Q. Did you share her view?

9 A. I don't -- I don't really remember my
10 reaction to that.

11 Q. Do you recall what was said during this
12 meeting?

13 A. No. What I remember about early days was
14 there was a lot of uncertainty. Anne had a certain
15 set of points. Yvonne said that was not accurate.
16 There was a lot of back and forth. And in the seat
17 that I sit in, I just didn't want to deal in
18 uncertainty and I wanted to know -- I wanted to be
19 able to speak with what we knew to be true, and if we
20 didn't, I didn't want to say anything at all. Again,
21 try not to inflame the external constituencies and
22 relationships that we had.

23 Q. When you say Yvonne had certain points,
24 what do you mean by that?

25 A. Well, Yvonne said -- you know,

1 contradicted Anne, that -- what Anne's points here
2 were not accurate that it had been distributed in
3 command staff meeting. I remember that Katrina and I
4 were both concerned that we didn't know.

5 There were a lot of -- lot of statements
6 floating around that we just didn't know how they all
7 fit together.

8 Q. And when you say "here," were you
9 referring to page 2 of Exhibit 49?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Do you recall whether anything was said
12 about the content of the book at this meeting?

13 A. I don't.

14 Q. Do you recall whether anything was said
15 about whether or not Chief Cochran had received
16 ethics board approval at this meeting?

17 A. That was something very early on in the
18 early discussions that was really central. I think,
19 to me, as I said, because I -- in terms of the
20 content, my experience with Chief Cochran didn't
21 support what I had read. He never -- in my
22 relationship with him and in my experiences working
23 with him, I didn't see what he described in the book.
24 It didn't manifest in my professional experience with
25 him. And so I was less concerned about the content

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1 and more about this process.

2 And also didn't want to, again, exaggerate
3 with the notion that what we were hearing externally
4 was that discrimination is rampant in the city, you
5 know. That's why later in my e-mails you'll see that
6 we had a campaign to push back against that.

7 Q. Were any documents given out or discussed
8 at the meeting?

9 A. Not that I remember.

10 Q. Do you recall what the consensus of this
11 meeting was?

12 A. I don't.

13 Q. Any action items come out of this meeting?

14 A. Not that I remember.

15 Q. All right. Do you know anything about an
16 investigation that was done while Chief Cochran was
17 suspended?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. What do you know?

20 A. I know that there was one. I believe that
21 law and HR did it jointly.

22 Q. Uh-huh.

23 A. And to determine, again, the process
24 around approval for the book and the ethics board and
25 discussions with employees.

1 Q. Were you involved in the investigation at
2 all?

3 A. I was not.

4 Q. Did anyone discuss the investigation with
5 you?

6 A. Not until afterwards when I saw the final
7 report.

8 Q. Please hand the witness Exhibit 13. It's
9 already been introduced. Take a moment to look
10 through that.

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. This is the investigative report prepared
13 by the city law department. Is this what you
14 received?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. When did you first see a copy?

17 A. I can't -- I can't remember for sure. It
18 was -- I don't know.

19 Q. Would it have been after it was publicly
20 released?

21 A. No. I think I saw a draft a couple of
22 days before.

23 Q. Do you recall who you received that draft
24 from?

25 A. I don't.

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1 Q. Was that received via e-mail, hard copy?

2 A. I think it was a hard copy.

3 (Exhibit 85 was marked for
4 identification.)

5 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

6 Q. Do you recall receiving the e-mail?

7 A. I do.

8 Q. And were you aware that Robin Shahar would
9 be sending the e-mail?

10 A. Uh-huh. I was.

11 Q. What's this e-mail about?

12 A. This e-mail is about -- I said earlier
13 that Robin was getting lots of calls, unhappy calls
14 from constituents. She thought it would be a good
15 idea to reach out to ADL for their -- not analysis,
16 but for their opinion of this. And that we
17 anticipated -- there was a pretty hot religious
18 freedom bill from the general assembly from the
19 previous session that we knew was gearing up and we
20 expected this would be swept up into that, and we
21 were trying to get ahead of that with external folks.

22 Q. Who is ADL?

23 A. It's the Antidefamation League.

24 Q. Can you tell me about them?

25 A. It's a nonprofit whose mission is to fight

1 discrimination.

2 Q. And why did you think ADL's input would be
3 helpful in this situation?

4 A. Why did I? Well, they are an ally who we
5 had been hearing from and knew -- and had been --
6 they are an ally in the sense of the work that we'd
7 been fighting on religious freedom and the positions
8 there on the religious freedom bills at the general
9 assembly.

10 And also Robin was hearing that they
11 wanted to meet with the mayor, so we wanted them to
12 have the information before they came to meet with
13 him so it would be productive, not speculative.

14 Q. You've mentioned a couple of times
15 religious freedom bill. Can you tell me a little bit
16 about that?

17 A. Well, it's a series of bills introduced
18 around state houses around the country and in Georgia
19 specifically that would -- it's called religious
20 freedom, but the idea behind them is that pastors
21 don't have to marry gay couples if they don't want
22 to. There's lots of things that are involved in
23 that. The legislation changes from year to year.

24 Q. And what was your involvement in these
25 bills?

1 A. It was the -- generally the City doesn't
2 have a position and we don't involve ourselves in
3 those. Personally, I'm opposed to them. But this
4 year, in the 2015 legislative session, which starts
5 in January, we knew leading up to that in November,
6 December -- October, November, December, we knew that
7 it was coming and that it was going to be
8 controversial.

9 And then with this decision here, Ralph
10 Reed and other -- I guess it was Franklin Graham and
11 other evangelicals were picking up this cause, and we
12 realized that we were going to get swept up into this
13 and be part of the conversation at the state, which
14 we wanted to avoid, but that didn't happen.

15 Q. Okay. The first paragraph here on
16 Exhibit 85, it indicates, "The request was not coming
17 from the mayor himself, but from Melissa Mullinax and
18 I," being Robin Shahar, "requesting this issue be
19 looked at further by other faith-based leaders and
20 organization."

21 By "this issue," what were you referring
22 to?

23 A. The issue that -- the decision to suspend
24 the chief to investigate this was getting -- people
25 were rushing to judgment about -- on both sides about

1 discrimination or nondiscrimination and that we were
2 getting swept up into the religious freedom
3 legislative package at the state capitol.

4 Q. Why was it important to clarify that the
5 request was not coming from the mayor himself?

6 A. Because I remember saying to Robin that I
7 hadn't asked him about this and that I wanted her to
8 be clear that this was -- we were doing what we
9 thought was the right thing to get us ahead of what
10 was coming in January at the state capitol, but that
11 I had not talked to him about this.

12 Q. What did you hope to accomplish by
13 reaching out to ADL?

14 A. I don't remember exactly at the time, but
15 what we wanted was for the groups that we work with:
16 ADL, Faith in Public Life, the -- I think there's a
17 group of ministers that we regularly work with, that
18 we were looking into this. And that, you know, on
19 the one hand we had folks who were saying that we've
20 allowed discrimination against City employees by
21 having the chief as the fire chief; and on the other
22 hand, we had people who were saying that we were
23 violating the chief's First Amendment rights.

24 And so we really just wanted -- we wanted
25 our folks to know that we were working through this.

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1 There's a process and --

2 Q. Picking up on what you just said. In any
3 of the meetings that you participated in related to
4 Chief Cochran, did any of them -- did anyone raise
5 the question of whether or not they might violate the
6 chief's religious rights?

7 A. I don't remember that.

8 Q. Going back to this ADL letter, why did it
9 matter what outside organizations thought of this
10 employment issue?

11 A. It didn't matter what they thought of the
12 employment issue. It matters what they think of the
13 administration, and that's, you know, my role to
14 manage those.

15 Q. And who came up with the idea to have
16 other faith-based leaders and organizations look at
17 the issue?

18 A. Robin and I both talked about it, but
19 there -- what was happening at the time is that
20 Reverend Barber from the Moral Monday Movement in
21 North Carolina was coming down to Georgia. People
22 were -- it wasn't -- people were already looking at
23 this and so we wanted to essentially engage them in
24 the conversation and say, again, we have a process.

25 You know, I -- at this point in December,

1 I thought we were -- I didn't expect the chief to be
2 terminated, so I knew that we were going to have to
3 manage an entire group of people who -- of
4 constituencies who were going to be unhappy that he
5 wasn't.

6 And so we were trying early on, I am, to,
7 you know, basically let them know that we're not
8 sweeping this under the rug. This is important to
9 us. So --

10 Q. What other faith-based leaders and
11 organizations did you contact to look at the issue?

12 A. So there's a group called Faith in Public
13 Life that I understood was putting together a press
14 conference for early January, that the City didn't
15 participate in and typically, you know, wouldn't
16 participate in, but I talked with some of those
17 pastors, a Rabbi Josh Lesser, who had been an ally.

18 Q. Can you tell me a little bit more about
19 Faith in Public Life, that organization?

20 A. It's a DC-based nonprofit and they work a
21 lot with Reverend Barber and the Moral Monday
22 Movement. They were at that time looking to open a
23 Georgia office. I don't know if that actually
24 happened, but that's, you know, sort of a group of
25 progressive churches and pastors.

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1 Q. When you say "progressive" --

2 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: I'm sorry. Could
3 you move your microphone up higher for me?

4 THE WITNESS: Yes.

5 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Thank you.

6 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

7 Q. When you say "progressive," how do you
8 identify them as such?

9 A. They support a woman's right to chose, so
10 their faith is -- I don't know how to describe
11 progressive religious folks. That they support
12 marriage equality -- Faith in Public Life supports
13 marriage equality, but they support immigration
14 rights, a woman's right to choose, all of those
15 things still within their -- their faith framework.

16 Q. So these other faith-based leaders and
17 organizations that you contacted, what types of
18 responses did you receive from them, letters,
19 e-mails?

20 A. No, no letters other than the letter that
21 came from ADL. What we -- what I remember is that
22 they wanted us to come over to their press
23 conference. I ended up going, but no one else from
24 the City went. And that they -- you know, they
25 wanted -- they wanted to -- their -- their -- their

1 point and their focus was to defeat the -- I guess it
2 was Senator McKoon's bill at the time, the religious
3 freedom bill, and that was really their focus.

4 And they also were concerned that this
5 employment issue was getting wrapped up in a cause
6 celeb for the -- for the other side in their mind.

7 Q. Did you try to get different community
8 perspectives on the issue?

9 A. We were getting different community
10 perspectives on the issue.

11 Q. So you received both letters, e-mails in
12 support of the chief and against the chief?

13 A. I didn't exactly get letters, I personally
14 didn't, but I certainly heard from lots of people at
15 city council meetings, at committee meetings.
16 Uh-huh.

17 Q. But as far as the City intentionally
18 reaching out to the faith community, you weren't
19 intentionally seeking diverse perspectives?

20 A. I wasn't reaching out to -- there was a
21 group of pastors that came up to the City, came to
22 city hall. Primarily -- I guess it was primarily
23 black pastors, and I didn't talk with them but that
24 wasn't -- that wasn't the community that I typically
25 worked with. So I know that they had a different

1 perspective than ADL and Faith in Public Life, some
2 of them.

3 Q. So if I understand you correctly, you were
4 primarily reaching out to your contacts. Those
5 organizations --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- that you primarily worked with?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And would it be a fair characterization
10 that those organizations would be supportive of
11 same-sex marriage?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And you did not reach out to faith leaders
14 that might hold the traditional beliefs about
15 marriage is the union of a man and a woman?

16 A. I did not.

17 Q. What happened next after this letter was
18 sent to the ADL?

19 A. After this e-mail was sent?

20 Q. I'm sorry, yes. Thank you.

21 A. I remember that they asked for a meeting
22 with the mayor, and I passed that request along to
23 the mayor's scheduler.

24 Q. Did you participate in that meeting?

25 A. No.

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1 (Exhibit 86 was marked for
2 identification.)

3 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

4 Q. The court reporter has handed you what has
5 been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 86.

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Please feel free to take a moment to look
8 that over.

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 Q. Does this e-mail look accurate to you?

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. And do you recall sending it?

13 A. I remember being up into the wee hours of
14 the morning.

15 Q. You are referring to the 4:23 a.m. time
16 stamp?

17 A. Yes. This was -- I did a bunch of
18 research leading up to the general assembly in
19 January. That's what this was about. I don't
20 remember exactly which cardinal this was about,
21 but --

22 Q. So these are your notes?

23 A. Uh-huh.

24 Q. And you said they related to the upcoming
25 general assembly?

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1 A. Uh-huh.

2 Q. What anti-LGBT lawmakers and extremists
3 were you referring to?

4 A. This is -- I'm not even -- I'm not sure
5 that this first sentence is something that I wrote.
6 I think this might be a copy and paste.

7 Q. Okay.

8 A. But it was -- it was speaking nationally
9 because these bills were -- they introduced -- like
10 the North Carolina one that came a year later around
11 HB2 and the bathrooms. Yeah, I didn't include the
12 source here, but --

13 Q. So your recollection is this was a copy
14 and paste?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And when you're referring to bills in the
17 Georgia legislature, were you specifically referring
18 to the religious freedom bill that you spoke of
19 earlier?

20 A. Uh-huh.

21 Q. And why did you put Cochran in the subject
22 line?

23 A. For an easy search for myself because I
24 expected to do -- I was -- I think I did a bunch of
25 these. And as I said, the chief was being pulled in

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1 as the example for the groups that were supporting
2 the religious freedom bills.

3 Q. Did you take any action with respect to
4 this content after you sent it to yourself?

5 A. Probably informed some of the documents
6 that I -- that I wrote in preparing to engage the
7 public and the faith leaders around the bills at the
8 general assembly.

9 Q. Okay. Next one.

10 (Exhibit 87 was marked for
11 identification.)

12 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

13 Q. The court reporter has handed you what has
14 been marked as Plaintiff's Exhibit 87.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Does this e-mail look accurate to you?

17 A. It does.

18 Q. And do you recall sending it?

19 A. I don't, but --

20 Q. But no reason to doubt its authenticity?

21 A. Right.

22 Q. It looks like, again, an e-mail from
23 yourself to yourself. What was the purpose of this
24 e-mail?

25 A. More research and a reminder to look at

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1 the -- evidently the Times Union article, though I
2 don't remember that one, and this Pope Francis note.

3 Q. So the Pope Francis note related to
4 Exhibit 86?

5 A. (Witness nods head affirmatively.)

6 Q. And you don't recall what Times Union
7 article --

8 A. I don't.

9 Q. -- you were talking about?

10 And, again, why were these items relevant
11 to Cochran?

12 A. Because the -- well, I was putting
13 together, from what I remember, a message around our
14 belief that the Cochran decision was an employment
15 issue and not -- you know, that he -- that he was
16 not going -- that he should not be seen or viewed in
17 this instance as the, you know, the reason why these
18 religious freedom bills are required.

19 Q. When did you first become aware that
20 Chief Cochran was going to be terminated?

21 A. Well, I don't remember except that from
22 the e-mails that I saw, I think I knew on Monday.

23 Q. Before his termination on?

24 A. Tuesday. Because we were -- I was -- I
25 was getting ready for the press conference.

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1 Q. Do you recall who informed you?

2 A. I don't.

3 Q. Were any reasons given to you for the
4 termination?

5 A. Certainly. The conversation was that
6 the -- the violation of the process; that -- that his
7 book had not been approved by the ethics office; that
8 the mayor was not aware and had not given approval;
9 that during his suspension, he spoke to the press,
10 which is really a cardinal rule for all cabinet
11 members that you don't do that. Really, kind of the
12 degrading of the relationship between the chief and
13 the administration.

14 Q. And who provided you with this
15 information?

16 A. I don't remember exactly, but it
17 was -- that was the discussion.

18 Q. Do you recall being in any meetings where
19 this information would have been communicated to the
20 executive team?

21 A. I don't remember.

22 Q. Have you ever discussed Chief Cochran's
23 termination with anyone?

24 A. I'm sure.

25 Q. Do you recall who those conversations

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1 might have been directed to?

2 A. You mean beyond our internal team?

3 Q. Sure.

4 A. I talked about it with the -- I mean, I
5 described the termination as an employment decision,
6 not an attack on his religious beliefs with lots of
7 folks. The community -- you know, community leaders
8 who called, people who came to council meetings.

9 When I attended the press conference that
10 Faith in Public Life had, they came up there. I
11 talked with the leaders of the press conference who
12 were there about that. The message after the
13 termination was why -- why he was terminated and that
14 it wasn't about the content of the book, but about
15 the process that had unfolded.

16 Q. You mentioned phone calls. Who was
17 calling or what types of phone calls did you receive?

18 A. I mean, you know, phone calls from -- I
19 mean, they would have been from the Faith in Public
20 Life folks at the press conference. I don't remember
21 all of who called. A lot of what -- a lot of my
22 interaction was with people in person at city council
23 and at committee meetings.

24 Q. With city council members themselves or
25 the public?

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1 A. No, the public.

2 MS. HOLCOMB: Take a break. We've
3 been going for about an hour and
4 15 minutes. Let's go ahead and take a
5 break.

6 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is now
7 10:41 a.m. We're off the record.

8 (A recess was taken.)

9 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is now
10 10:49 a.m. We are back on the record.

11 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

12 Q. We're back. So you mentioned that
13 Robin Shahar had received a number of phone calls
14 from constituents expressing outrage or concern. Do
15 you know who those phone calls were coming from?

16 A. I don't.

17 Q. Did they communicate what types of
18 organizations?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Just that they've expressed --

21 A. Right.

22 Q. -- displeasure?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. You also testified about a meeting that
25 the mayor had with some representatives. Black

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1 pastors, I think you had mentioned?

2 A. I didn't say the mayor met with them.

3 Q. I apologize.

4 A. I think they came to city hall. There was
5 a march, protest march into city hall.

6 Q. Do you recall whether they met with anyone
7 while they were at city hall?

8 A. I don't remember.

9 Q. Do you remember approximately when that
10 was?

11 A. I believe it was in January.

12 Q. Do you recall anything related to a
13 meeting that the mayor might have had with
14 representatives from Elizabeth Baptist Church?

15 A. I don't. I think I remember that it
16 happened -- I think that's -- is that Jasper Williams
17 church?

18 Q. I don't know.

19 A. I think I remember that it happened.

20 Q. And then you talked a fair amount about
21 this religious freedom bill. First of all, could you
22 explain it with a little more detail why you oppose
23 the bill?

24 A. Well, I oppose the bill because I don't
25 think -- I think that religious freedom is already

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1 enshrined in the constitution and the Bill of Rights,
2 and additional legislation is not necessary. And
3 it's really just an attempt to give -- to make legal
4 for folks to discriminate against people whose
5 beliefs they don't share.

6 Q. Did you ever express those beliefs in your
7 official capacity during your work at city hall?

8 A. I don't think so.

9 Q. So you received no pushback within the
10 City for your perspective on that bill?

11 A. I didn't -- we didn't -- I wouldn't have
12 discussed the bill, how I felt about the bill or the
13 bills because it was kind of a -- you know, it's a
14 broader movement except for the fact in the 2015
15 session, that what was happening at city hall was
16 being used as an example of why the bills were
17 needed. So --

18 Q. And so would that have been, then,
19 discussed among the mayor's executive team?

20 MS. HINTON: Object to form.

21 THE WITNESS: Yeah. I mean, I don't
22 remember that. I mean, I discussed with
23 Anne, that I remember from the e-mails,
24 that we knew that this was happening and
25 wanted to pushback against that.

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1 (Exhibit 88 was marked for
2 identification.)

3 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

4 Q. The court reporter has handed you what's
5 been marked as Exhibit 88.

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Do you recall this e-mail?

8 A. I do.

9 Q. I'm noticing in the to line that your name
10 is there twice. Do you recall what e-mail accounts
11 you sent this e-mail to?

12 A. I don't. I think -- I mean, I only have
13 two. I have my personal and then I have my City, but
14 I don't know that that was to my personal. Oh, it
15 must have because it says one is Melissa Mullinax and
16 one is Mullinax Melissa, so --

17 Q. What is this e-mail?

18 A. This is -- these are my notes about the
19 press conference that was going to happen on Tuesday.
20 And the second sentence here reminds me that -- I
21 guess when I was told to begin to get a press
22 conference together or that one was coming, that the
23 chief would be given the option to resign. So that's
24 why that's in there.

25 And up top, the supporters is who I was

1 suggesting would be standing there with the mayor.

2 Q. Are these notes from a meeting?

3 A. No. These are my planning at home at
4 night by myself.

5 Q. Who communicated to you that a press
6 conference was going to be necessary the following
7 day?

8 A. I don't remember. It might have been -- I
9 mean, it would have been Yvonne or Candace or Cathy,
10 you know. As I said, we're all -- Candace and I are
11 in the same hallway with Katrina and Mike Geisler, so
12 it could have been any one of them.

13 Q. So no official meeting informing --

14 A. No, not that I remember.

15 Q. Directing your attention to the subject
16 line. What does COCH stand for?

17 A. That's my -- I guess I got lazy and didn't
18 put Cochran.

19 Q. And what does "supporters" in the body of
20 the message reference?

21 A. These are our constituency allies who I
22 thought would be important to have there with him.

23 Q. Why did you think it would be important to
24 have these particular individuals?

25 A. Because we were -- because the public was

1 very split on this. We were making a decision to
2 terminate that was around the -- you know, the
3 process issues, but there was such a drumbeat that
4 the City was -- had a lot of discrimination and, you
5 know, they are just all -- regardless of whether the
6 facts agree, the administration just has detractors.

7 And so they were using this as another way
8 to attack the mayor. He wasn't progressive enough.
9 He wasn't left enough. He let this go on for years.
10 He should have known about this, whatever, whatever.
11 And so we wanted our supporters there to kind of help
12 calm that and send the message out.

13 Q. Who is CT Vivian?

14 A. He is a SORS leader, pastor.

15 Q. Who is the rabbi you reference?

16 A. I didn't have anyone in particular in
17 mind. I mean, it could have been Josh Lesser. It
18 might have been the rabbi from the Temple. These are
19 just profiles other than CT Vivian.

20 Q. And the white female minister?

21 A. It could have been one of five or six,
22 but, you know.

23 Q. And LGBT?

24 A. The same. I mean, Jeff Graham is the head
25 of Georgia Equality. That's probably who I had in

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1 mind. Someone that we work with quite a bit.

2 Q. And how did you know that these
3 individuals were supporters?

4 A. Well, I didn't know that they were
5 supporters on this particular issue. They're our
6 natural allies on the mayor's -- you know, his past
7 campaigns.

8 Q. Are they your natural allies on a
9 particular issue for the mayor?

10 A. Huh-uh, no. In fact, we -- you know, it
11 comes and goes.

12 Q. As you already mentioned, the second line,
13 "Chief Cochran has resigned or been separated from
14 the City today."

15 Did the City have two plans ready to go,
16 one for termination, one for resignation?

17 A. I don't know. I was putting this
18 together, as I said, talking points for the mayor's
19 speech writer.

20 Q. And then the final paragraph, "I want to
21 make my and the City of Atlanta's position clear.
22 The city's nondiscrimination policy is
23 nonnegotiable," and so on.

24 You see that in the third paragraph? What
25 was your role in drafting the City -- or the mayor's

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1 statement for the press conference?

2 A. Well, I wrote that and then it was
3 incorporated into the mayor's statement or the quote
4 in the press release.

5 Q. Did you write the full quote in the press
6 release?

7 A. I was not responsible for the typo.

8 Q. Fair enough.

9 Who reviewed the mayor's statement for the
10 press conference?

11 A. Likely I looked at it, but Anne Torres.

12 Q. And who would have ultimately been
13 responsible for approving that?

14 A. The mayor would have been responsible for
15 approving it.

16 (Exhibit 89 was marked for
17 identification.)

18 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

19 Q. Is this the press statement you were
20 referring to a moment ago?

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. Does the e-mail look accurate to you?

23 A. It does.

24 Q. Why did you forward the Cochran press
25 release on to Janet Ward?

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1 A. Because Janet was the public information
2 officer for the fire department, and she was getting
3 calls asking for it from reporters.

4 Q. And I apologize if you already answered
5 this. Did you draft the entirety of this statement?

6 A. I did not.

7 Q. Could you identify what portions you
8 drafted?

9 A. Well, I would have sent this or given this
10 to Anne and so I think she took my sentence here
11 about the discrimination and incorporated it into
12 this document.

13 Q. So the remainder would have been drafted
14 by another individual?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 (Exhibits 90 and 91 were marked for
17 identification.)

18 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

19 Q. The court reporter has handed you two
20 exhibits that have been marked 90 and 91.

21 A. Uh-huh.

22 Q. Do you recognize Exhibit 90?

23 A. I do.

24 Q. Does that look accurate to you?

25 A. It does.

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1 Q. And is Exhibit 91 the exhibit -- or excuse
2 me -- the attachment for Exhibit 90?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Okay. So the title of Exhibit 90, "Faith
5 and Freedom Coalition," what is this document?

6 A. This is a document that I put together. I
7 mentioned earlier that the Georgia Baptist Convention
8 and others were organizing a big rally at the capitol
9 around the religious freedom bill, and they were
10 going to, you know, use Chief Cochran's termination
11 as kind of their rallying cry for the bill. But
12 then, ultimately -- and what I was concerned about
13 was against the mayor and the administration.

14 And so I put this together to recruit
15 folks at the capitol who would kind of give a
16 different perspective on this.

17 Q. When you say "give a different
18 perspective"?

19 A. Essentially get our message out. This top
20 part is our -- what I wanted people to say.

21 Q. Did you draft the first two pages?

22 A. I wrote the top, the draft statement for
23 the MKR supporter. The supporting facts are -- this
24 is, you know, research that I pulled together from
25 various places.

1 Q. What does MKR supporter stand for on the
2 very first page?

3 A. Mayor Kasim Reed.

4 Q. Who was it specifically drafted for?

5 A. Nobody specifically, but the folks I was
6 talking to in the Faith in Public Life Coalition,
7 state legislators who I know supported the mayor.

8 Q. Was this statement sent to anyone else in
9 addition to the two you mentioned?

10 A. Over here in my notes you mean?

11 Q. I'm sorry. Was this document sent to
12 anyone? "This document" being Exhibit 91.

13 A. I didn't e-mail, I don't think, to
14 anybody. And I took -- I took copies over to the
15 capitol.

16 Q. The notation in -- facing at the
17 right-hand margin.

18 A. Uh-huh.

19 Q. Are these your notes?

20 A. They are.

21 Q. Who is Reverend Joanna Adams?

22 A. Joanna Adams is the minister at Trinity
23 Presbyterian. She's a white woman. And ADL is
24 Anti-Defamation League.

25 Q. And why did you write those two terms in

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1 the margin?

2 A. There were question marks because I was
3 thinking about whether I wanted to get this
4 specifically to those folks or to other people.

5 Q. And asked them potentially to make those
6 statements --

7 A. Right.

8 Q. -- to the Georgia legislature?

9 A. Uh-huh.

10 (Exhibit 92 was marked for
11 identification.)

12 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

13 Q. The court reporter has handed you what has
14 been marked Plaintiff's Exhibit 92.

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Does this e-mail look accurate to you?

17 A. It does.

18 Q. Do you recall sending it?

19 A. I do.

20 Q. What is this e-mail about?

21 A. I'm letting the senior team and the
22 communications folks know about the work around the
23 religious freedom bill and our attempts to get our
24 message out and push back.

25 Q. How did you know that ADL would be

1 publicly releasing its letter?

2 A. I must have heard it from Robin because I
3 didn't talk to Shelly myself.

4 Q. In the second bullet point there, you
5 mention a Jeff Graham, Georgia Equality Op-Ed?

6 A. Uh-huh.

7 Q. Did you solicit Georgia Equality to write
8 that piece?

9 A. I don't remember if I did or if Robin did.

10 Q. But your guess is one of the two of you?

11 A. Uh-huh.

12 Q. And same thing with the Faith in Public
13 Life Op-Ed?

14 A. I talked to them.

15 Q. And several times you've mentioned the
16 Faith in Public Life press conference. What was the
17 topic or the purpose of that press conference?

18 A. The topic was to show that there were
19 pastors in the -- around the state who, you know,
20 also were guided by their faith who opposed the bill,
21 and that there wasn't a -- you know, monopoly or a
22 unified faith community in support of McKoon's bill
23 at the time.

24 (Exhibit 93 was marked for
25 identification.)

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1 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

2 Q. The court reporter has handed you what's
3 been marked Exhibit 93. Do you recognize this e-mail
4 thread?

5 A. I do.

6 Q. Does it look accurate to you?

7 A. It does.

8 Q. And you recall sending it?

9 A. I do.

10 Q. Jumping down about halfway down the page,
11 Anne Torres says, "Please forward to all of our
12 supporters and organizations."

13 Who is she referencing?

14 A. Well, supporters would be -- I mean, she's
15 talking about, you know, campaign supporters, allies
16 who have public -- you know, who have a social media
17 profile that can be helpful. Organizations would be
18 the ones I've mentioned earlier and any others, so --

19 Q. Can you --

20 A. There's no list anywhere of -- you know,
21 the mayor has a campaign list, you know, campaign
22 e-mail list, but we didn't access that.

23 Q. So can you provide names of some of the
24 organizations other than the ones we've already
25 mentioned such as Faith in Public Life?

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1 A. No. And I actually didn't end up sending
2 out to any organizations. I didn't need to because
3 once the mayor started tweeting and the City started
4 tweeting, the organizations who, you know, do this
5 kind of thing picked it up. I sent it out to
6 individuals.

7 Q. When you say to "do this kind of thing,"
8 what are you talking about?

9 A. I mean who weigh in on social media, you
10 know.

11 Q. What are these e-mails about? What are
12 you trying to accomplish?

13 A. Well, we are trying to -- what we were
14 trying to do here, again, is tease out that the
15 decision to terminate the chief was not about content
16 and it was not an attempt to violate his religious
17 rights, but that -- and as I said, you know, not all
18 this is speaking -- some of this is speaking to the
19 pro gay groups who were still attacking us for not
20 having fired him immediately and for having had him
21 on as fire chief, you know, for any amount of time.

22 So it was kind of a -- lots of messages
23 for various audiences. And people across the country
24 were attacking the mayor and saying that he had
25 violated the chief's civil rights, and so this -- I

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1 stand with Kasim was essentially a -- you know, a way
2 to bolster the mayor publicly in a situation where
3 there is getting -- it was getting national, negative
4 attention.

5 Q. Did you help craft these social media
6 messages?

7 A. I didn't.

8 Q. Do you know who drafted them?

9 A. I don't. I'm going to guess it was Anne,
10 but I don't know.

11
12
13
14

15 (Exhibit 94 was marked for
16 identification.)

17 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

18 Q. Do you recognize this e-mail?

19 A. I do.

20 Q. It looks very similar to the prior
21 exhibit.

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Who is Norma Driebe?

24 A. Driebe. NJ, Norma Jack, that's my aunt,
25 who is an activist with PFLAG and Parents and Friends

1 of Lesbians. Well, I don't know what it stands for.

2 Q. What do you mean by your first sentence,
3 "The mayor is getting hit pretty hard by the
4 religious right"?

5 A. What I said earlier, that nationally folks
6 were saying that the mayor had violated the chief's
7 civil rights and pretty ugly things were being said
8 about him on Twitter and on Facebook, and we wanted
9 to counter that.

10 Q. Looking at the Twitter messages, the first
11 one listed, "I stand with Kasim because all employees
12 have a right to a boss who does not speak of them as
13 second-class citizens."

14 Is it your understanding that the
15 implication was that Chief Cochran spoke of those
16 underneath him as second class citizens?

17 A. Is that my understanding of what happened
18 or what this message is saying?

19 Q. Is that your understanding of what this
20 message is communicating?

21 A. No. Really so much of -- in mid-January
22 our work had really shifted from the -- what actually
23 had happened to what was being said nationally and
24 pushing back on that. And so that's really what I
25 was doing with the Faith in Public Life press

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1 conference. Again, I said earlier, we wouldn't
2 normally get involved in that. It's not something
3 the City needs to have a position on and the mayor
4 specifically didn't want to take a position on it.
5 And he had been approached in the early fall about
6 weighing in on this as a democratic leader. He chose
7 not to then.

8 We only got involved because he was being
9 attacked and the City was being dragged into, you
10 know, as the problem and the reason for these bills.
11 So my memory of this is that so much of this was
12 about responding to articles and things that they
13 were saying that the mayor had -- that the City was
14 not, you know, a good place to work, that the mayor
15 wasn't a good mayor, so --

16 And, you know, the other piece too is that
17 what the public can say in a Twitter message when
18 they're spreading the New York Times article, the
19 public doesn't know the ins and outs of the
20 investigation or the employment issues. And so they
21 can speak to what's out there publicly and that's
22 what was out there publicly.

23 Q. As you read these tweets, the first one,
24 for example, does it imply that Chief Cochran did
25 speak to those beneath him as second-class citizens?

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1 MS. HINTON: Object to form. Asked
2 and answered.

3 You can still answer.

4 THE WITNESS: Oh, okay. I don't
5 think so.

6 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

7 Q. And the second tweet, in your
8 understanding, does that imply that discrimination
9 had been taking place in the workplace?

10 A. I don't think so.

11 (Exhibit 95 was marked for
12 identification.)

13 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

14 Q. Exhibit 95, same song, different verse?

15 A. Uh-huh.

16 Q. Who is Natalie Zellner?

17 A. A friend of mine. And Cecily Craighill as
18 well.

19 Q. Where do they work?

20 A. They both at the time worked at Emory.

21 (Exhibit 96 was marked for
22 identification.)

23 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

24 Q. Do you recognize this e-mail?

25 A. I do.

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1 Q. Who is Lillian Govus?

2 A. She worked for a state senator,
3 Nan Orrock. She was her chief of staff, I guess.

4 (Exhibits 97 and 98 were marked for
5 identification.)

6 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

7 Q. All right. Do you recognize Exhibit 97,
8 the e-mail?

9 A. I do.

10 Q. Do you recall sending it?

11 A. No, but I don't doubt that I did.

12 Q. And looking at Exhibit 98, is this the
13 press release that would have been attached to that
14 January 13th e-mail?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Whose press release is this?

17 A. I guess I wrote this.

18 Q. For the City of Atlanta?

19 A. For the City of Atlanta?

20 Q. Uh-huh.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And why did you send a copy of this to
23 Torres and Garland?

24 A. Well, because they would have had to
25 be -- they would have been the official folks to

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1 release it and to run it by the mayor.

2 Q. Even given the time stamp being 7:40 p.m.
3 on the 13th?

4 A. Right. I go home and end up working a lot
5 more at home. So this is clearly a draft that I
6 would have written at home. I don't know that this
7 actually ever was released. If it was, it would be
8 on the City, you know, website and would be on City
9 letterhead, but it looks like I wrote this.

10 Q. Okay. Well, I'll represent to you that
11 there is this press release on the website but it was
12 posted at least publicly around 2:30 p.m.

13 A. This one was? On the 13th?

14 Q. I believe so. I have not compared it
15 identically. So I was just curious if this was the
16 already released press release that you were then
17 disseminating or if it was --

18 A. No. This is a different press release
19 than the mayor's statement that you gave me earlier.

20 Q. So this would be a subsequent one to be
21 released potentially on the 14th?

22 A. Uh-huh. Oh, right. This one went out on
23 January 6th, so about the termination. This would
24 have been something that would go out officially with
25 the report when we were releasing a report.

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1 MS. HOLCOMBE: All right. Let's take
2 a couple-minute break, and then I think we
3 are about ready to wrap up.

4 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is
5 11:21 a.m. We're off the record.

6 (A recess was taken.)

7 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: The time is now
8 11:31 a.m. We're back on the record.

9 BY MS. HOLCOMB:

10 Q. Ms. Mullinax, you previously testified
11 that there were some groups that had wanted
12 Chief Cochran to be terminated immediately. Do you
13 recall which groups those were?

14 A. Not with certainty, but Georgia Equality
15 comes to mind. The Georgia Voice, which is a
16 newspaper but functions as an advocacy paper in my
17 mind.

18 Q. Advocacy paper for what particular issue?

19 A. Oh, yeah. It's a gay paper.

20 Q. Any other organizations come to mind?

21 A. No.

22 MS. HOLCOMB: No further questions.

23 MS. HINTON: No questions.

24 MS. HOLCOMB: Thank you.

25 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: This concludes

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1 Media Number 1 in the video deposition of
2 Melissa Mullinax. We're off the record at
3 11:33 a.m.

4 (Deposition concluded at 11:33 a.m.)

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E R R A T A S H E E T

Pursuant to Rule 30(e) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and/or the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 9-11-30(e) any changes in form or substance which you desire to make to your deposition testimony shall be entered upon the deposition with a statement of the reasons given for making them.

To assist you in making any such corrections, please use the form below. If supplemental or additional pages are necessary, please furnish same and attach them to this errata sheet.

- - -

I, the undersigned, MELISSA MULLINAX, do hereby certify that I have read the foregoing deposition and that to the best of my knowledge said deposition is true and accurate (with the exception of the following corrections listed below).

Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____
Reason for change: _____

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1 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

2 Reason for change: _____

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4 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

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7 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

8 Reason for change: _____

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10 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

11 Reason for change: _____

12

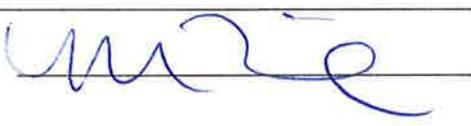
13 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

14 Reason for change: _____

15

16 Page _____ Line _____ should read: _____

17 Reason for change: _____

18 Signature 

19

20 Sworn to and Subscribed before me

21 Karla Johnson, Notary Public.

22 This 20th day of March, 2017

23 My Commission Expires: 2/6/21

24

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ESB

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C E R T I F I C A T E

G E O R G I A :
F U L T O N C O U N T Y :

I hereby certify that the foregoing deposition was reported, as stated in the caption, and the questions and answers thereto were reduced to the written page under my direction; that the foregoing pages 1 through 72 represent a true and correct transcript of the evidence given. I further certify that I am not in any way financially interested in the result of said case.

Pursuant to Rules and Regulations of the Board of Court Reporting of the Judicial Council of Georgia, I make the following disclosure:

I am a Georgia Certified Court Reporter. I am here as an independent contractor for Huseby, Inc.

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1 I was contacted by the offices
2 of Huseby, Inc. to provide court reporting
3 services for this deposition. I will not
4 be taking this deposition under any
5 contract that is prohibited by O.C.G.A.
6 15-14-37 (a) or (b).

7 I have no written contract to
8 provide reporting services with any party
9 to the case, any counsel in the case, or
10 any reporter or reporting agency from whom
11 a referral might have been made to cover
12 this deposition. I will charge my usual
13 and customary rates to all parties in the
14 case.

15 This, the 7th day of March, 2017.

16
17 

18 _____
19 SUZANNE BEASLEY, B-1184
20 My commission expires on the
21 24th day of August, 2018.
22
23
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Attachments: Scanned from a Xerox Multifunction Device.pdf

Hi Shelley,

Attached are portions of the book we spoke about. A link to a Washington Post article about it is also below. To be clear, this request is not coming from the Mayor himself. Melissa Mullinax, the Mayor's Special Advisor, and I are requesting that this issue be looked at by other faith-based leaders and organizations.

According to the media coverage, it appears that Chief Cochran's suspension occurred on November 24th (This info is from the Washington Times on November 25, 2014).

Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran has been suspended without pay for one month and must undergo sensitivity training for authoring a Christian book in 2013 that described homosexuality as a "sexual perversion."

Mayor Kasim Reed's spokeswoman Anne Torres said the administration didn't know about book, titled "Who Told You That You Are Naked?" until employees came forward with complaints last week, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

The book identifies Mr. Cochran as Atlanta's fire chief and says it's his first priority as chief is to run the department "to cultivate its culture to the glory of God," a local ABC affiliate reported.

The mayor's office has opened an investigation to determine whether the chief's actions violated city policies or discriminated against employees.

The Washington Post Link:

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2014/11/26/atlanta-fire-chief-suspended-after-distributing-his-religious-book-to-employees/>

I am available to answer any questions. Thanks for your time and consideration.

Robin

NOTE: My office address and phone number has changed.

Robin Joy Shahar
Mayor's Advisor on LGBT Issues
55 Trinity Ave, Suite 5000
Atlanta, Georgia 30303
rshahar@atlantaga.gov
Office: (404) 546-4171
Fax: (404) 546-8580



From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Friday, January 02, 2015 4:23 AM
To: Mullinax, Melissa
Subject: Cochran

How ironic it is to find the demoted cardinal is from the United States. What does that say about America - that even the Catholic Church and a pope are ahead of so many anti-LGBT lawmakers and extremists in this country.

Weeks after taking office in 2013, Pope Francis asked, 'Who am I to judge?' speaking of the LGBT community. Since then, he has had great support for his progressive views, and of course, great opposition. Raymond Burke is one of the pope's strongest opponents. The 66 year-old Burke believes homosexuality is, 'always and everywhere wrong [and] evil,' and continuously questioned the authority of Pope Francis, now 77. Burke told Buzzfeed in October:

Sent from my iPhone



From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2015 1:23 PM
To: Mullinax, Melissa
Subject: Cochran

Times Union article
Religious freedom bill
Pope Francis

Sent from my iPhone



From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Monday, January 05, 2015 8:21 PM
To: Mullinax, Melissa; Melissa Mullinax
Subject: Coch

Supporters - City Council members including Alex Wan, high profile community leaders (CT Vivian, rabbi, white female minister, lgbt)

Chief Cochran has resigned or been separated from the City today.

I've called this press conference because I want to make my and the City of Atlanta's position clear.
- the city's non-discrimination policy is non-negotiable -neither race, nor gender, nor religion, nor creed, nor sexual orientation, nor physical ability, nor gender identity

Sent from my iPhone



From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 06, 2015 9:35 PM
To: Ward, Janet L.
Cc: atlmedia
Subject: FW: Statement on Chief Cochran

Janet –
Our official statement is below. Thanks, MM



From: Torres, Anne
Sent: Tuesday, January 06, 2015 4:26 PM
To: Fausset, Richard (richard.fausset@nytimes.com)
Cc: atlmedia
Subject: Statement on Chief Cochran

Hi Richard-

Here's the official statement:

Statement from Mayor Kasim Reed on the Termination of Atlanta Fire Chief

ATLANTA – Mayor Kasim Reed issued the following statement today, announcing the termination of Atlanta Fire and Rescue Chief Kelvin Cochran:

“I have made a decision to separate from Atlanta Fire and Rescue Chief Kelvin Cochran, effective immediately. I want to make my position and the City of Atlanta’s position clear. The City’s non-discrimination policy is non-negotiable. Neither race, nor gender, no religion, nor creed, nor sexual orientation, nor physical ability, nor gender identity will be used to discriminate against any City of Atlanta employee.

I appreciate Chief Cochran’s service as Fire Chief. Chief Cochran’s personal religious beliefs are not the issue. The City and my Administration stand firmly in support of the right to religious freedom, freedom of speech, and the right to freely observe one’s faith.

I take no pleasure in this decision, but as the Commanding Officer of 750 employees within the Fire and Rescue Department, his judgment and management skills were the subject of the inquiry and my decision to terminate his employment with the City of Atlanta.

I am person of deep faith, and we are a city of laws. Chief Cochran’s book, “Who Told You You Were Naked,” was published in violation of the city’s Standards of Conduct, which required prior approval from the Board of Ethics. Despite my respect for Chief Cochran’s service, I believe his actions and decision-making undermine his ability to effectively manage a large, diverse workforce. Every single employee under the Fire Chief’s command deserves the certainty that he or she is a valued member of the team and that fairness and respect guide employment decisions. His actions and his statements during the investigation and his suspension have eroded my confidence in his ability to convey that message.

Chief Cochran also failed to notify me, as Mayor and Chief Executive of the City of Atlanta and his employer, of his plans to publish the book and its inflammatory content. This demonstrates an irreconcilable lapse in judgment.

Chief Joel Baker will serve as the Interim Fire Chief and will be able to compete for the permanent job. Going forward, the Fire and Rescue Department Command Staff and all members of my Cabinet will participate in a sensitivity training

offered by the well-respected Basic Diversity firm in January. This same training will be rolled out to all managers this year.

Any Fire and Rescue Department employees with additional suggestions for moving forward are invited to share those ideas with me. I am all ears and will do everything I can to support the healing that needs to take place within the Fire and Rescue Department and for all City employees.”

Anne Torres

Director of Communications

Office of Mayor Kasim Reed

(O) 404.330.6423

(C) 404.904.2618

(F) 404.546.2983

www.atlantaga.gov

@AnneMTorres

Stay connected on Twitter: @CityofAtlanta and @KasimReed

From: Mullinax, Melissa
To: 'Melissa Mullinax'
Sent: 1/12/2015 11:08:33 PM
Subject: faith and freedom coalition
Attachments: Faith Freedom Coalition.pdf

Melissa Mullinax | Senior Advisor to the Mayor | City of Atlanta | Office of Mayor Kasim Reed | 55 Trinity Ave. SE, Suite 2500 | Atlanta, GA 30303 | ph: 404.330.6756 | cell: 404.825.2430 | www.atlantaga.gov | mjmullinax@atlantaga.gov

Stay connected on Twitter: @MJMullinax, @CityofAtlanta and @KasimReed



FAITH & FREEDOM COALITION

Ralph Reed, Founder & Chairman

National Endorsers: Sarah Palin, Sean Hannity, James Dobson, Newt Gingrich

DRAFT STATEMENT FOR MKR SUPPORTER IN RESPONSE TO GA BAPTIST "DEFEND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY" RALLY AT GA STATE CAPITOL

The Religious Right never lets the truth get in the way of a good story. They specialize in distorting the facts to create martyrs, not to support the individuals, but to advance their national right-wing agenda.

In the case of Chief Cochran, there has been NO attack on his religious liberty. He was dismissed because he violated city code, ignored the city's Ethics Office, showed terrible judgment and flagrantly disrespected the chain of command that required him to seek and receive approval from his boss before publishing a book.

The GA Baptist Convention and the Faith & Freedom Coalition are ignoring the facts and dishonestly presenting his dismissal as an attack on religious liberty.

Ralph Reed and his people have a history of this dishonest manufacturing of martyrs. The ways in which these folks are mis-characterizing Mayor Kasim Reed are absurd and anybody who knows the Mayor knows better than to believe this junk.

SUPPORTING FACTS

In 2012, when **Retired General Jerry Boykin** was disinvited from speaking at a National Day of Prayer event at West Point, Ralph Reed and his allies tried to lift Boykin up as a martyr – saying he was denied the right to speak because of his Christian beliefs.

The truth about Boykin is that, in 2000, when Boykin was still on active duty, he generated criticism for public comments, given while he was in uniform, indicating that he saw U.S. military engagement in religious terms, as "our God" (Christian) vs. Satan or the "idol" God he said was worshipped by Muslims. It was widely feared that such comments could endanger U.S. troops. Boykin was criticized publicly by then-President George W. Bush and in a 2004 report by the Pentagon's inspector general; critics worried that his remarks could put servicemembers' lives in jeopardy by suggesting that the American military saw regional conflicts in religious terms.

Rev. Joanne Adams?
ADL?



Boykin has repeatedly said that President Obama is creating a Hitler-like cadre of Brownshirts to force Marxism down Americans' throats.

Vigorous opposition to Boykin's invitation to keynote the West Point prayer breakfast was led by veterans utilizing research from Right Wing Watch, as well as West Point cadets and faculty, military chaplains, and religious and civil rights organizations. Said a faculty member writing on behalf of his colleagues:

Suffice it to say that the horrible consequences of the prejudiced message sent 'round-the-world by this official West Point invitation to Boykin is all but incalculable. The true price to be exacted, by granting this high profile speaking engagement to the bigot Boykin, will shamefully be paid in blood, and the blood of innocents.

VoteVets argued that Boykin's views were incompatible with Army values, inconsistent with Army doctrine, and disrespectful of the service of Muslim-Americans serving in the Armed Forces. VoteVets leaders Jon Soltz and Richard Allen Smith said the kind of anti-Muslim remarks Gen. Boykin has made "threaten our relationships with Muslims around the world, and thereby, our troops serving in harm's way."

Members of the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy also opposed Boykin's invitation. "Chaplains are sworn to serve all in the military," said retired Chaplain (Colonel) Paul Dodd, co-chair of the Forum. "It sends a poisonous message to have chaplains sponsor someone so strongly associated with speech that condemns one particular religious group."

Although West Point officials initially defended the plan to have Boykin speak at the "pluralistic" breakfast, saying cadets were "purposefully exposed to different perspectives and cultures," the retired general withdrew a few days before the breakfast, reportedly after speaking with West Point officials.

In 2013, **David and Jason Benham** – whose plans for a reality TV show on HGTV were scrapped by the network after Right Wing Watch reported on the brothers' anti-gay, anti-choice, anti-Islam activism – were featured speakers at Ralph Reed's 2014 Road to Majority conference, sponsored by the Faith and Freedom Coalition.

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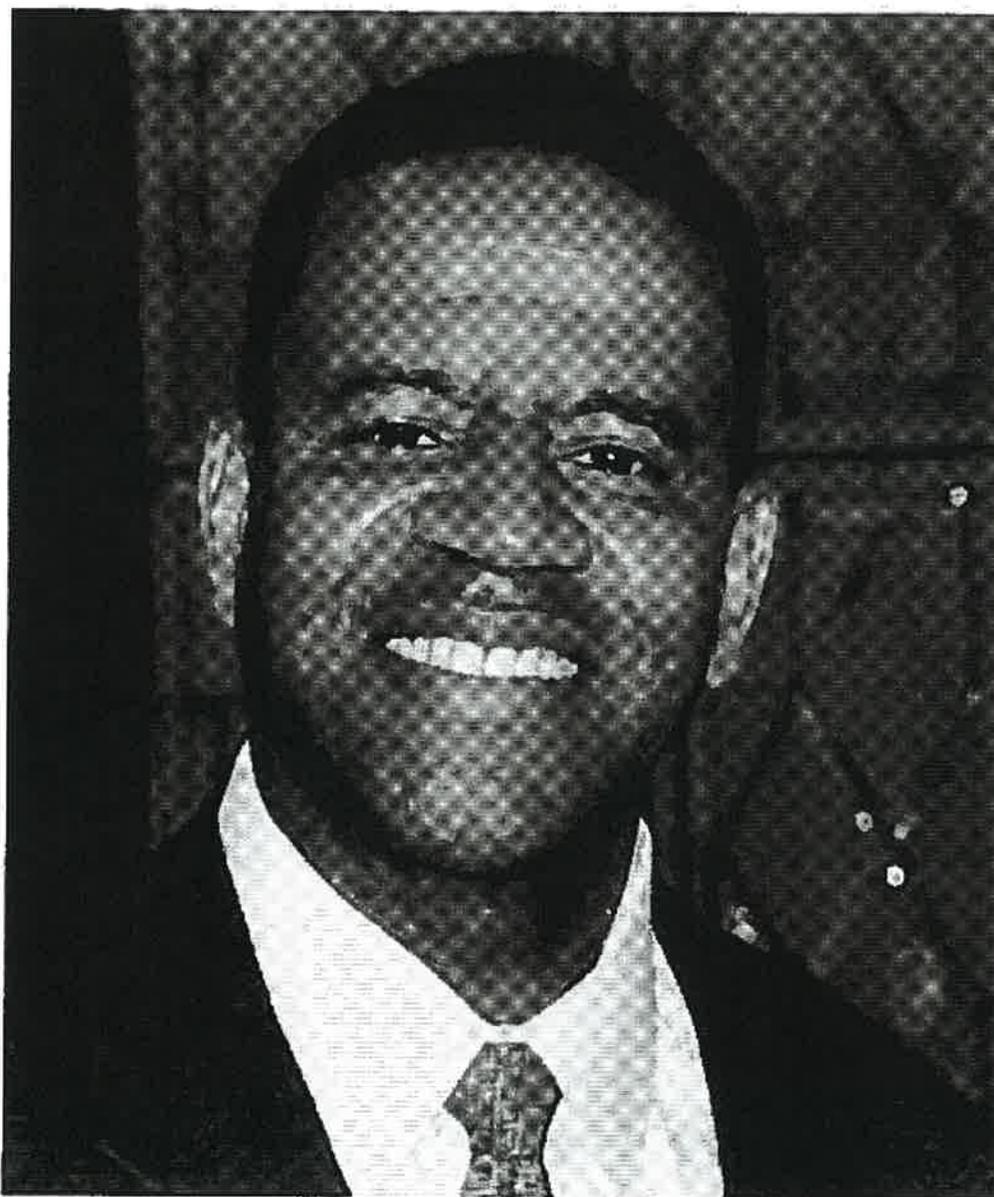
Help Us Defend Religious Liberty!

NEWS UPDATE 1-11-2016

Standing for Our Faith Rally

On Tuesday, January 13 come to the Georgia State Capitol and stand with Christians from around our state!

The unjust firing of Chief Kelvin Cochran by Atlanta Mayor Kasim



Kelvin Cochran

Reed has awakened believers from around our state and nation to the reality of Christian

discrimination in the workplace. Now is the time for all Bible-believing Christians to show their support for Chief Cochran's courage and for our First Amendment rights as American citizens!

Come stand for your faith and against anti-Christian bigotry with Chief Kelvin Cochran, pastors, church leaders and Christians. We will conclude our time together by walking to City Hall for a time of prayer.

What: Standing for Our Faith Rally

When: Tuesday, January 13, 1:30-2:30 p.m.

Where: Georgia Capitol Rotunda

Who: Public Invited

Organized by Concerned Pastors:

Garland Hunt, garlandhunt1@gmail.com

Mike Griffin, mgriffin@gabaptist.org

Sign the Petition:

The Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) is calling on the Christian community to "stand up for biblical principles and fellow believers who are punished or marginalized for their faith."

In response to Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran's original suspension, and now termination by Mayor Kasim Reed, the GBC's Public Affairs Committee is continuing the petition started last month. The committee has issued its own statement defending the Fire Chief and is calling on Reed to:

- Acknowledge Chief Cochran's First Amendment Rights.
- Make a public apology for the termination and grief it has caused the Chief and his family.
- Restore Chief Cochran's position and reputation as an honorable Fire Chief.

GBC is requesting Christians and people of faith across the nation to sign the related petition (right) calling upon Mayor Reed to reverse his decision as outlined in the three areas listed above.

Please enlist as many churches and believers as possible to express these concerns to Mayor Reed:

Mayor Kasim Reed
 404-330-6100
 55 Trinity Ave. Suite 2500, Atlanta, GA 30303
 mkreed@atlantaga.gov

Additional Resources:

- Statement on firing of Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran 1-7-2015- download the PDF
- Read the Full story in The Christian Index.
- GBC News Press Release 12-15-2014 – download the PDF
- Listen to audio excerpts from Chief Cochran's address to the Executive Committee of the Georgia Baptist Convention – Click Here
- Purchase Chief Cochran's book "Who Told You That You Were Naked?" on amazon.com.
- For more information contact Mike Griffin at the Georgia Baptist Convention (706) 436-2646.

Petition to Mayor Kasim Reed

READ THE PETITION

FIRST NAME *

LAST NAME *

EMAIL *

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<input type="button" value="Sign Now"/>	
9,207 signatures	
Share this with your friends:	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

How to Contact GBC:

Address:

Georgia Baptist Convention
Missions & Ministry Center
6405 Sugarloaf Parkway
Duluth, GA 30097-4092

Phone: 770-455-0404

Toll Free: 800-746-4422

Contact Form

Our Location:



[Click Here for Large Map & Driving Directions](#)



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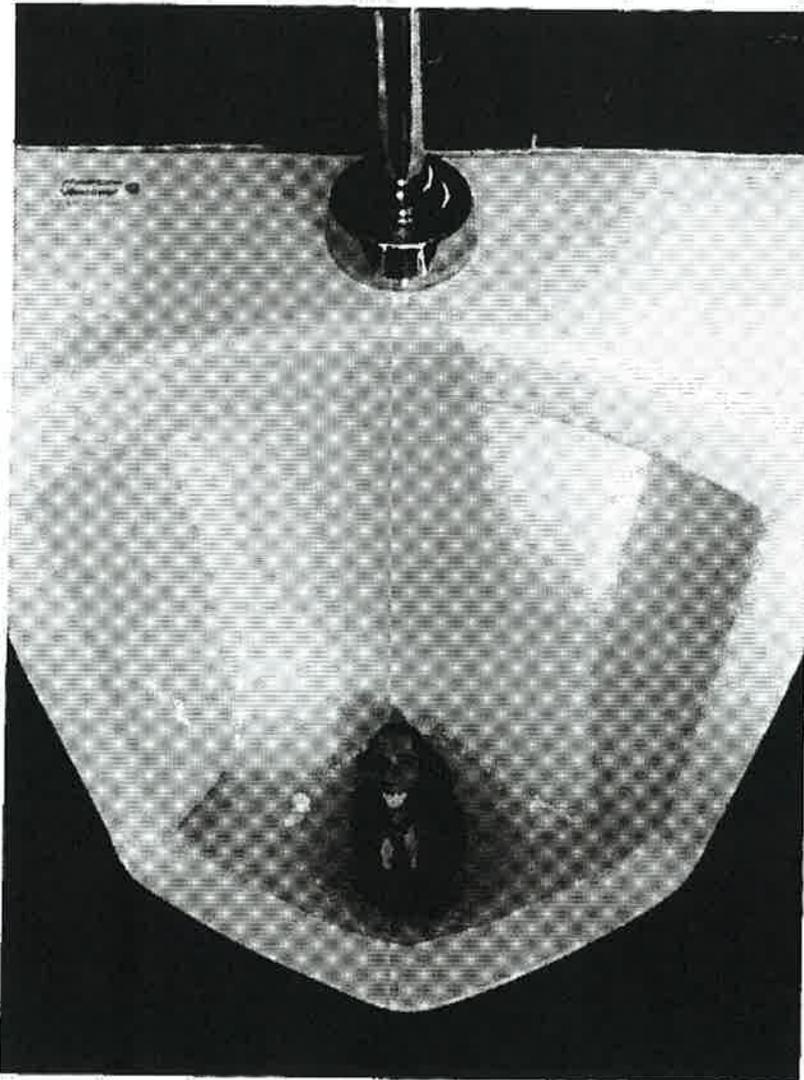


Igor Bobic
@igorbobic

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Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014

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Michael Curry @mcurryfelidae · Jun 20

@igorbobic Knowing there r a bunch of conservative pols at #RTM2014 & their record w/ restroom behavior, pls don't take more pics in there.

Reply Retweet 3 Likes



Sylvie Parris @SylvieDParris · Jun 20

@igorbobic @WillMcAvoyACN The disrespect is just appalling, and at a event for grownups, no less

Reply Retweet 2 Likes



Lawrence Serewicz @ldzne · Jun 20

@igorbobic @Green_Footbails This image perhaps sums up the corruption in the American soul better than any 8k word essay.

Reply Retweet 5 Likes



Jesse Joseph Realmo @JRealmo · Jun 20

@igorbobic obama.....THE MOST INCOMPETENT, MOST INSIGNIFICANT KENYAN HOMOSEXUAL WHO EATS PUPPIES LIKE THE CHINESE, HATES GOD, HATES WOMEN!!!

Reply Retweet 1 Like



April @ReignOfApril · Jun 20

Disgusting but not surprising. RT "@igorbobic: Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014 pic.twitter.com/6GsLF0i2L5"

Reply Retweet 1 Like



TiffJ @Coffey0072 · Jun 20

Wow... :-\ RT @igorbobic Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014 pic.twitter.com/Gkblxn47R3

Reply Retweet 1 Like



George Thotstanza @etfp · Jun 20

 **@igorbobic** This is what it looks like when you're not allowed to mature after age twelve. Search Twitter Have an account? Log in

 **AMC@Truthbuster** Jun 20
@igorbobic Low-class, racist, disrespectful & disgusting RW evangelicals prove it again! They stink!

 **Vickijee@vickijee** Jun 20
@igorbobic @Truthbuster thanks for nothing!

 **Amarlie@marabout40** Jun 20
RT **@sasphoto**: Approved by Jesus? Shameful RT **@igorbobic**: Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014 pic.twitter.com/a4RZkFyxCB

 **Amarlie@marabout40** Jun 20
@SylvieGalloway "christian" and "patriotic" grown ups. **@igorbobic @WillMcAvoyACN**

 **AMC@Truthbuster** Jun 20
@JRealmo You are one sick human....barely human **@igorbobic**

 **AMC@Truthbuster** Jun 20
@vickijee @igorbobic I guess we should know what these creeps get up to....and GOP 'Faith and Freedom' leaders presumably condone!

 **Vickijee@vickijee** Jun 20
@Truthbuster @igorbobic I don't like to repeat racist bad taste. Nonsense...political strategies important...imbecilic behavior. NOT

 **Vickijee@vickijee** Jun 20
@Truthbuster @igorbobic besides he works for Huff fluff...they do junk mail all the time!

 **Trevor Bauknight@tzbauknight** Jun 20

 **The #TeaParty #GOP keeping it classy.** @igorbobic Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014 pic.twitter.com/F9MmZDgAZ Have an account? Log in

← ↻ ★ ...

 **Jesse Joseph Realmo**@JRealmo Jun 20
 @Truthbuster @igorbobic WHERE ON YOUR SLIMY BODY DID I FIND A NERVE THT STILL WORKS, THE WORSE THING ABOUT LIBERALS IS THT THEY HAV A CHOICE

← ↻ ★ ...

 **Simon Templar**@SimonTemplarPV Jun 20
 Good news @HardballChris - you can reverse it too #icot RT @igorbobic Scene from a Faith & Freedom restroom #RTM2014 pic.twitter.com/RcXnOmdAdC

← ↻ ★ 1 ...

 **Alex**@alexmazzaraa Jun 20
 @Truthbuster How about another synonym for us? Everyone is a racist!!!! Even though you have met nobody!!

← ↻ ★ ...

 **AMC**@Truthbuster Jun 20
 @alexmazzaraa Actions are articulate.

← ↻ ★ ...

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The Mythical Martyrdom of Jerry Boykin



The Mythical Martyrdom of Jerry Boykin

A Case Study in Religious Right Propaganda Techniques

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Introduction

Ever since retired Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin withdrew as the scheduled keynote speaker at the February 8 National Prayer Breakfast at West Point military academy, Religious Right leaders have tried to turn the controversy over his planned appearance into a cautionary tale of political correctness trumping religious liberty. In reality, the episode provides a case

study of Religious Right propaganda techniques in action – and of right-wing leaders' unwillingness to let the truth get in the way of a good story.

Facts First: Boykin in Brief

Retired General William "Jerry" Boykin had a long military career, much of it spent in charge of special forces units. So why would his selection as a speaker at West Point be controversial? Almost ten years ago, when Boykin was still on active duty, he generated criticism for public comments, given while he was in uniform, indicating that he saw U.S. military engagement in religious terms, as "our God" (Christian) vs. Satan or the "idol" God he said was worshipped by Muslims. It was widely feared that such comments could endanger U.S. troops. Boykin was criticized publicly by then-President George W. Bush and in a 2004 report by the Pentagon's inspector general; critics worried that his remarks could put servicemembers' lives in jeopardy by suggesting that the American military saw regional conflicts in religious terms. Since he retired, Boykin became an ordained minister and has been a regular speaker at Religious Right and right-wing events, where he has not only demonized Muslims, but also claimed that since Islam is not a religion but a "totalitarian way of life," and since Muslims are under an "obligation to destroy our Constitution," American Muslims are not protected under the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty. More explicitly, he said there should be no mosques allowed in America. Boykin works through his organization Kingdom Warriors. He also serves on the board of the dominionist Oak Initiative. Boykin is a co-author of *Sharia, the Threat to America*, popularly known as the Team B II report. He has charged that President Obama is creating a Hitler-like cadre of Brownshirts to force Marxism down Americans' throats.

Boykin at the Beach

In January, People For the American Way's Right Wing Watch blog noticed that Boykin was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the "Mayor's Prayer Breakfast" in Ocean City, Maryland. PFAW President Michael B. Keegan wrote to the mayor and city council members offering details about Boykin's promotion of religious bigotry and his advocacy for religious discrimination. PFAW's letter argued that city officials should not give Boykin's extremism an implied endorsement. Other organizations, including the Council on American Islamic Relations, the Auburn Seminary, and Standing on the Side of Love, asked that Boykin be disinvited; at least 2,000 people contacted city officials to express their opposition. The *Baltimore Sun* weighed in with a strong editorial, which concluded:

Make no mistake: This is not an issue of freedom of speech or of any of the constitution's protections for religious expression that Mr. Boykin seems so eager to deny to those who don't share his own Christian faith. Mr. Boykin has every right to say whatever outrageously offensive and hateful things about Muslims pop into his head, and the private organizers of an Ocean City prayer breakfast have the right to invite him to speak. Likewise, Ocean City Mayor Rick Meehan and the town council can attend the breakfast if they so choose. What they cannot do, however, is pretend that their presence there won't reflect badly on them and the resort town they lead. They need to make clear whether they agree with Mr. Boykin's views, they need to do it immediately and they need to do it publicly.

In the end, Boykin addressed the breakfast, focusing on his experiences as a military commander and his belief that God had repeatedly intervened to save him and his men. Boykin concluded with the equivalent of an altar call, asking participants to join him in a prayer recognizing Jesus Christ as lord and savior.

Boykin at West Point

As the controversy over Boykin's invitation to lead the Ocean City Mayor's Prayer Breakfast picked up steam, it was revealed that Boykin was also scheduled to be the featured speaker at the National Prayer Breakfast at West Point military academy – a much higher-level platform that would directly suggest approval by the nation's military leadership of Boykin's extremism, religious bigotry, and calls for discrimination. Vigorous opposition to Boykin's invitation to keynote the West Point prayer breakfast was led by veterans utilizing research from Right Wing Watch, as well as West Point cadets and faculty, military chaplains, and religious and civil rights organizations. Said a faculty member writing on behalf of his colleagues:

Suffice it to say that the horrible consequences of the prejudiced message sent 'round-the-world by this official West Point invitation to Boykin is all but incalculable. The true price to be exacted, by granting this high profile speaking engagement to the bigot Boykin, will shamefully be paid in blood, and the blood of innocents.

VoteVets argued that Boykin's views were incompatible with Army values, inconsistent with Army doctrine, and disrespectful of the service of Muslim-Americans serving in the Armed Forces. VoteVets leaders Jon Soltz and Richard Allen Smith said the kind of anti-Muslim remarks Gen. Boykin has made "threaten our relationships with Muslims around the world, and thereby, our troops serving in harm's way."

Members of the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy also opposed Boykin's invitation. "Chaplains are sworn to serve all in the military," said retired Chaplain (Colonel) Paul Dodd, co-chair of the Forum. "It sends a poisonous message to have chaplains sponsor someone so strongly associated with speech that condemns one particular religious group."

Although West Point officials initially defended the plan to have Boykin speak at the "pluralistic" breakfast, saying cadets were "purposefully exposed to different perspectives and cultures," the retired general withdrew a few days before the breakfast, reportedly after speaking with West Point officials.

Cranking Up the "Christian Persecution" Propaganda Machine

Right-wing leaders and pundits lost no time in trying to turn a defeat into victory by portraying Boykin as a martyr for free speech and religious liberty. This is one of the Religious Right's go-to strategies: to dishonestly portray policy disagreements – or in this case, an effort to hold officials accountable for promoting irresponsible behavior – as attacks on religious liberty. Said the Family Research Council's Tony Perkins, "He has done so much to defend the ideals and the freedom that America stands for. Yet his own freedoms – that he fought to protect for others – have been taken from him."

Propaganda Technique 1: Distort the Issue as a question of Religious Freedom and Free Speech

Boykin supporters immediately began portraying opposition to his appearance as an attack on Boykin's Christian faith and his freedom of speech. Ken Blackwell and Ken Klukowski of the Family Research Council declared that Boykin was kept from speaking at West Point "because of his Christian beliefs." Frank Gaffney, himself a font of anti-Muslim bigotry, railed in *The Washington Times* against "the suppression of Gen. Boykin's right to express himself – and, for that matter, to enjoy freedom of religion." The Family Research Council sent an action alert to members blaming Boykin's withdrawal on "the Obama Administration's continuing track-record of hostility toward Christianity." FRC's Tony Perkins urged activists to "Sign our petition urging Congress and the Obama administration to take action to end the purging of Christianity from the military."

Diana West, one of Boykin's co-authors on the "Team B II" report, argued that the issue was about freedom of inquiry: "Boykin's opinion about a legitimate topic of discussion is cause for ejecting him from West Point. The effect is to marginalize further the quest for open debate about Islam and its threat to liberty – and to marginalize further those who seek it." Boykin himself pushed this line of attack, saying "The message is that people of faith and conservative Americans are losing our voice to a very well-organized and very well-funded group of very passionate people – those being the atheists and the Muslims. They want to change the nature of our culture – and they are succeeding."

On a radio show with Religious Right leaders Tony Perkins and Tim Wildmon, Boykin said:

This is going to get worse unless the American people - and particularly people for faith, Christians - rise up and say that we're going to draw a line in the sand ... They contact their congressman, they let their congressman know that this is not their values, that they believe in the First Amendment, not only free speech, but the freedom of religion. And I think they have to get the leadership involved in this and I think that the Administration needs to hear through the Congress that there are a lot of Americans who do not endorse this sort of thing. Where's it going to stop?

Propaganda Technique 2: Mischaracterize the Opposition

Gaffney's *Washington Times* op-ed pushed a silencing-of Christians interpretation of the controversy by focusing only on opposition to Boykin by the Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), which he described as "the organization demanding that [Boykin] be silenced." Todd Stearns of Fox News & Commentary headlined an article "Muslims, Atheists Pressure Military to Remove Christian Speaker."

The Family Research Council told its activists, "The Academy moved Boykin to pull out of the event when a handful of atheist and Muslims cadets complained about Boykin's beliefs. The message to this elite, three-star warrior was obvious: You and your faith aren't welcome." These claims ignore the vigorous and well-articulated opposition to Boykin's

appearance from VoteVets, the Forum on the Military Chaplaincy, and a group of 27 West Point faculty and 74 cadets working with the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, the vast majority of them self-identified as Christians.

Boykin has even blamed the media, claiming that the nation's leaders are afraid to take on radical Islamists "because of the liberal media. The media is going to support the enemy. That's the bottom line -- the mainstream media is."

Propaganda Technique 3: Whitewash History

After his Ocean City speech, Boykin told a reporter, "The Muslim people are a precious people and I respect them and their right to worship, so long as they don't fall into the category of a radical who wants to destroy the Constitution." When asked by Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly about his past statements, including his view that Muslims should be barred from immigrating to, and building mosques in America, Boykin claimed he had misspoken and that he had merely been opposing the so-called "Ground Zero Mosque." He complained to the Christian Broadcasting Network that his views "have been grossly misrepresented." Unfortunately for Boykin, whitewashing history is a little harder in the YouTube era; People For the American Way's Right Wing Watch has full documentation of Boykin's statements.

Propaganda Technique 4: Blame Obama

Since the primary goal of the Religious Right political movement today is the defeat of President Obama, and Religious Right leaders routinely and falsely characterize the administration as anti-religious and anti-Christian, it is not surprising that Religious Right officials have tried to blame the controversy on the president. Tony Perkins said, "There seems to be pressure coming from within the administration to sweep Christianity off the face of military bases." Ken Blackwell echoed the charge: "This sad episode is yet another example of the Obama administration's ongoing hostility to people of faith, especially Christians." The Family Research Council's Tony Perkins wrote, "The Obama Administration is advancing an environment of religious disarmament among the military – and it must be stopped quickly for the sake of our soldiers' spiritual lives." Boykin himself has joined in, saying that the administration has "shown favor to Islam at the same time that they have denigrated both Christianity and Judaism." Perkins said that even if the order did not come from Obama's desk, "The President has created an environment that has become hostile to Christianity in this country."

There has been no indication that administration officials were involved in conversation about the prayer breakfast. Indeed, West Point officials initially defended the invitation to Boykin; he himself said he withdrew after a conversation with West Point's chaplain about the pressure that had been put on the school's leadership.

Propaganda Technique 5: Shout "Sharia!"

Boykin is part of a brigade of right-wing activists who claim that the U.S. is under dire threat of having the Constitution supplanted by Sharia law. As noted earlier, Boykin is a co-author of "Sharia, the Threat to America," popularly known as the Team B II report. American

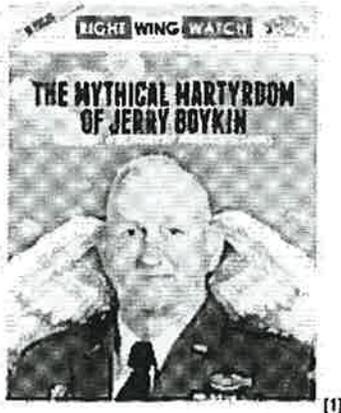
Family Association spokesman Bryan Fischer made the nonsensical claim that criticism of Boykin's invitation to address West Point was somehow a sign that "Sharia law is gaining a preferred place in the United States military.

The Truth

No one has challenged retired Gen. Boykin's freedom of religion or freedom of speech. He is like all Americans free to speak, preach, and proselytize. He is free to continue to travel around the country promoting religious bigotry and calling for legalized discrimination against some Americans based on their religious beliefs. He is free to make his case in the media, as he has continued to do since withdrawing from the West Point prayer breakfast. And he is even free to claim that criticizing his outrageous statements is the equivalent of an attack on his personal freedom.

But General Boykin has no "right" to be free from criticism. And he has no "right" to have his irresponsible positions promoted by public officials. Indeed, Americans who value free speech and religious liberty have good reasons to challenge Boykin's assertions, and to hold accountable public officials who give his extremism credibility it does not deserve.

A new Right Wing Watch In Focus report from People For the American Way about Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin (Ret.) provides a case study in the Religious Right's propaganda techniques.



[Download the report as a PDF.](#) [1]

A Story Image:



Source URL: <http://www.pfaw.org/nww-in-focus/mythical-martyrdom-jerry-boykin>

Links:

[1] <http://site.pfaw.org/pdf/Boykin-Report.pdf>



A project of People For the American Way dedicated to monitoring and exposing the activities of the right wing movement. [LEARN MORE](#)



Stop Persecuting Us! Five Religious Right Tactics On Clear Display At The Values Voter Summit

SUBMITTED BY Brian TeShimmer on Monday, 9/29/2014 7:40 am

One thing was clear at last week's Values Voter Summit: many of the Religious Right's leaders and allied politicians know that their stances on abortion rights and LGBT equality are becoming more and more toxic to the average voter, and less and less popular within the GOP.

Many speakers at the conference tried to reframe the debate on issues such as same-sex marriage, insisting that opponents of LGBT rights are becoming an oppressed minority in America. This delusion even seeped into matters such as foreign policy, with speakers attacking President Obama as an Islamist sympathizer who refuses to take military action against ISIS, even while he was doing exactly that.

Naturally, one politician was able to prey upon the many fears and fantasies of the far-right: Ted Cruz.

Even as the Values Voter Summit subtly changed its tone on some familiar issues, five tried and true tactics of the Religious Right were unchanged at last week's event:

6. Make Audacious Persecution Analogies

While addressing the plight of Christians in the Mideast and people such as Menahem Abraham in Sudan and Saad Abedini in Iran — both of whom are actually the victims of shocking anti-Christian persecution — Values Voter Summit speakers often attempted to claim that conservative Christians face similar persecution. [Read more about the persecution of Christians in the Mideast.](#)

Mat Staver of Liberty Counsel attempted to paint the Obama administration as persecuting Christians in the U.S. [Read more about the persecution of Christians in the U.S.](#) and twins Jason and David Banham — who lost a planned HGTV reality show after we reported on their anti-gay political activism — even had the gall to [blame the suspension of their show on the actions of Obama.](#)



Ted Stammer, Alan Robertson, and other speakers rattled off cases of purported anti-Christian persecution in America. "Duck Dynasty" star Alan Robertson said his family's reality TV show was briefly suspended in the name of some anti-gay activists, and a Colorado baker who gained national attention after denying service to a gay couple.

Maggie Gallagher, the founder of the National Organization for Marriage, told attendees that marriage equality opponents will be "persecuted" due to their opinions, and Mat Staver of Liberty Counsel predicted that opponents will be persecuted on behalf of "the intolerant homosexual lobby."

4. Demand Religious Freedom... Except For Muslims

For a conference dedicated to protecting religious liberty and addressing the supposed persecution of Christians in America, there sure was plenty of animosity towards Muslims.

Conference speakers including Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, a likely GOP presidential candidate, dedicated their remarks to the threat of Islam, with several conflating Al Qaeda and ISIS with all of Islam and suggesting that the U.S. government somehow declare war on the religion.

Prior to the conference, Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, whose group was the summit's chief sponsor, suggested that Muslim-Americans be "hunted down and killed and destroyed."

Bachmann declared that the president was "on how to handle ISIS. 'You kill their leader, you kill their council, you kill their army until they wave the white flag of surrender. That's how you win a war'."

3. Brazenly Ignore Reality

It was surreal to watch several Values Voter Summit speakers criticize President Obama for not going after ISIS at the same time as a U.S.-led coalition was launching a daily torrent of airstrikes against ISIS and the Al Qaeda-affiliated group Jabhat al-Nusra in Syria and Iraq.

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2. Push Back Against The GOP

There was a palpable fear throughout the conference that the Republican Party is moving away from the Religious Right, as more and more GOP candidates either refuse to highlight the movement's anti-choice and anti-gay positions or are openly trumpeting support for abortion rights and gay marriage.

Just before the conference took place, Focus on the Family, the National Organization for Marriage and the Family Research Council joined a brief advertising blitz to defeat two openly gay Republican House candidates and the Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Oregon, who is pro-choice and running advertisements boasting of her support for marriage equality.

NOM president Brian Brown criticized Republicans for blaming the party's stances on social issues for losses in the 2012 election.

Brown insisted as he introduced unabashedly anti-gay politician Rick Santorum at the summit.

Later, at a NOM-sponsored panel, Brown accused gay rights supporters of attempting to "pull away from the GOP." While one panel at the summit attempted to explain the potential for libertarians and social conservatives to build a political alliance, it seems many in the audience were skeptical.

1. Throw Them Red Meat

From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 12:15 PM
To: Torres, Anne; Byrd, Candace; Taylor, Katrina; Garland, Jenna
Subject: Support on Cochran Issue

Team-

This NYT editorial should be widely distributed! It was posted online this morning.
<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/01/13/opinion/god-gays-and-the-atlanta-fire-department.html>

- ADL will publicly release letter today.
- jeff graham/ga equality is writing long piece for ajc op ed page- will support firing decision in detail- will run Thursday.
- Faith in Public Life will run ajc oped Friday.
- I will be at the FIPL press conference this morning at the Capitol at 10am.

Thanks,
MM

Sent from my iPhone



From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 6:06 PM
To: Joe Binns
Subject: Fwd: Messages for Social Media

Joe:
See below. Help how you can.

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Torres, Anne" <amtorres@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Date: January 13, 2015 at 11:56:20 AM EST
To: "Mullinax, Melissa" <MJMullinax@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Subject: Messages for Social Media

MM-

Please forward to all of our supporters and organizations. These are ready to go. We want #IStandWithKasim trending.

Twitter Messages

#IStandWithKasim because all employees have a right to a boss who does not speak of them as 2nd class citizens. <http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>

#IStandWithKasim because there is no place for discrimination in the workplace.
<http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>

Religious freedom have been violated? An assertion that is as wrong as it was predictable. <http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc> #IStandWithKasim

Atlanta is a welcoming city for all - let's keep it that way #IStandwithKasim
<http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>

Facebook Messages

Finally! Someone gets it right. There is no place for discrimination in the workforce. I support Mayor Kasim Reed's decision to terminate the Fire Chief. <http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>

Religious freedoms have been violated? An assertion that is as wrong as it was predictable. Read today's New York Times Editorial here: <http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>



#StandwithKasim because he has it right: everyone, no matter who they love, should come to work without fear of discrimination. Read it here: <http://nyti.ms/1KFECYc>

Anne Torres

Director of Communications

Office of Mayor Kasim Reed

(O) 404.330.6423

(C) 404.904.2618

(F) 404.546.2983

www.atlantaga.gov

@AnneMTorres

Stay connected on Twitter: @CityofAtlanta and @KasimReed

From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 6:08 PM
To: Norma Driebe
Subject: Fwd: Messages for Social Media

NJ-
The Mayor is getting hit pretty hard by the religious right. Will you help us by posting on your Facebook page?

See suggested messages below.

Thanks!

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Torres, Anne" <amtorres@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Date: January 13, 2015 at 11:56:20 AM EST
To: "Mullinax, Melissa" <MJMullinax@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Subject: Messages for Social Media

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From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 6:09 PM
To: Natalie Zellner; Cecily Craighill
Subject: Fwd: Messages for Social Media

NZ, CC:

See below. If you guys can help by posting on FB or twitter, that'd be great.

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Torres, Anne" <amtorres@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Date: January 13, 2015 at 11:56:20 AM EST
To: "Mullinax, Melissa" <MJMullinax@AtlantaGa.Gov>
Subject: Messages for Social Media

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From: lillian govus <lilliangovus@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 6:39 PM
To: Mullinax, Melissa
Subject: Re: Messages for Social Media

You got it!

On Tue, Jan 13, 2015 at 1:06 PM, Mullinax, Melissa <MJMullinax@atlantaga.gov> wrote:
Lillian -
Can you help with this? Posting on twitter and FB?

Thanks.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Torres, Anne" <amtorres@AtlantaGa.Gov<mailto:amtorres@AtlantaGa.Gov>>
Date: January 13, 2015 at 11:56:20 AM EST
To: "Mullinax, Melissa" <MJMullinax@AtlantaGa.Gov<mailto:MJMullinax@AtlantaGa.Gov>>
Subject: Messages for Social Media

MM-

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@AnneMTorres

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From: Mullinax, Melissa
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2015 7:40 PM
To: Torres, Anne; Garland, Jenna
Cc: Shahar, Robin
Subject: press release- 1-13-2015
Attachments: press release- 1-13-2015.doc



PRESS RELEASE

City of Atlanta Releases the Law Department's Investigative Report of Kelvin Cochran

ATLANTA- The City of Atlanta Law Department performed a thirty-day investigation into the publication of the book *Who Told You That You Were Naked* by former Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran. The Law Department issued its findings in an Investigative Report released on January 9, 2015.

The Investigative Report shows that Mr. Cochran did not have authority to publish the book as required by the Atlanta Code of Ordinances and that he distributed the book to at least nine subordinates at work. It also describes a general consensus among the interviewed Atlanta Fire Rescue Department employees that Mr. Cochran's book publication, in his capacity of Fire Chief, undermined his ability to provide leadership to the Department in the future.

The findings demonstrate the inaccuracy of the relentless assertions, by a vocal minority, that the Mayor terminated Mr. Cochran for his religious beliefs.

"Mr. Cochran and I are both men of faith," said Mayor Kasim Reed. "My decision has nothing to do with his religion and everything to do with his judgment and conduct as the leader of the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department and a member of my Cabinet. Mr. Cochran ignored the City's Ethics Code which establish a clear protocol which *must* be followed before a Commissioner may engage in private activity for pay. Mr. Cochran made numerous judgment decisions regarding the book that are unacceptable for a leader in City of Atlanta government: he sold the Book without the requisite approval; he authored the book identifying himself as the Atlanta Fire Chief; he distributed the book at work, despite the fact that its content expressed opinions which are contrary to the City's and my personal commitment to nondiscrimination; he exposed the City to potential litigation from employees; and he published the book without ever mentioning it to me. Mr. Cochran's decisions as a City official, not his religion, resulted in his termination."

Authority

Atlanta's Ethics Code establishes the required approval process for Department heads who wish to engage in outside activities "for remuneration".

Commissioners . . . may engage in private employment or render services for private interest only upon obtaining prior written approval from the board of ethics in accordance with this paragraph. The board of ethics shall review each request individually and provide written approval or disapproval of the notification within thirty days.

(Atlanta Code of Ordinances, Section 2-820 (d)).



The independent report found that “no such approval was sought or rendered in the publication of the book that is available on Amazon.com for purchase”. (Investigative Report, p. 1).

Distribution of Book in Workplace

The Investigative Report determined that Mr. Cochran distributed his book in the workplace to at least nine individuals. Three of them stated that the book was given to them without a request on their part. (Investigative Report, p. 2)

Most notably, Mr. Cochran provided the book to a Battalion Chief during a professional counseling one-one-one session. The Battalion Chief did not request a copy of the book. The purpose of the session was to discuss what the Battalion Chief needed to do to prepare himself for appointment to the position of Assistant Chief. The Assistant Chief position is the *only* sworn position that a Fire Chief may appoint using his sole discretion; all other sworn positions are filled through a pre-determined selection process. (Investigative Report, p. 2)

Disciplinary Decisions

The Investigative Report found no indication that Mr. Cochran allowed his religious beliefs to compromise his disciplinary decisions. (Investigative Report, p. 3)

None of the witnesses interviewed for the Investigative Report were able to identify a *specific* instance of unfair treatment by Mr. Cochran based on his religious beliefs. One of the witnesses, a lesbian who is a retired Battalion Chief, stated that during her employment, she suspected Mr. Cochran’s religious beliefs and consequently took a voluntary demotion. (Investigative Report, p. 4)

Judgment as Department Head

The Investigative Report evinces that Mr. Cochran’s actions undermined his ability to lead the Atlanta Fire Rescue Department. “There was a consistent sentiment among the witnesses that firefighters throughout the organization are appalled by the sentiments expressed in the book. There is also a general agreement the contents of the book have eroded trust and have compromised the ability of the chief to provide leadership in the future. . . . [Union president Borders] echoed the sentiment of distrust and disgust created by the contents of the book with the representation in the book that Chief Cochran is speaking in his capacity as AFRD Chief.” (Investigative Report, pp. 3-4)