

Zootopia's Current Governing Empathy

To their greatest assets ... their employees!

... A short story from Joe Passaretti asking where are the
Checks and Balances ...

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6 minutes

Zootopia ... I would like to start with a Please and thank you for this chance to speak to you! ... It's difficult for me to tell this story.

There once was a white rabbit named Bugs who lived in Zootopia. Bugs was an empathic, hardworking, and loyal employee who served the IT needs of multiple departments to ensure their daily success. He was always compassionate, listened to others in need, never missed a deadline, and he was always willing to lend a helping paw, when needed ... But there was one thing that Bugs couldn't handle: one of his bosses, named JellyDonuts.

JellyDonuts was a bad manager who took advantage of Bugs and many other employees. He would yell at them, belittle them, and make false allegations against their character. Bugs watched as he repeated this destructive behavior on at least a dozen other employees, causing them to cry, submit, or quit after the repeated offenses. To his dismay, this bad boss's actions were dismissed by upper management, and he was rewarded. One day in 2018, Buggs heard terrible news, JellyDonuts was promoted again to run the Desktop team he was proud to be on. The new director, Scotty the squirrel, addressed the team after the promotion was announced and he said, "Jellydonuts is a new person, and his abusive behavior was corrected and would not happen anymore." The whole Desktop team was in shock and disbelief. Scotty had fired a great manager, Aladen, and replaced him with a narcissist who would yell at any undesirable request that came across his desk. On the first week, Bugs was removed from this team and put back in his old position. Bugs was heartbroken once again. His only career ladder success was removed, and he knew JellyDonuts advances were coming soon.

Bugs watched as JellyDonut's new team started feeling his effect and some of them started falling apart from the abuse. Around 50% of his team of quality teammates left Zootopia within a short period of time, and the remaining team members were put under even more stress while trying to pick up the pieces. Bug's heart broke every time he saw someone else being subjected to the same treatment that he was experiencing for such a longtime. Over the years, It was sad for him to watch his teammates who were quality, talented employees get frustrated and leave Zootopia, over and over.

Early this year while working on a special A/V project for the CEO, Bugs reached his limit. Bugs walked into his boss's office and said, "I can't take his abuse anymore!" He told his boss about the continuing abusive behavior he had experienced in front of coworkers during planning meetings and the effect it was having on him while trying to coordinate multiple IT groups to successfully reach his CEO goals for deploying a new A/V system for waiting clients. Ultimately, JellyDonuts dismissed the issue and said the work his team needed to perform will only take 1-hour per room and it does not need to be documented in these meetings. Bugs was ignored and he was viewed as a complainer. Bugs knew only Jellydonut's team was not ready for the task in front of them. When the clients deployment times came, it was obvious to all the involved IT groups why the A/V room deployments were not ready to be deployed. JellyDonuts did even have a plan to complete his portion of the deployment. This oversight stopped the whole program for months. A 1-hour process turned into weeks and months of delays while he struggled to find a solution. His team was mixing up equipment that was for other clients and causing vendors to have to redo work, which was a waste of county funds and wasted a lot of Bug's time to fix the deployment issues as they came to light.

In his spare time, Bugs continued to support his desperate customer's tickets who were begging for someone to fix their slow PC issues. They would say to Bugs, my boss thinks I'm lazy or my work needs to be completed now, or I'm months behind on my daily work. Bugs knew what the problem was and how to fix it. This issue was occurring on hundreds of Zootopia PCs in most of Zootopia departments. The issue was caused by JellyDonuts oversights. He automated the ordering PC process and didn't give the clients training or guidance when they were ordering the PC equipment for their staff, wasting thousands of dollars. Additionally, he was not maintaining the PC ordering website for the required PC specifications needed to run the user's daily applications. The IT department's PCs ran perfectly, but the rest of the departments had PCs that barely worked in the environment. During the troubleshooting process, Bugs identified the problem and made recommendations to management to solve it (a \$30 part was needed).



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Multiple IT managers called Bugs **“White Noise”** to his face over the next week and said that he was making up the issue. Instead of addressing the problem, they closed Bug’s ServiceNow Problem tickets with fixes that didn’t work for the users. They would have known this if they just called the user or tested the solution on the problem PCs. They decided together to let the users wait till the next ordering cycle, which was years away for 100’s of users. It was a cheaper and easier solution, but it didn’t help the customers with their distress. In his spare time, Bugs fixed many of the user’s PCs, using surplus PC parts to speed up user’s PCs with minimal support for his superiors. Until it was obvious that it was a working solution for the users. Other technicians in multiple IT groups noticed and started to agree with Bugs. They started making the same recommendations for their affected users. This allowed the users to preform their daily tasks and responsibilities for their departments and Bugs was thanked by many of them for removing their long-term distress, one by one.

In 2023, Bugs finally broke down from mental exhaustion during his 10th year of service. He was confused and not sure what was happening to him. Bugs struggled to do simple tasks like entering his passwords and preforming basic troubleshooting on simple tickets. This was completely out of character for Bugs and it was noticed by many of his caring teammates. In June, Bugs realized his mental health was declining, he brought his symptoms and physical ailments to light to his management and to a HR department friend. He asked them for assistance and information for services that were offered to Zootopia employees for mental services, in hopes of finding the right healing path. In his weak state, Bugs struggled to find answers and finding a doctor to see him in a timely manner. After days of searching providers with his wife’s assistance, the earliest option for care was in November. For weeks, Bugs tried to do his job in extreme discomfort. He felt embarrassed to be in the office with his ailments on display for his coworkers to see. His symptoms including; severe motor skills loss, daily memory loss, Partial facial drooping, uncontrollable emotions and reoccurring nightmares. Bugs began using his PTO time that he had saved up. Bugs used over 80 hours of his PTO time in a very short period of time while he search for services and solutions to his distress. His mind was weaker than it’s ever been in his life and uncontrollable emotions were ruling his days. While at home, He found helpful websites for his symptoms that helped to help him regaining some of his mental skills with exercises and mind-strengthening tasks. In early July, His management presented a formal letter to him stating all the time off he was using. Bugs felt very uncomfortable with the wording of this letter and talked to his boss for over an hour about it before his boss rescinded the letter back from Bugs. The letter did not mention Bugs mental status and it was written in a way that blamed Bug’s for taking unscheduled time off. He felt his boss rescinded the letter because he understood Bug’s feelings and condition, but he was wrong.

A few weeks later, to his disbelief, he was terminated from his job. His last week of employment was handled completely unethically! ... Multiple IT bosses showed signs of finally supporting him and they gave him 3-days in a row off, stating, “this time off is to help you heal your mind and body and this time is on us”. On the 4th day, Friday, Bugs was asked to return to work, and he was told to bring in all his gear from home. He was terminated for a 1st time small offense and escorted off the premises. 7 days later while Bugs was in the ER for an MRI, his Health Care was removed. He was able to confirm with the doctors that it was not a stroke that caused his distress, but he still didn’t have a cause. He felt betrayed by his management and his HR department. Buggs paid over \$3,600 in health care premiums that year and his health-care plan was not there when he needed it the most. His employer had stripped away all Bugs support from him and there was nothing he could say or do to appeal to the cold-hearted decision of Zootopia’s governing body, who truly did not value his opinions or complaints of abuse that he had endured. Bugs knew that he needed help to overcome this trauma.

With mounting medical bills, Bugs found out what caused his distress, He developed a severe case of C-PTSD and he didn’t even know it for months. It was caused due to the continued abuse and the continuing ill-treatment that was ignored by his superiors. He sought out mental health resources online and found additional support from other survivors of workplace abuse while at home with no money and no insurance. With their help, Bugs finally started to heal himself, and he found the inner courage in him to speak to the Zootopia’s Officials about the abuse he suffered. In hope to help others who are suffering under the same abusive conditions with nowhere to turn.

Moral of the story:

Bugs should not be labeled the bad guy ... and he is full of experiences ... Zootopia’s Officials and the public deserve to know the truth. They deserve true transparency ... This is not just a word that is used on websites. It’s a requirement for public funding and for the success of Zootopia’s governing body to fulfill the responsibilities that the public expects from them.

Thank you for allowing me to tell my 2nd story.