

Irina Frakes

Interview Questions

10/31/2023

Frakes' Investigation Questions

August 10th Thursday evening

Naomi was having issues with her hip and back, which locked up (now resolved via chiropractic aid). I messaged Regina re: Naomi is not to run, but can she be shown other exercises that might help her work through the hip/back issue. At this point, the Merritts had seen her run no more than 3 times this season. Naomi was at practice despite her injury on Friday August 11th. Friday August 11 in the late morning, I received a call from the Merritts to discuss their concern for Naomi's health. They wanted her to avoid injury by taking a break from XC so she can play basketball. I told them how much the team has meant to Naomi in her journey of healing from recent traumas. Merritts said Maddie was injured and might very well be out for the rest of the season, if not a good part of it. I believe they said this as additional persuasion for her to quit the team. They said Naomi was in worse shape than she was last year. They told me although of course it's our decision to make, they think it's in Naomi's best interest to leave the cross country team. I felt pressured by the medical advice Frank was influencing me and therefore I agreed to listen to their advice because Regina offered to talk with Naomi and I. When I told Naomi about the call, she broke down in tears because she did not want to leave the team. When we called Regina, Her first question was "what are your thoughts on cross country?" Naomi responded by telling her that she was not a big fan of it but she loved being part of the team. She was not very engaged, responding with "Yes ma'am", "No ma'am", submitting and numb from being upset. Regina said "you don't have to feel bad about it, we're going to refund your mom her \$250". Naomi never had a chance to speak up and say she wanted to remain on the team during that phone call but was forced to quit. That Friday Naomi went with the Nichols to a lake house for the weekend. After her return I found out there were several other families in similar situations.

Merritt Interview 10/25/2023 - Why would you recommend her taking a break from XC? How do runners qualify to be on the team? If she was out of shape, is there a program or fitness options that she could do to continue to be on the XC team? Ms. Frakes and Naomi did not want her off the team, why would you talk about refunding her the money?

Merritts' written statement 10/25/2023 - Naomi did want to be off the team and she expressed that to me. When I asked her if she wanted to run XC, she said "NO". I cannot speak to her mother/daughter situation and if she is intimidated by her mother; sometimes parents have different expectations than their children.

Merritt's Interview 10/30/2023

Frakes state - "Naomi was at practice despite her injury on Friday August 11th. Friday August 11 in the late morning, I received a call from the Merritts to discuss

their concern for Naomi's health. They wanted her to avoid injury by taking a break from XC so she can play basketball."

- 1) Did you make a call on August 11th to discuss Naomi's health?
- 2) What medical advice did you give Ms. Frakes about Naomi as for the reason she needed to take XC season off?
- 3) If Ms. Frakes and Naomi expressed, she did not want to be off the team - why would you offer them a refund of \$250.00?

Regina: Had talked to Irina. Then talked w/Irina and Naomi. Naomi was struggling. Simply asked her if she wanted to run XC. She said "actually, no" and that she prefers bball and was only doing it to keep in shape for bball. Purpose of the call was to address the conversation Regina had w/Naomi re: whether she wanted to be in XC.

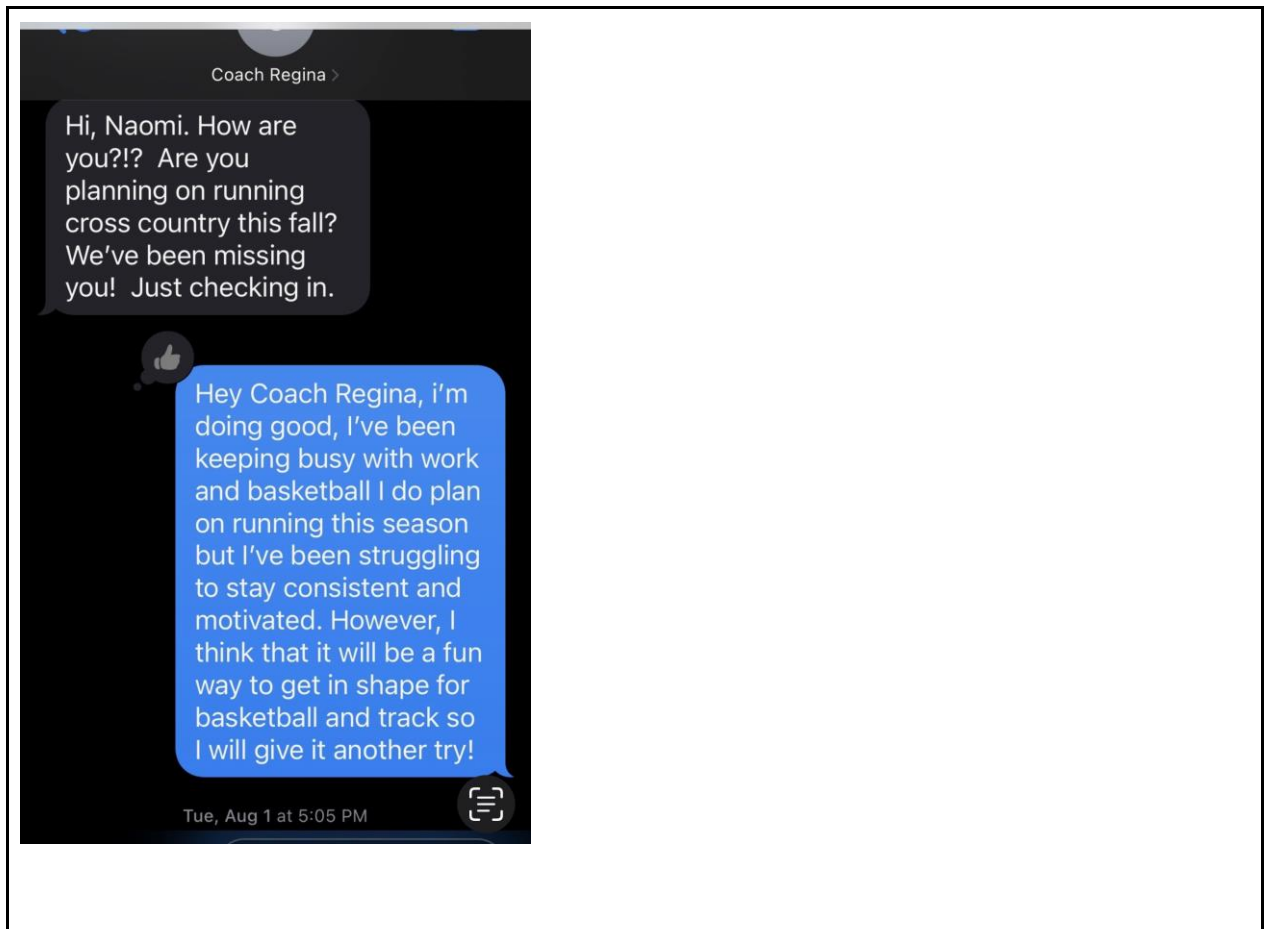
Frank: Total fabrication. Never gave any medical advice. Felt like the parent wanted something different from what the student wanted. Regina felt like Naomi wanted Regina to address it with her mom for her.

Irina Frakes response 10/31/2023:

- 1) **Did Naomi ever tell Regina that she did not want to run XC and that she prefers Basketball?**
- 2) **Anything else you would like to add about the above statement made by the Merritts?**

Naomi does prefer basketball. She did not tell Regina that she did not want to run xc. She enjoys xc for the emotional support and camaraderie. She also wanted to use xc as an opportunity to get in shape for basketball. I felt pressured by Frank to have Naomi quit the team. I knew she would be devastated as this is a huge support group for her dealing with her trauma. I wanted what Naomi wanted as long as it did not jeopardize her health. I later learned from Ambereen, that Frank did not want kids using xc training to get in shape for other sports.

Screenshot of text message below:



On August 24th I went to school and took Jordan Nichols for support into the meeting. The coaches all tried to intimidate me by having a group of people including all the volunteer coaches present that are parents of other athletes. There was Coach Green, Regina, Frank, Julio and Stacey Flores all present in the meeting room. I had been told this meeting was with the Meritts and Coach Green only so I asked for the extra people to leave. Instead they wanted my support person Jordan Nichols to leave but I had already arranged permission to have him there by Mr. Smith. This upset them all but they finally left when Coach Green asked them to.

As soon as the meeting began, Regina started talking about how much they love Naomi

and of course Naomi could stay on the team. I let her finish talking, but saw no point in the meeting after that. So I told Frank to stay away from my daughter and told him "may God have mercy on you". And I walked out. There was no bizarre behavior except Regina got loud and jumped up saying I could not leave, which was witnessed by Jordan Nichols.

Merritt's Interview written response 10/25/2023 - What was your understanding for the purpose of this meeting?

We had no clue what the purpose was as we were not given any expectations, no communication as to the content of the meeting from Irina.

Merritts' Interview 10/30/2023

- 1) You stated you had no clue what this meeting was for. So you did not have any conversation with AD Green or any other Admin before this meeting to find out why you were meeting?

Regina: completely blind going into the meeting. All they knew was that AD Green said the parents wanted a meeting.

Irina Frakes' Response 10/31/2023

- 1) Did you request a meeting with AD Green and the Coaches? If so, did you express to the AD what was going on and what you were upset about?
- 2) Why didn't you go straight the Coaches to address this concern or talk it over with the Merritts?

No, I did not request a meeting with the coaches. Mr. Green asked me if I would meet with the Merritts, not all the coaches, just the Merritts. This is how the meeting came to be, after learning about the other athletes and learning more about how Frank humiliated Naomi in front of the other athletes, I asked for a meeting with Mr. Smith to share our story and make my complaint about Naomi being publicly humiliated. Mr. Green joined Naomi and I's meeting with Mr. Smith. In this meeting, Mr. Green assured me that Naomi could be reinstated to the team and this is when he asked me if Naomi and I would meet with the Merritts.

I did not go straight the to coaches because I had already talked to them and they manipulated me. It was Mr. Green's responsibility to communicate with the Merritts about my complaint of Frank humiliating Naomi since I brought the complaint to him. Regina sent me a text message telling me Naomi could return to the team. I thought she would have some idea of what the meeting was about. Regina also started the meeting. I don't know why she would start the meeting if she didn't know what it was about. See text message provide in original complaint documents.

Naomi has been so traumatized by all of this that now she is even scared to **walk into the gym hall in the morning. She is afraid to see or be confronted by them or have any interactions with them.** She used to leave her basketball bag which she needs for her 7th period class in her gym locker, but due to fear of running into the Merritts she now carries two heavy backpacks with her all day instead. Naomi is still traumatized and grieving the loss of her dad and with this added stress her academics are being affected. Even her math teacher has noticed it and spoken to me.

Merritt Interview 10/2/2023 - Why do you feel like Naomi would be scared to walk into the gym hall in the mornings?

Why don't you ask Naomi? I don't know why she is scared. It would be purely speculative on my behalf. I think this is a family, as we learned this summer, when we were still in good standing, that is struggling. Irina called my husband and stayed on the phone over an hour talking about her former husband who died by suicide and Irina stated she was "glad he is dead", and she accused her former husband of psychological abuse of her and Naomi and she spoke of having a strong hatred and distrust toward all men during that conversation. Obviously this made my husband very uncomfortable as he made numerous attempts to get off the phone without being rude. You must remember, Irina also hated Coach Tom last year as she stated so right in front of Frank, Coach Stacy and Coach Tom's wife at a track meet in the spring.

On top of this, Naomi must not be too scared of going down the hallway as she walked right by our son, Levi, who was politely holding the door open for students just this past Monday morning. Levi didn't want to be rude when he saw her but remembered he was not to have any communication with her but she tried to engage him in conversation. **He was emotionally distressed by the interaction.**

Merritt's Interview 10/30/2023

- 1) "He was emotionally distressed by the interaction"
 - a) Why do you say he was emotionally distressed?
 - b) What did she say to him when he held the door?

Frank: Not commenting on any of this. They're in family counseling.

Irina Frakes response 10/31/2023

- 1) Can you explain why Naomi is afraid to go to the gym?
- 2) Can you tell me what the conversation between Naomi and Levi was when he held the door open for her to enter?

First, I would like to address some of the lies in Regina's statement here and in her email to me. Regina said that I told her I hate men. I do not hate men and I never told her that "I have a strong hatred and distrust toward all men", that is a lie. She states in her email to me that she has come to that conclusion on her own, she says "I think you just hate men" and "I'm seeing a trend that you hate men". I never made the comments about Tom Dever. In her email, she says that at a track meet, I said to Frank, in front of Laura Dever (Tom's wife), "I am so excited you will be taking over after Tom leaves. Tom runs these kids too much and injures them." Stacy is the one who suggested to Mr. Green that Frank and Regina should be the next coaches. The Merritts becoming the new coaches was not announced to the team until after the end of season banquet. Stacy is the one who knew they were

the next coaches. Tom has made a special effort to go see Naomi at her work and he keeps in contact with me about Naomi. I have never told Regina or Frank that I am "glad my husband is dead" or that he physically abused me. All of the accusations in her email to me are false and she continues to say these false and cruel things.

Naomi is afraid to go to the gym because she was shocked by the email that Regina sent to me. It made false and cruel accusations and said to stay away from her boys and she knew she would see the boys in the hallway. Also, she was stopped in the hall by Coach Stacy, who said "there's no issues, right?" putting her on the spot to agree with her. Naomi is very intimidated by the Merritts. She is not used to being targeted by adults. She is still in an emotionally fragile state due to the death of her father and does not handle confrontation well.

Naomi told Levi and Samuel "thank you" as they held the door for her.