State Police accused of bias

Lawsuit alleges women, minorities are often overlooked for promotions

By Nester Ramos

A lawsuit brought by four current and former troopers is alleging that the Massachusetts State Police routinely pass over female and minority troopers for promotion, and cite those who do so as advancement for favoring barbers and overnight shifts.

These women, with about 75 years of combined service time, and a former trooper who is blind, said they were denied a position they were qualified for in line with the lawsuit, which was filed in August and updated in November.

The suit describes an ongoing pattern of alleged discrimination in a force that is overwhelmingly male and white. Male high-ranking and better-paying jobs are not posted publicly, nor are all jobs, and those that are posted are quickly filled by white, male candidates where qualifications were often less impressive than women and minority candidates who sought the same jobs. Discrimination within the State Police “is getting worse every time,” wrote Lisa Broder-McQua, an attorney who represented the troopers.

In response, State Police LAWFILE, Page A3

Darkness and the dream

P

at Lacey walked into the San Diego hotel conference room and looked around the others already at the table. He was in a good mood for the first time in months, and so, it seemed, was everyone else.

At home, they all had children battling a rare form of cancer called medulloblastoma and doctors had told them it couldn’t be beat. But in this room there was a sense of hope. At the head of the table was the source of it, Dr. Giselle Shuler, an oncologist encouraging them to think not about death but about the possibility of a cure.

She was one of the only doctors anywhere running a drug trial for medulloblastoma. If it appeared the drug was effective, she said, it could change their lives.

Shuler had just had a major liver surgery, but it appeared the drug was working. Immediately, she said, they would have to get the drug out of the lab and into the hands of patients.

It was April 2009, a few months after Pat’s first, transforming encounter with Shuler in New York.

Will Lacey’s parents dreamed most. And time was running out.

The power of will a narrative in five parts.

Chapter 2

ExxonMobil counterattacks Healey over climate suit

Demands details of investigation

By Stephanie Ebert

Sun—agreed with General Motors and other Massachusetts law enforcement officials Monday that they were conducting a criminal investigation into the carbon emissions of the company, ExxonMobil, former vice president Andrew Silverstone called it “the most important step I can remember in a long time” to combat climate change.

“Fossil fuel companies that deceive consumers and investors about the dangers of climate change should be, must be, held accountable,” Silverstone said at the time. “We are all on the cusp of a new era of discovery, and a significant of industry now, what industry folks knew, and what the company and industry chose to share with investors and with the American public.”

Now, months later, the company is still on the defense, and the issue is being raised against Healey, in a lawsuit filed by ExxonMobil. In a stunning about-face, the oil giant’s legal team was trying to block its emissions data from being released to the state. ExxonMobil’s defense lawyers argued that the state was not entitled to the information.

The company, which is headquartered in Houston, is facing a growing number of lawsuits over its alleged role in the climate crisis. The company has been accused of misleading investors and consumers about the risks of climate change, and its effects on the environment.

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Trump adds more to the mix for Cabinet post

Romney competing against 3 new faces for State Dept.

By Nicholas Fandos

WASHINGTON — President-elect Donald Trump is broadening the field of candidates for secretary of state, as his transition team remains divided nearly a month after the election over how to fill the most prominent post in his prospective Cabinet.

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, a top adviser to Trump, told reporters Sunday that the search had expanded beyond the four men thought to be under consideration, including former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney. She said Trump planned to interview additional candidates early this week but did not name them.

Others said the search candidate appeared to include John B. Bolton, an ambassador to the United Nations under President George W. Bush, and Gov. Jon Huntsman Jnr., a former Utah governor and ambassador to Russia under President Barack Obama, and Rep. Will Hurd, a Texas Republican and retired Air Force intelligence officer.

It was not clear what Trump meant by “the mix,” but the president-elect has mentioned Bolton as a potential candidate and said others would be considered.

TRUMP, Page A6

Sleet alert

Monday

High: 34°F to 39°F, Arctic air 29°-34°. Sleet 25%-30%. Snowfall: 0.25-0.5 in., 0-0.25 in.

Complete report, Page A13
Darkness and the dream

WILL

Continued from Page A6

York: Now, the doctor was attending a cancer conference in San Diego and had suggested that everyone meet there to plan the next phase of the attack. She was already researching a few other potential drugs in her lab, but she was on the hunt for more. She wanted their input. Some of the parents came with their own leads on possible treatments. They also had to talk about money. Funding was scarce, and drug trials are expensive. And there was no time to go through the normal research grant cycle, which could take years. This handful of parents would have to raise all the money themselves.

They had been brainstorming ideas for two days now and had identified some with promise. As Sheller flashed a slide on the screen to get their going, Pat noticed one parent was missing. Neil Hatchison had filled the room the previous days with a frenetic stream of ideas. He was a storm of a man, driven by fear they all had of losing their child. It pulled him in a thousand different directions at once.

Pat had a hunch where Hatchison was—and he was right. Neil was out hunting again.

Inside the cavernous San Diego Convention Center across town, Neil Hatchison stalked through the halls of booths and exhibits. It was the annual meeting of the American Association for Cancer Research, one of the largest oncology conferences in the world. There were 10,000 presentations and twice that many doctors and researchers here. He hoped someone would have a drug, even the possibility of one, he hadn’t tried already; and he had tried just about everything. Even in the world of desperate, trying anything cancer parents, Hatchison was legendary for his manic pursuit of something, anything, to save his 7-year-old son, Sam. He attended every major cancer conference, read obscure research publications, phoned doctors and researchers in the middle of the night. He was giving him a cocktail of 46 pills, most of them unproven treatments that he had picked out himself, in the hope that he could catch the odds.

Now with a printout in his hand of all the presentations that mentioned neuroblastoma, he moved quickly from researcher to researcher, skipping plenaries and getting right to the point. Is this something we can bring to a clinical trial quickly? He wasn’t getting much he wanted, but he kept at it. By afternoon, he had exhausted himself. His head was fuzzy. He should eat. He thought. But not yet.

He went looking for the next exhibit on his list and found him at the end of a long row, a trim man with a sweep of dark hair who stood by a poster about his research, recently published in the Journal Nature. He’d found that a molecule derived from bacteria on bean plants could stop the growth of neuroblastomas.

The researcher started to speak, but Hatchison interrupted.

DISPATCHES FROM A NIGHTMARE

Pat Lacy created a blog and wrote almost daily about her son Will’s battle with cancer

CHANGE

OCT. 4, 2007

I found myself near shock when contemplating the fact that parents, doctors, researchers, and scientists were outlining plans to test these new, or untested agents, in Neuroblastos.

This doesn’t happen, and to see it taking place, gaining traction, and getting ready to put into mice and test was an exhilarating experience.

It filled me with a renewed sense of optimism that the small race that currently exists doesn’t have to be the only way. That keeping Will stable long enough may very well allow him to be here and see the day when the survival of refractory or relapsed kids is no longer miraculous.

EVENTUALLY SOMEONE HAS TO WIN

FEB. 22, 2008

The road from “incurable” to “curable” has to start with one patient being saved. Then two...then three...until finally this disease is stopped.

This thought process helps me to validate my deep belief that Will can be cured. I’m still cognizant of the reality, but these two pieces of information can peacefully co-exist in my mind.

The best way I can relay this mindset is to ask you to think about the lottery. You buy a ticket when there is some outrageous prize and you know that the odds say you aren’t going to win.

Yet you still buy the ticket and until someone wins that prize you still hold out hope. In spite of the odds, eventually somebody has to win the prize...why can’t it be you?

WE HAD A NICE RUN

JUNE 27, 2008

Will’s oncologist informed me on the phone that he has a new tumor lesion in his chest (lower left and partial basal).

It has been about 37 months since a CT scan showed any new lesions cropping up. We managed to get 18 cycles of ABT-731 under our belt and just over 13 months on this therapy. We started off 2007 with two rounds of MIBG therapy as well as a. It has been a great run these past 16 months as it relates to quality of life. As I look or coincidence or late would have it Will was already scheduled to go up to Vermont next week for a formal visit. Yeah! Will just stay a few extra days to get some scans and tests performed and discuss therapeutic options and what would be best for Will to try at his next therapy.

Sadly as I just said 3 days ago, the pace of translational research for these kids makes a glacier look speedy. However, I don’t feel us hopeless as I would have in the past thanks to the work being done in Vermont with neuroblastoma.

Andre Bachmann
In this something we can get to the clinic quickly,” she said. “But the researcher replied, it was still basic science. It would be years before patients might see its benefit.

Hutchison stood back then. He lowered his head and started to sob.

The researcher, a molecular biologist at the University of Hawaii named Andre Bachmann, watched him, stunned. Bachmann had thought he was seeing a physician or a fellow scientist but now realized his mistake. This was a parent looking for a cure, a parent in desperate need.

Bachmann and his team at Hutchison led him to an open area with some tables and chairs. They sat, and he poured out his story — about Sami, the boy’s rapidly progressing cancer, and his quest to save him.

Bachmann listened. Again he apologized that his new research would do nothing in time for Sami.

But I might have something else,” Bachmann said.

There was a drug that he had researched years earlier and abandoned because he couldn’t find anyone willing to bring it to a clinical trial.

It was sitting on a shelf in his lab in Hilo.

Bachmann told Hutchison the whole story, starting with his inductive decision in 2003 to attend a neuroblastoma conference in Perú. He knew little about the disease at the time but happened to be working with neuroblastoma cells in his lab. He figured the conference would be a good way to learn more.

At the conference, Bachmann sat in on a session in which a researcher mentioned a curious trait of the disease: In the worst cases, patients’ bodies produced unusually high levels of a protein called MYCN. Bachmann knew quite a bit about MYCN — in particular, the fact that if it replicated, a gene named CDK6 was activated. Bachmann had an epiphany but quickly dismissed it. It was too basic.

Surely someone had already tried it.

Bachmann was thinking of a drug called DMP100, that was known to block CDK. If he blocked CDK, wouldn’t that disrupt the whole chain reaction the cancer needed to grow?

DMP100 had been developed decades before as a possible cancer drug but failed to live up to its promise. It was never approved in the United States but had found a remarkable second life in Africa, treating African sleeping sickness. Transmitted by the bite of a tsetse fly, sleeping sickness was deeply feared, often leading to coma and death. DMP100’s ability to kill a wide array of parasites was so startling that Africans knew it by another name.

They called it the Resurrection Drug.

DMP100 hadn’t worked against other cancers, but maybe neuroblastoma was different, Bachmann thought. He trusted that there was no hope left for their boy. It was so beautiful here, but he was alone and apart from those he cared about most.

He picked up his phone and called home. Dina answered. He asked about their new boy, Freddy, and about Will.

Pat heard Dina whisper to her son.

“Tell your daddy,” she said.

“I love you, Daddy,” Will said into the phone.

Pat told him he was in California and could see the Pacific Ocean and that he hoped that Will would get to see it someday, too.

Hutchison found Scholler and told her what he’d heard. She agreed to meet with Bachmann, and soon the three of them were sitting at the same table where Hutchison had earlier sat. She listened as Bachmann explained his research on DMP100.

His theory made immediate sense to her. Let’s try to get this to the clinic, she said. The next day at the hotel, she presented the idea to the parents. It was an exciting possibility, but it was still years away before going into a patient. There was a lot of research left to do, and a trial could cost hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Pat Lamy spoke up and said he would try to cover it.

He never raised that kind of money before. He’d been selling homes and family and community members, selling ribbon bracelets and painted peonies, getting people to run in charity road races. He would just need to do more. He spent the plane ride home from San Diego thinking about how he would pull it off.

In June, Pat and Dina rented a house by a lake on Cape Cod. It was finally warm again in New England, and they needed a week to get away.

Pat did his best to be present, to stay off the Internet. It was hard. So much of him was wrapped up in tracking the stories of the other families, watching their children they were hellbent for his own.

Pat knew Will’s cancer would eventually do what so many of theirs had done; it would lay quiet, seemingly doing nothing, and then one day it would burst forth and quickly spread. He put it out of his mind. Will’s cancer had so far showed no signs of that, and this was a week to forget, to enjoy a silver of peace.

He watched Will run and splash in the lake and see the delight. The boy’s hair had grown in for the first time in his life, and it was getting big now, approaching a head, a little human with a personality and opinions and a baby sister he feared one day.

When vacation was over that Saturday, they went home to Braintree and to real life. On Monday, their skunklight caller.

He received a scan from the week before. He had the same news Pat and Dina feared most. The cancer had spread.

There was no telling how much time they had now, or whether Will would live long enough for the cure they were chasing.

In what had become an annual tradition, this was the third year that Will capped the family Christmas tree.

Servo editor: Adam Wilcox

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