

## Say cheese, Rhodes frosh!

OVER THE SUMMER, WE ASKED THE INCOMING RHODES COLLEGE CLASS OF 2020 TO SEND US PHOTOS OF THEMSELVES ROCKING SOME FRESH RHODES GEAR. HERE ARE THE RESULTS!



Ellie Aronson can't wait to switch from the beach to the Alburty Pool!



Emily Burkhead, Sri Velrajan, Yanay Almalem, AND Jason Yu roll SQUAD DEEP.



José Raúl Pastrana snaps a final, happy selfie before the soul-crushing realities of Freshman year set in.



Raneem Imam jumps for joy in Jordan. Mad about bunnies.



Juliet Mace took advantage of a 2-for-1 sale at the bookstore.



Sri Velrajan and Emily Burkhead are blissfully unaware of their proximity to the infamous Sou'wester tree.



Fatima Deme sports a sexy Rhodes pennant.

SALUTATIONS FIRST YEARS AND HAPPY WELCOME WEEK!

OPEN UP TO FIND MORE EXCEPTIONAL WRITING AND PRICELESS FIRST-YEAR TIPS.



## NEWS

## Letter from the Editors

*"Now they wanna hit me with the woo  
wap, the bam*

*Tryna snap photos of familia"*

-Chance the Rapper, **Ultralight Beam**

A short summer comes to an end, a new class moves into Williford and Glassell, and The Sou'wester is back. Starting with this issue, the pair of us (Zoe Laulederkind '18 and Christian Wiggs '18) will be at the helm as Editors-in-Chief. There's lots we want to

do this year, and we're excited to get the class of 2020 involved.

Believe it or not, printing a newspaper isn't just about writing the articles contained within. We need stories, and we need you guys to make those stories happen. Go do some cool stuff, then let us know or just write it yourself. We might print it.

Start digging into the lives of your professors, the staff and administrators, or even Palmer Cat. Like Hog-

warts, Rhodes College harbors quite a few magical people (and animals) with quite a few tales fit to print. Don't stop there, though. The City of Memphis has rich history and an even richer present. For example, the early 1900's saw a lovers' quarrel between two ladies ending in gruesome public murder. Seriously, look it up. It's weird.

What we really mean to say is that despite our names being listed after "Editor-in-Chief," you, reader, control the

destiny of The Sou'wester. The content and direction isn't really decided by the administration or the editors; it's decided by students who decide to write about what's important to them. So, regardless if you're a new or old student, come to us with your ideas. This is your forum.

Love, peace and rock n' roll,

Zoe & Christian

## New Student Space in Burrow

BY CHRISTIAN WIGGS '18 AND ZOE LAULEDERKIND '18  
EDITORS-IN-CHIEF

The much anticipated renovation of Burrow Hall's 3rd floor was completed over the summer, and The Sou'wester staff's already made some use of the new space. It's nice; it has a modern design and an open layout to encourage collaboration between students like few other places on campus. We sat down with Ira Lawson--the Student Leadership Coordinator and man in charge of the space--to ask some questions about Burrow's newest addition.

**Q:** How long did construction take?

**A:** Construction began around May 31st and concluded around July 31st.

**Q:** How often can students use the space?

**A:** The space will be open 24/7 and can be accessed via fob. EMS (Event Man-

agement System) does not include the space at the moment as it is an open area accessible to everyone.

**Q:** What would you say the new space is best used for?

**A:** As a community gathering place, it allows students to collaborate and interact with each other. The hope is that students will become creative in how they choose to use the space; socials and casual hangouts are expected (There's Netflix up here, y'all).

**Q:** Where'd the idea come from?

**A:** The idea for the space was influenced by the desire to create a space for students where they could build community, and where organizations could collaborate more.

**Q:** Are there Pokemon?

**A:** You'll have to come to the space to find out.



Photos By Ira Lawson

Staff of *The Sou'wester*

*Editors-in-Chief*, Zoe Laulederkind '18 & Christian Wiggs '18

*Chief Design Editor*, Sam Clark '17

*Chief Copy Editor*, Savannah Patton '19

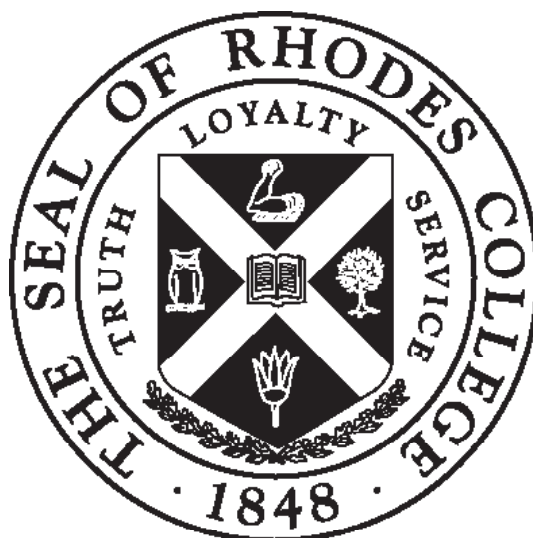
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*Staff Writers*, Doria Jackson '18,  
Thomas Mitchell '18

*Contributing Writers*, Phillips Hutchinson '19,  
Anyia Tipton '18, Joseph Ozment '17



Interested in joining *The Sou'wester*?  
Have any stories you think need a voice?  
Comments/concerns?

Contact [rhodescnews@gmail.com](mailto:rhodescnews@gmail.com) for  
more information

Find us on Instagram @souwesternews  
and Facebook at  
<https://www.facebook.com/souwesternewspaper>



## WITHIN THE GATES

# Summer Classes: A Review



By PHILLIPS HUTCHISON '19  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Summer classes are five weeks of intensive and seemingly unending work. In other words, they go by in a strangely quick fashion as you work to complete assignments and prepare for exams in quick succession. The days begin to blend together as you lose track of the semester of material that you are attempting to learn in a short time. Coupled with the lonely campus and the seeming isolation of it all, it's a wonder that anyone would willingly subject themselves to such a test. In short, summer classes are not as easy as some would have you believe; however, not all is bleak.

Taking a course in such a condensed time period presents its own significant challenges, but it is also likely the only class you will be taking. Much different than trying to balance four classes with extracurriculars, a summer class

allows you to hone in on the task at hand and devote all of your attention to it. You have to study only the one subject. There is also less distraction around campus, which makes it easier to focus on the seemingly mountainous pile of work. Succeeding in summer classes is certainly possible, but it requires a rhythm of concentrating on coursework outside of lecture.

Don't be discouraged to take summer classes, but know that they won't be a walk in the park. Before signing up, there are some things to consider, such as the difficulty of the course and outside obligations. It's not advisable to take an upper level course because it helps to have more time to master the material. It is also wise not to obligate yourself to many outside activities during summer courses because the courses are very time consuming. Summer classes are a great way to advance in school if you manage the work.

# Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies Connects Students to Memphis

By ANYA TIPTON '18  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The Rhodes Institute for Regional Studies shouldn't exist. Honestly, it shouldn't. It's too good to be true and every summer for the rest of my life will be spoiled because they'll never live up to what I experienced from June 6th to July 29th, 2016. I spent eight weeks with sixteen other students conducting graduate-level research projects that we designed entirely on our own according to our personal interests. We received \$3,000 for this, with the only stipulation being that our projects were regionally relevant to Memphis.

My project was on gentrification in the Crosstown neighborhood of Memphis, where the old, abandoned Sears building on North Parkway is being renovated and transformed into the "Crosstown Concourse"—a mixed-use, vertical urban village with apartment buildings, retail, restaurants, a high school, health care facilities, an art gallery, and more. I interviewed nine members of the Crosstown community to measure their attitudes regarding the way the development has affected the neighborhood. My research found that, while people with occupational relationships to Crosstown see the changes through an economic lens and are much more likely to be enthusias-

tic about the changes, residents fear an increased cost of living and that Crosstown will be gentrified. Additionally, participants across the board agreed that there were barriers to involvement in neighborhood plans and that there is little access to community-wide dialogue and decision-making.

I can't even begin to describe how much hard work we put into our projects. My paper was 42 pages, but some students wrote over 60. Students also poured their hearts into documentaries, pieces of music, podcasts, and more. Though some non-Rhodes Institute students shudder when I tell them how long my paper was and how many all-nighters I pulled writing it, it was all worth it.

Rhodes kids can talk forever and ever about what they're passionate about, so I actually enjoyed typing away furiously at my project. I built a network in Memphis through my interviews, I fostered relationships with some of our finest faculty members whom I otherwise may have never met, I created something I'm inexplicably proud of, I acquired meaningful experience for my career, but most importantly, I learned something extremely valuable from each and every one of my peers who also participated in the Institute. Oh, and getting paid \$3,000 wasn't too bad either.

# Freshmen Experience Shock and Awe Upon Discovery That Dan Schrader Not Simply A More Well-Dressed Student

By MEAGHAN PICKLES '19  
SATIRE EDITOR

Beloved Rhodes College administrator Daniel Schrader's true identity was veiled in secrecy during Welcome Week, as new students struggled to come to the conclusion that he was not simply an overly friendly peer with an odd taste for pleated pants.

Many students spotted the sprightly Caucasian man trapezing about the campus grounds, his youthful looks deceiving them into believing they had brushed elbows with a 18-year-

old dressed for a Baptist church service, instead of the Director of New Student Programs whom we all know and love.

"There is something I enjoy about the aura of mystery that surrounds me in these first few weeks," said Schrader, a 2010 graduate of Rhodes and lifetime Lynx Cat. "Of course, students hear whispers across our hallowed grounds that might indicate I am not 'one of the kids', but I love to watch them solve the riddle of my persona."

By all accounts, freshmen simply weren't going to ask why this mod-

ern-day Peter Pan was wearing a bowtie, beige jacket, and dress pants, helping his identity remain a secret and the subject of storytime lore. "I guess it should have raised an eyebrow when I saw some dude asking random passerby if they had any questions about their schedules," said freshman Marcus Green, who had recently tasted hard liquor for the first time and deemed it 'tight'. "I don't know, man, sometimes people do weird shit."

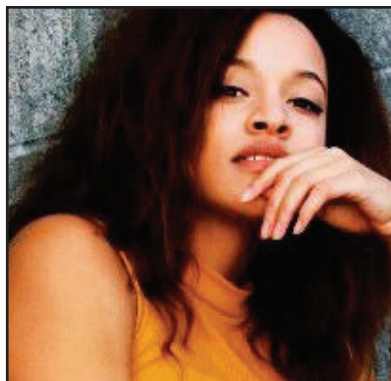
Said new lacrosse player Amy Jordan, "I didn't happen to see him at any of the parties, but I just always assumed

he was off doing something more low-key, like having a toke sesh and listening to vinyl CDs. Discovering the truth was something that shook me to my very core."

As an integral member of the campus community, Schraeder is held in high esteem among administration, professors, and students. The former physics major has been known by a variety of aliases, such as P-Danny, Dan "The Man", Oh Danny Boy, Dan "Shred-the-gnar"der, and, perhaps most inexplicably, Toucan Dan.



## POETRY &amp; PHOTOS

"Where  
Curses  
Lie"

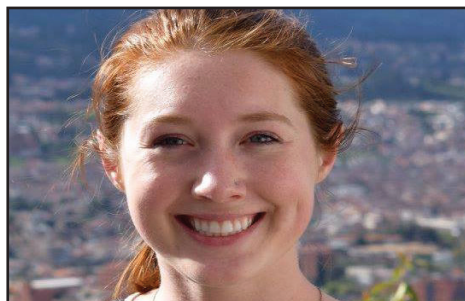
BY DORIA JACKSON '18  
STAFF WRITER

There is magic in black skin  
mystery in fingers and bones which  
tightly tether coiled roots to scalp,  
and in unison clap on 2's and 4's  
to genres born from old oppression

Fire in feet, which march in  
syncopation to the hum of We  
Shall Not Be Moved  
and run with swiftness to dry for-  
saken tears.

Riot in Black voices  
which take to the streets  
belting their battle cry- No Justice  
No Peace,  
and in unison mourn the bloodied  
backs, who asked for nothing,  
but the privilege to occupy this  
black skin.

*(Originally posted on Facebook in re-  
sponse to the police shootings of Alton  
Sterling and Philando Castile this  
past summer in July 2016.)*

Untitled Poem in Response to the  
Murder of Alton Sterling

BY SAVANNAH PATTON '19  
CHIEF COPY EDITOR

I'm gonna fight for you.  
I'm gonna write for you.  
Wish we could have switched for a sec-  
ond,  
I hope I would have laid down my life  
for you.  
That's all it took, isn't it?  
Just a second – quicker than you could  
sell a CD  
outside your buddy's store.  
But they had time to think.  
We're not animals; don't blame this on  
instinct.  
You didn't need to die today  
outside your buddy's store.

What about him? What about him?  
God, why'd you let this happen to this  
man,  
my friend.  
They didn't know him.  
They weren't You, God, they aren't You;  
why'd they get to choose?

Tell me why they got to choose?

I watched that man die today.  
I watched a man die today.  
I didn't earn that right,  
but they didn't give him a say  
to pick who'd be there as they shot him  
3 times  
defenseless on the ground,  
then told him to get on the ground,  
but I was already weeping for him there  
before.

I saw him there before,  
didn't you see him there before?  
He fell to the ground before he couldn't  
get up from it anymore.  
You were holding him there before.  
3 more shots.  
3 men. 2 guilty. One dead.  
Got a million stories like this, congested  
and heavy,  
weighing down my head –  
lighter than his, whiter than his,  
so I get to breathe and drive home to left-  
overs  
and Netflix.

And someone handed his wife that bag  
of CD's,  
heavier than bricks,  
heavier than all the bricks it took to build  
his house.  
He might've left a mess inside;  
who's gonna clean it up?  
Another local police department with a  
mess on their hands;

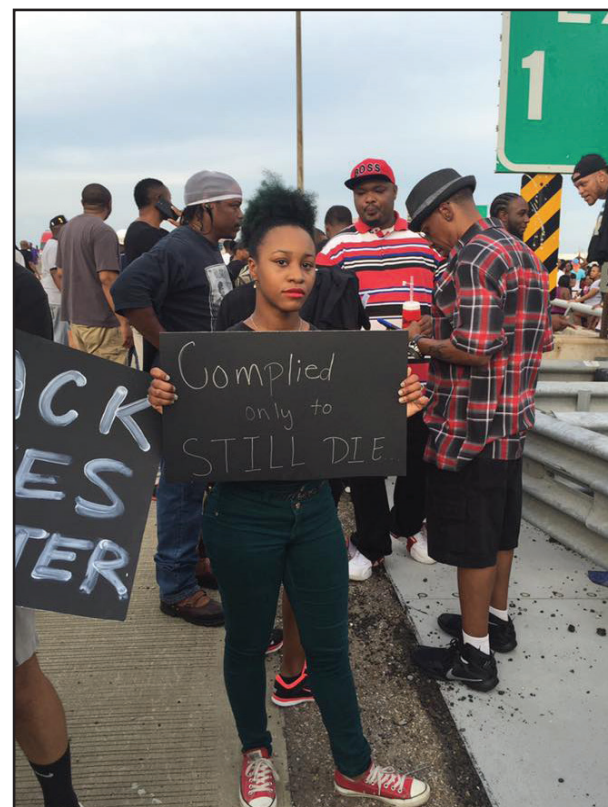
who's gonna clean it up?  
Who's gonna clean this up?  
This isn't a PR disaster.  
This isn't a chief of police forced to re-  
sign.  
This isn't your reputation ruined in a mo-  
ment,  
in the length of time it took for a man  
to die.  
Don't call this self-defense.  
This is a man you killed today.  
This is a man you decided oughta die.  
This is a man, this is a man,  
this was a man.

Listen to this battle cry, listen to his chil-  
dren cry, listen.  
Listen to the mountains as they shed  
their tears  
for this man you clipped from the earth  
like branches in the way,  
shorn back by a pair of eager shears.  
2 men with 2 pairs of ears  
that did not listen as he cried out.  
Listen to what you did.  
His wife, his son, will never be cried out.  
Do you hear them now?  
You could have listened as he pleaded  
with you,  
crushed beneath your bodies, crushed  
upon the ground.  
Do you hear him now?

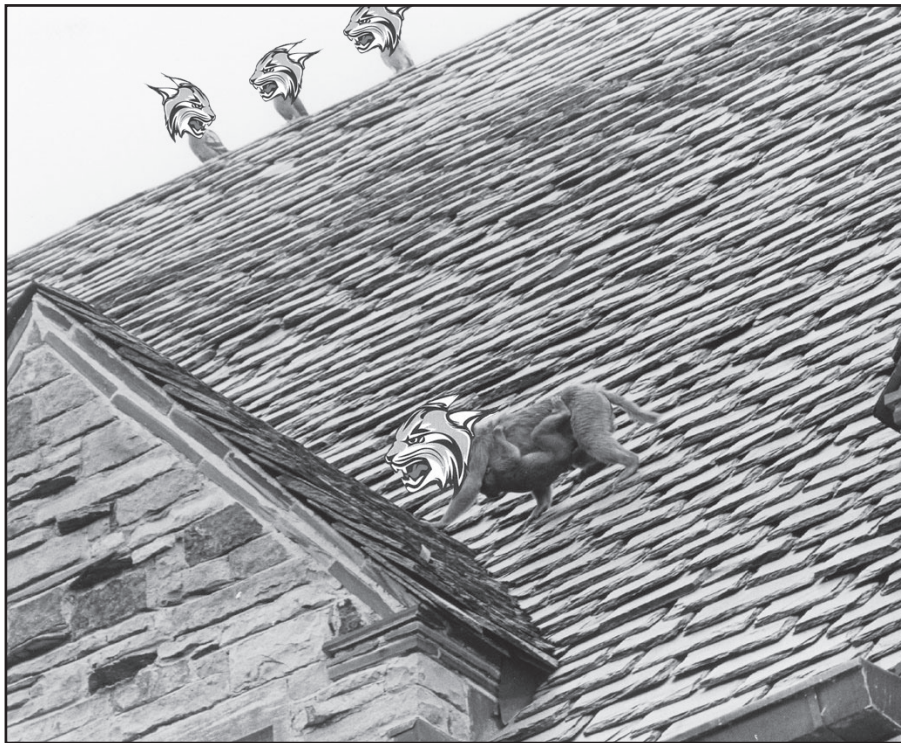
*#AltonSterling #BlackLivesMatter*

#BlackLivesMatter,  
Memphis-Style  
July 10, 2016

Photos By (from left to right) Gene Lamanilao '16 and Taylor Barksdale '18





*WITHIN THE GATES***Leroy Conquers The Rhodes Pentathlon**

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THE RHODES PENTATHLON INCLUDES THE "5 TRADITIONS" YOU MUST COMPLETE BEFORE YOU GRADUATE. MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE RHODES PENTATHLON EXIST. ABOVE YOU'LL FIND LEROY LYNX DOING THE RHODES PENTATHLON AS UNDERSTOOD BY THE SOU'WESTER: CLIMBING A BUILDING LIKE THE MEMPHIS ZOO MONKEYS IN THE 70'S, SITTING ATOP GOOD OL' DIEHL'S SHOULDERS, TAKING A DIP IN THE GARNER COURT FOUNTAIN OUTSIDE MCCOY THEATRE, "RIDING THE LYNX!!!!" AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, SKINNY-DIPPING IN ALBURTY POOL. WE DARE YOU TO PHOTOGRAPH "LEROY" DOING THEM ALL, BE CAREFUL TO WARN HIM THOUGH, THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR BEING CAUGHT...



## BEYOND THE GATES

### Russian Summer: Thoughts From Abroad



BY JOSEPH OZMENT '17  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Every person I've seen back home in Memphis has asked me the same question since I've returned: "how was Russia?" My response, which admittedly I planned out beforehand, is always the same: "it was a lot of things."

I am a pretty experienced traveler, and I've spent a fair portion of my life living and growing up abroad. The differences between my previous experiences and the journey I embarked on in June when I boarded a plane to Moscow were numerous, and significant. The problem with that is that I only realized it when I got there.

Most, if not all, of my traveling with my life has been with my family, and it hasn't been real. I've been fortunate enough to go to exotic places, see the sights, eat the food, and go back to luxury hotel where everyone speaks, or at least tries to speak, English. Russia was absolutely nothing like that. There was no crutch, nothing and no one to lean on. This was an Olympic diving pool and I was thrown into the deep end.

This presented countless challenges, but inside of each and every one of those challenges was an opportunity. An op-

portunity to prove to myself I could solve each problem as it came my way (in an exotic language of which I only have basic command), an opportunity to stick to my principles and to try to excel against pretty extreme adversity. All of this probably sounds pretty cliché, but let me explain why it isn't.

Someone, whose name I was unable to locate even with some Google searches, once said that to know more of England, one must go to France. When I first heard that quote I took it for granted, said, "yeah, been there, done that, where I live still isn't all that." My time in Moscow was a day-to-day embodiment of that quote. For two months, every time I couldn't speak English, couldn't get in my car and drive where I wanted to, ate cafeteria food that made the Rat seem worthy of a Michelin star, I appreciated America, and particularly everything about it that made me who I am, more. People always joke that travel helps you "find yourself." I know I've poked fun at more than a few of my friends who have come back from some exotic place to talk about how much it changed their lives. You probably won't hear me say that about Russia when you see me next and inevitably ask me about it. It didn't change my life. It made me appreciate the life that I have already each and every bit more.

So Russia was a lot of things: fun at times, lonely, frustrating, and downright depressing at others. Traveling alone isn't easy, especially doing so while working an internship and/or studying, but it is so, so important. In my opinion, it is crucial for every person on this planet not only to see how other people live, but every now and then, try living like them for awhile. Chances are you'll come home and kiss the ground you walk on.

### An Occasion for Registration

BY WARNER RAULSTON '19  
NEWS EDITOR

Register, NOW! Election season is upon us once again, and the time remaining before voter registration ends is rapidly closing in many states. Over the past few years, new voter ID and registration laws, enforced in a majority of the fifty states, have made it increasingly difficult to engage in our democratic process—especially for Millennials. There are currently over 12 million students attending college in the United States, several million of whom go to school out of state and will be unable to journey home on November 8 to vote for the first time. This is not to mention, the several million members of Generation Y who are out of school and are becoming increasingly mobile, moving to new cities while still maintaining strong connections to their home towns.

This is why it is exceptionally important to begin the process of registering now if you have not already done so. Before long, the burden of classwork and social life will become too distracting and you will look up at the start of November to see that the deadline has already passed. Registration procedure can vary wildly from state to state, and some require it to be done in person, but a total of thirty-one states and the District of Columbia allow registration online. Some states however, go far as to require registration to be completed in person or by mail a full thirty days before voting for the first time. In addition, a number of states require first time voters to go to the polls in person before being allowed to request

absentee ballots, including Tennessee.

When taken together, some of you may find it logistically impossible to vote despite your best efforts. But don't let this deter you from registering now because the mindset of not being able to vote this year often pushes people to put off registering, creating the same problem in the future. And even if you miss out on the thrill of voting in the Presidential election, you still earn the opportunity to participate in state and local elections that are equally important.

Our generation has become a powerful political constituency, comprising thirty-one percent of the electorate, the same as the Baby Boom Generation. But in 2012 only forty-six percent of eligible Millennials turned up to the polls to vote for either Barack Obama or Mitt Romney. Although as generations mature, its individuals tend to become more reliable voters, a strong stigma remains with the under-25 crowd, with observers deriding us for not showing up to the polls, almost to the point of it being expected. What is most surprising about this however, is that we should be the most politically enthusiastic group because the political decisions made today will affect us more than anyone else. We have a job to do, let's do it. Register and VOTE!

If you need help registering, go to <https://www.youtube.com/c/howto-voteineverystate> and find a video for your state detailing how to register. And if you have any political questions that you want answered in *The Sou'wester*, shoot an email to [rhodesnews@gmail.com](mailto:rhodesnews@gmail.com).

Oh, and welcome back; Let's have a great year!

### The (Bro)dyssey Presents: 10 Obscure, Esoteric Signs You May Go to Rhodes College (Hint: they're not what you think!)

BY WILL MORROW '19 AND WARREN SOCHER '19  
SATIRE WRITERS

1. You were accepted to attend Rhodes College.
2. You are enrolled as a student at

Rhodes College.

3. Your parents pay tuition for you to attend Rhodes College.
4. You attend classes at Rhodes College.
5. Your professors teach at Rhodes College.
6. You eat meals at the Catherine Bur-

row Refectory, the Rhodes College cafeteria.

7. Your peers attend Rhodes College.
8. During the summers you go home, exiting Rhodes College.
9. You will never attend an athletic event at Rhodes College.

10. You joined a Greek organization at Rhodes College in order to cope with social insecurities common among Freshman students.

SPORTS

# Upcoming Home Games



SEPTEMBER 3 - 11 A.M.  
Lady Lynx Field Hockey

vs.

Denison University  
Lady Big Reds



SEPTEMBER 3 - 7 P.M.  
Lynx Football

vs.

Williamette University  
Bearcats



SEPTEMBER 4 - 12 P.M.  
Lady Lynx Soccer

vs.

University of Texas at Tyler  
Lady Patriots



SEPTEMBER 9 - 6 P.M.  
Lady Lynx Volleyball

vs.

Letourneau University  
Lady Yellowjackets



SEPTEMBER 10 - 4 P.M.  
Lynx Soccer

vs.

Webster University  
Worloks





## OP-ED

## Black Tax



BY THOMAS MITCHELL '18

STAFF WRITER

*Medium.com originally published this piece on July 7, 2016.*

Black Tax: The extra work that a black American has to do to even begin to be considered “equal” in talent and skill to a white American. Almost every black person has heard this lesson from their parents. I remember my father reciting it to me almost daily on the way to school. It’s so ingrained in black culture that it was part of a dialogue between Olivia and Papa Pope on Scandal. It’s also the title of Marcus Mabry’s biography of former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. For many white folks, it was the first time they’d heard the warning “You have to work twice as hard to be half as good.”

Often times, the “black tax” also refers to economic consequences, wherein we routinely see black Americans pay more than their white counterparts for the exact same products and services. And let’s not forget redlining, the practice of denying loans and mortgages to black Americans in certain neighborhoods and areas of town.

I want to talk about something different. I wanna talk about the tax that black Americans are forced to pay every single day simply because we wake up. The other part of the black tax is emotional; it’s psychological; it’s fear to do the ordinary; it’s death.

The black tax requires us to do the following:

-defend ourselves against racist stereotypes.

-prove that a racist stereotype is correct.

-express our anger and grief in a “town hall” after a racial incident occurs on campus.

Shows like this seem to suggest that our feelings aren’t justified until you see us cry, and shake... until we break.

We are called upon to educate you on your ignorance.

I will never forget the day that I sat discussing my ACT test scores at lunch with a table of friends only to be told that my scores were “average,” to hear a friend utter the words “affirmative action,” before chuckling to himself. I then attempted to defend both my scores, which actually measure social class, not educational aptitude, and affirmative action. After 20 minutes of sharing all of the experiences and slights that I have suffered as a black man, the same person asked, “Where do you get your stats from?” An amazing person, who herself understood my frustration in this moment said, “Thomas, we have a meeting.” I left the table and didn’t look back.

First, why should I have to educate you on this information? I shouldn’t have to pour my heart out and literally write you an autobiography while also searching for the data to “back up” my life experiences. Look at my skin, that’s the only data I need. I live and breathe being black. In America today, it could also kill me.

Second, if you honestly care about the

issues at hand, then do exactly what you do for every other question you have: GOOGLE IT. Heck, use Bing. Honestly, just use common sense. The answers to your questions exist. If you haven’t found them, then you must understand that it’s because of your want to dismiss reality and the privileges that you have been afforded through the color of your skin.

Finally, the black tax requires us to sit with our families and lament over the newest execution of a black man at the hands of police (TW: You will actually see police kill a man).

It’s an amazing thing when you think about it. When a man walks into a school and kills 30 kids or into a nightclub and murders 50, no one has an answer for what we can do. When a black man is shot in the streets by a cop, then suddenly everybody’s an expert on the law, race theory, and on psychology too. Hell, we can even read the minds of people that we see on a video. Suddenly we’re f\*cking gods with third-person-omniscient powers. “Don’t run,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t talk back,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t sell cigarettes,” they say, “and you won’t get choked to death.” “Don’t play in the park,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t ask for help,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t shop in the store,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t sell CDs,” they say, “and you won’t get shot.”

Soon, I fear, they will say “Don’t be black, and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t be you, and you won’t get shot.” “Don’t try to live a life worthy of saying that you are part of God’s creation, and you won’t get shot.”

“Don’t work twice as hard to be half as good. Accept your place and you won’t get shot.” “Do as we say and you won’t get shot.”

No. Just no.

Here’s the deal. I’m tired of paying my black tax. I’m tired of remaking and reshaping my blackness to make it more comfortable for you. I’m tired of trying to accommodate your feelings.

God didn’t put me on this earth to play with you hoes. God sent me to slay, so I am done paying my black tax. I am done subjecting myself to the emotional and psychological abuse that the system of race has established. I am done accommodating you. I am done educating you. I am done defending my basic existence. I am done with your nonsense. I am done reading through

your Facebook arguments. I am done pretending that people who will vote for Donald Trump might have a good argument (Newsflash, not being Hillary is actually not a platform. It’s a cop-out. It’s a cowardly way to sew your racism, sexism, and xenophobia into the fabric of America). I am done sitting around waiting to see who of my friends will speak up for me, because even if you think that I “talk or act white” or that I’m “the whitest black guy you know,” in the eyes of the state, I’m black as hell. In the eyes of a loaded service pistol, I’m a fresh kill. In your eyes too, on your worst day, I will be black again because you’ll need to feel some happiness or sense of accomplishment.

Are you listening America? We are done paying the black tax. We’re coming for what we deserve. We’re not just coming for 40 acres and a mule. No. We’re coming for everything you owe us. We’re coming for the blood, sweat and tears of our ancestors. We’re coming for the soil they tilled and the crops they harvested. We’re coming for the screams that echoed and the tears that fell when they were beat by their oppressor. We’re coming for the dogs that were set upon them in Birmingham. We’re coming for the ropes you used to lynch them. We’re coming for the hoses you sprayed on people fighting for freedom. We’re coming for the dream of Dr. King. We’re coming for the work of Malcolm X. We’re coming for the ideology of James Baldwin and A. Philip Randolph. We’re coming to live in the future that Rosa Parks, Fannie Lou Hamer, the Little Rock Nine, the Clinton 12, the Memphis 13 and so many others worked tirelessly for us to see. We’re coming for the racialization of poverty. We’re coming for the racism in the criminal justice system. We’re coming for the racism in the education system. We’re coming for the racism in politics. We’re coming for the racism in religion. We’re coming for the racism in thought and speech. We’re coming for all the anguish and inner turmoil the invention of race has set upon us.

We’re coming to get a refund for our black tax.

We’re coming to slay.\*

To Alton Sterling, Philando Castile, Tamir Rice, Mike Brown, Trayvon Martin and all of the brothers and sisters that we have lost, rest in power. Rest in peace.

\*Slay(slang)- to accomplish something great.