

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Name and address of the plaintiff:

Trenton John Tompkins

510 Main Street

Prospect, PA 16052

v.

No. 20-1141

Full name, title, and business address

of each defendant in this action:

1 Lauren Leigh Hackett, Public Defender

120 South Diamond Street

Mercer, PA 16137

Jury Trial Demanded

2

Use additional sheets, if necessary

Number each defendant

Plaintiff brings this action against the above named and identified defendants on the following cause of action:

I. Where are you now confined? Released 9/20/21

What sentence are you serving now? \_\_\_\_\_

What court imposed the sentence? Mercer County

II. Previous Lawsuits

A. Describe any and all lawsuits in which you are a plaintiff which deal with the same facts involved in this action. (If there is more than one lawsuit, describe the additional lawsuits on another piece of paper, using the same outline.)

1. Parties to this previous lawsuit

Plaintiffs Trenton John Tompkins

Defendants PrimeCare Medical Inc., Erna Craig.,  
et al.

2. Court (if federal court, name the district; if state court, name the county) and docket number

Western District of Pennsylvania - #19-1089

- 
3. Name of judge to whom case was assigned Maureen P. Kelly
4. Disposition (For example: Was the case dismissed? Was it appealed? Is it still pending?)
- 
- 

5. Approximate date of filing lawsuit August 28, 2019
6. Approximate date of disposition "Closed" June 9, 2020

- B. Prior disciplinary proceedings which deal with the same facts involved in this action:

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Result: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

- III. What federal law do you claim was violated? Conspiracy to deprive 5th, 6th and 14th amendment rights

IV. Statement of Claim

(State here as briefly as possible the facts of your case. Do not give any legal arguments or cite any cases or statutes. If you intend to allege a number of related claims, number and set forth each claim in a separate paragraph. Use as much space as you need. Attach extra sheet if necessary.)

- A. Date of event: polygraph 10/31/17, ongoing obstruction/harm

- B. Place of event: Mercer's County jail

- C. Persons involved--name each person and tell what that person did to you: Lauren Hackett may have conspired with the district attorney's office, the county jail, and a local polygraph examiner to deprive the plaintiff, whom she represented, of his rights by lying to him as part of a ruse to help manufacture evidence. Lauren Hackett has since refused to communicate at all with the plaintiff, thereby obstructing his PCRA efforts and masking her role in any conspiracy.

(facts attached)

## **Facts**

1. Before his arrest, plaintiff refused to talk to the police without an attorney regarding an allegation of rape and related charges. On 9/1/17, he was arrested, and on 9/5/17, he was transferred to Mercer County Prison, Mercer County's jail.
2. On 9/14/17, Mercer County court issued an "Order appointing PD". Lauren Hackett, the defendant and a public defender with the Mercer County Public Defenders' Office, met with the plaintiff to discuss his case.
3. Plaintiff, then represented by Ms. Hackett, told her that he had been unaware of the existence of the crime of "corruption of the morals of a minor". He explained he had gone on ageofconsent.com and looked up Pennsylvania's age of consent which is sixteen, and that he did not know a separate law applied to him. He also told attorney Hackett that the other allegations against him were false, and that he was being falsely accused.
4. Ms. Hackett provided plaintiff no legal advice or advisement regarding the "corruption of the morals of a minor" law. Instead, she arranged for him to be polygraphed.
5. To induce the plaintiff to take the polygraph, she told him the prosecution had agreed to drop the charges against him if he passed the test.
6. On 9/30/17, one month before the polygraph, plaintiff was taken from his jail cell for "medical isolation". He was then punched in the face by C.O. Peters, and later that night, he was pepper sprayed. From then on, he was assaulted, tasered and pepper sprayed by jail staff up until, and after, a polygraph took place on October 31st, 2017.
7. On 10/13/17, plaintiff was held down and drugged via injection.

8. Meanwhile, plaintiff's family hired private attorney Ross Smith, who on 10/26/17, requested "Discovery and Bill of Particulars". Ross Smith later told the plaintiff he was unaware that a polygraph would be performed, and would have stopped it had he have known.

9. On 10/27/17, plaintiff's medical records state he is delusional, "covered in bruises", and "unable to make needs known"; and that "he has a bruised eye" and "what appears to be dried blood on the bruise"; and also that he "does not answer direct questions in a believable manner".

10. The day before the polygraph, nurse Michaellynn noted: "Pt is still present with delusional behavior and statements". He stated, "I can see things before it happens and it really happens", "we were playing dragon games", "Romeo and Juliet". Plaintiff also told Michaellynn he just "carved a pumpkin".

11. It is unknown how much of plaintiff's abuse and diminished state Lauren Hackett was aware of.

12. On 10/31/17, plaintiff appears in a videotaped interrogation, with two black eyes, visibly confused and suffering from severe schizophrenia. The polygraph is believed to have been setup by the Pennsylvania State Police, whom the plaintiff had already refused to speak to without an attorney

13. Plaintiff makes incriminating statements before the polygraph machine is attached. Lauren Hackett does not attend, and plaintiff is without counsel. On video, he claims to be Olaf the Snowman from the Disney movie Frozen. He says he needs Happy Meal toys, and says he will let Cheyenne, his accuser, "win". He also asks the polygraph examiner, believed to be a man named Scott Patterson, if the examiner is a "super lawyer". At one point, even the examiner threatens to end the exam due to plaintiff's condition.

14. Plaintiff passes the polygraph, as confirmed by the examiner. Initial incriminating statements are never followed up on. Later offers made by the plaintiff to retake the polygraph are ignored by the District Attorney's Office.

15. On 11/3/17, three days after the polygraph, a 304 hearing was held, and plaintiff, who was not present, was involuntarily committed. It is unknown if the commitment hearing was delayed to allow time for the plaintiff to be questioned.

16. While at Torrance State Hospital, Stephanie Lauderbaugh, the ADA with whom Lauren Hackett supposedly made a deal, charged the plaintiff with several new felonies, including "conspiracy to intimidate a witness", "conspiracy obstruction of justice" and "conspiracy to hinder apprehension", because his mother offered Cheyenne money at Applebee's on 3/29/18.

17. Another public defender, Gregory D. Metrick, represented the plaintiff on those new charges and refused to subpoena Ross Smith as a witness for trial. Plaintiff eventually pleaded no-contest, so his mother could receive a misdemeanor, on the condition no time would be added to his sentence

18. On 11/3/17, medical records state: "Pt rambles with little sense being made. Pt makes loose associations and says things that do not make sense". On 11/17/17, psychiatrist Varsha J. Pandya noted plaintiff "appears delusional".

19. On 11/29/17, medical records state: "Patient said he passed a polygraph and is unsure why he is here". Similar statements were likely recorded by GlobalTel Link in phone calls made to his family and attorney during this time.

20. Plaintiff was shown the interrogation video by Ross Smith and had only a fragmented memory of taking the polygraph.

21. No charges were withdrawn following the polygraph, and its effect was to create evidence for the prosecution to use to ultimately compel a plea. In fact, the first plea offer following the polygraph was for a “single count of rape”, an allegation the plaintiff successfully refuted.

22. Plaintiff wrote Lauren Hackett and Stephanie Lauderbaugh regarding “the “agreement”, and did not receive a response from either party.

23. Ross Smith told the plaintiff that he should not have been questioned, and scheduled an omnibus hearing to have the interrogation “thrown out”.

24. Despite plaintiff’s requests, Ross Smith never obtained medical records or other evidence from the jail to document plaintiff’s condition and the guards repeated use of force.

25. The omnibus hearing never occurred. It was postponed on 3/8/18, 6/6/18, 6/21/18, 8/8/18, 9/13/18, 10/7/18, 11/8/18, 12/5/18, 1/9/19 and 2/16/19.

26. On 2/16/19, plaintiff found out Ross Smith accepted a plea offer made by Stephanie Lauderbaugh on his smartphone by either text or email. The need to have an omnibus added over a year to plaintiff’s imprisonment; the total time spent in the county jail was 29 months, 10 days — 5 months and 10 days past his minimum sentence.

27. On 1/24/20, plaintiff submitted a motion for post-conviction collateral relief, and on 2/5/20, Michael T. Muha was appointed as PCRA counsel.

28. But prior to that, for over a year, plaintiff had attempted to get the “polygraph deal” terms from Lauren Hackett. Plaintiff wrote her on (and before) 11/15/19, 12/8/19, 2/14/20 and 5/11/20. And, on 6/21/20, plaintiff mailed a certified letter, which again requested the terms of the “polygraph deal”, and threatened to contact the Pennsylvania Disciplinary Board.

29. In response, in a letter dated June 26th, 2020, Dana R. Flick, another Mercer County Public Defender, told the plaintiff that Lauren Hackett would only communicate with his court appointed PCRA counsel. The letter did not address the fact that all correspondence prior to PCRA counsel's appointment had been ignored.

30. On 2/10/20, Dr. Saavedra, a psychiatrist with the PA DOC diagnosed the plaintiff with post-traumatic stress disorder, and prescribed psychotherapy with psychologist Regina Check, with whom plaintiff meets on an ongoing basis. Mercer County Prison, and medical provider PrimeCare Medical Inc., are sued in a separate action. It is unknown what role, besides allowing physical access, the jail played in facilitating the polygraph.

31. Ernest Snyder, also represented by Lauren Hackett, was also polygraphed and repeatedly questioned without counsel.

32. Ernest Snyder was deemed incompetent to stand trial and is believed by plaintiff to suffer from schizophrenia. He told the plaintiff that after he passed a polygraph, Lauren Hackett claimed that she did not know that one would be performed, and that none of the charges against him were withdrawn. Mr. Snyder also reported being repeatedly questioned about his pending criminal charges during psychiatric "competency evaluations", while represented by attorney Hackett.

IN SUMMARY, Lauren Hackett's participation in this scheme with prosecutors, and lying to the plaintiff while ostensibly defending his interests, violated ethical rules and deprived the plaintiff of his constitutional rights. Her ongoing refusal to assist with PCRA efforts or to even communicate with her former client — to the extent of essentially "lawyering up" — is improper and further violates his rights.

True copies of correspondence provided.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

V. Did the incident of which you complain occur in an institution or place of custody in this District?  
If so, where?

Yes, Mercer County Prison,  
55 Thompson Rd., Mercer, PA 16137

and answer the following questions:

A. Is there a prisoner grievance procedure in this institution?

Yes (X) No ( )

B. Did you present the facts relating to your complaint in the state prisoner grievance procedure?

Yes (X) No ( )

C. If your answer is YES,

1. What steps did you take? exhausted

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the result? \_\_\_\_\_

Warden / Deputy Warden know of lawsuit over abuse

D. If your answer is NO, explain why not: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E. If there is no prison grievance procedure in the institution, did you complain to prison authorities?

Yes ( ) No ( )

F. If your answer is YES,

1. What steps did you take? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the result? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

VI. Relief

State briefly exactly what you want the court to do for you. Make no legal arguments. Cite no cases or statutes.

\$1,000,000 punitive damages, evidence via discovery,  
and any other relief

I DECLARE UNDER PENALTY OF PERJURY THAT THE FOREGOING IS TRUE AND CORRECT.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Plaintiff)