

GUEST COLUMN

Mitch Henck: Jambois Shows You Can Beat the Boss

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It is easy to see why Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne wanted to see his former Assistant District Attorney Bob Jambois go away. Ozanne and three other assistant prosecutors recently reached a \$350,000 settlement to pay off Jambois with state taxpayer money.

Jambois accused them of retaliating against him for daring to run against Ozanne for the district attorney's position in 2016. Jambois says he ran because Ozanne was missing in action.

"He was never around the office," Jambois says. "He was never in court. You never knew what he was doing."

Jambois keeps going: "People would look around for Ismael but you couldn't find him. And he wouldn't show up for meetings with judges."

"I feel like the guy who says The Emperor has no clothes. Nobody else would say it because they were afraid, but I wasn't afraid," Jambois says.

For that, Jambois was given a crushing case load. Jambois said one day Assistant District Attorney Mary Allen Karst wheeled in the 20 toughest and most time-sensitive cases into his office. They weren't divided among the other prosecutors.

Jambois says he was doing the work of six other prosecutors and had more jury trials than all three other prosecutors in the felony crimes unit combined. He says he was restricted in his use of paralegals, even though no other prosecutor had the same restrictions. That meant his workload was even bigger.

He says he was even disciplined for having a witness waiting in the hallway before she was called to testify. That seems especially bizarre given that opening statements and other witnesses can run long in a courtroom. In one case, Jambois ran out of witnesses because he couldn't time their appearances in court exactly the way he had hoped.

"They were systematically trying to make my job impossible," Jambois says. So, he resigned and sued.

Rather than go to trial, Team Ozanne settled. The \$350,000 is less than the original ask of \$2.5 million. But it is still a lot of money going to one former assistant district attorney.

Jambois does not paint a pretty picture of the way Ozanne runs the Dane County District Attorney's Office. Ozanne still says he did nothing wrong. Ozanne chose not to return my phone call.

Jambois says he hopes things are different now. But the 66-year prosecutor has taken a job as an assistant district attorney in Portage County. He will get an apartment in Stevens Point and return to his wife, Bev, in Sun Prairie on the weekends.

Jambois proved you can take on your boss and win in the end.

Mitch Henck is a Madison, Wisconsin based commentator, broadcaster and standup comic. Watch Mitch's video, "Two Minutes with Mitch," weekdays at www.madisontalks.com. Listen to his podcasts on MadisonTalks.com, and Wednesdays at 6 p.m. on Facebook Live.

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