

Spotlight: Sigma Nu Fraternity Brothers Allege their Chapter Denied a Gay Student a Bid Due to Sexual Expression

By JORDAN HULSEBERG '19
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Two Rhodes College Sigma Nu brothers have alleged their fraternity chapter denied a gay student a bid due to his sexual expression during Spring Rush last academic year. The two, who spoke to the "Sou'wester" on the condition of their anonymity, will be referred to as Mr. Red and Mr. Black.

They claimed a gay student, who will be referred to as John Doe for the protection of his privacy, was denied a fraternity bid after a fraternity brother voted no and referred to the student's sexual expression for his reasoning.

Sexual expression is a very broad term for the way individuals present themselves as sexual beings; it is closely tied to one's sexuality.

The Rhodes chapter of Sigma Nu has denied the claims.

College officials have restated their commitment to inclusivity and have called for a campus-wide conversation on the matter. Additionally, a college investigation is underway.

The Allegations

Mr. Red, who was an active member of the fraternity at the time of the incident but remains inactive now, provided to the "Sou'wester" a narrative of what he claims transpired during the bid decision meeting in question.

"Well, it is custom for the fraternity, when voting for new members, to have this sort of all-or-nothing style vote. So, if one person doesn't want another to be in the fraternity, that person has the power to prevent this person from being a brother," Mr. Red said.

According to Mr. Red and Mr. Black, should a single member of the fraternity vote no on a candidate due to his sexual expression then, by extension, the entire fraternity has denied him a bid for that same reason.

Mr. Red continued, "[John Doe] came up for vote. His picture comes up and we're talking about him. People are giving pros, cons, breaking him down as a person, I guess—debating on why or why not he should be in the fraternity. We close our eyes to vote, and when we open our eyes, the person who is leading the vote says, 'Alright he's not in.'

"Earlier in the night, someone had not gotten in and one of the people who voted no was called out and asked to explain himself. So this sort of set precedent for when a brother, who was very upset about [John Doe's] vote, said that he wanted to know who didn't vote for him and why they voted that way.

"Eventually, we learned who it was. [The student who voted no] said that [John Doe's] Instagram was 'very sexual.' The student said, 'I find his Instagram inappropriate.' He then refer-

enced a Halloween Instagram photo where [John Doe] was showing a lot of skin. Basically, he was wearing something that if a girl was wearing would've been so hot. He said, when talking about [John Doe's] sexual expression, 'I don't think he would uphold our values as a brother.' The rest was gibberish and hot air."

The photo described features John Doe, dressed as the biblical Adam, wearing spray-painted leaves over short trunks. In the photo, John Doe shows no more skin than a man might wearing a swim suit. He is posed with a woman; their chests are touching and his hand is on her thigh. The photo's caption reads, "God's greatest creation: the thot and the slut."

Mr. Red continued, "I stood up afterwards and said that reason is entirely chalking up his character to his sexuality and sexual expression.

"I said, 'I want you to consider this: I want you to consider going to high school and being someone who was not allowed to dress the way they wanted, talk about sex the way they wanted. Everything to do with his sexuality has been shut down. He's been told he can't express it which is so frustrating that you can't be yourself. So for him to get here and finally feel comfortable enough for him to express himself and be sexual and be gay and for you to use

that against him is really screwed up.' "We ended up voting again. He didn't get in. After that I left, I didn't even finish voting."

When asked if he believed John Doe was denied a bid due to his sexuality, Mr. Red said, "Yes he was denied a bid because of his sexuality. I believe the argument on [John Doe's] admittance was based on [the student's] comfort with male sexual expression and I think that made the brothers uncomfortable. Given the picture that he referenced, given the fact that he said it was inappropriate, I think it was about his discomfort with queerness and homosexuality."

Mr. Red did not stop there. As a gay member of Sigma Nu, he claimed he, too, had felt the heavy hand of discrimination and homophobia.

"I feel that sometimes my presence is a burden. I feel othered. It's difficult to be gay in a fraternity, honestly. I think the idea of doing it successfully is a fantasy," Mr. Red said.

Mr. Black provided a similar account to Mr. Red's. He corroborated Mr. Red's story and confirmed that John Doe's Instagram photo was cited as the grounds for his rejection.

"So, [the student who voted no]...

(continued on pg. 2...)

Queer Students 'Disgusted,' 'Not Surprised,' Following Discrimination Allegations

By JORDAN HULSEBERG '19
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Upon learning of the allegations against Sigma Nu, several queer students expressed their concerns, called for penalties to fraternities and supported significant policy changes. GSA President Lee Kezar '19, in particular, had strong words for not only Sigma Nu but for all fraternities.

"To know about this problem and to not take action is to be neutral in a mo-

ment of injustice which we know is to be equivalent to taking the side of the oppressor... In that silence and in that constant reinforcement of toxic masculinity, I see the breeding ground for homophobia," Kezar said.

He continued, "I think the relationship between gay students and fraternities is non-existent. If a fraternity has a queer student in it, it is almost always because of an accident. I have not heard of any form of outreach or any attempt to be inclusive in any way."

After learning of the allegations, Kezar said, "I'm not surprised to be completely honest, because like I said, there hasn't been an attempt to be inclusive made to me. My reaction is that it's disgusting but at the same time I'm not surprised.

Kezar said this kind of incident was not exclusive to any one fraternity.

"I think the motivation for this decision was not unique to any fraternity. There are more similarities than differences between them. So I would be

surprised if it was an isolated incident," Kezar said.

Kezar also called for new policies and temporary sanctions on fraternities.

"Unless there is some sort of policy change then this could repeat itself," Kezar said.

"I think fraternities should make new policies and until it meets the satisfaction of the current administration, they should not be allowed to admit new members..."

(continued on pg. 5...)

NEWS, CONT'D



(...Spotlight continued)

"...pointed to [John Doe's] Instagram and said that it was really sexual. He pointed to a photo of [John Doe] in, like, a Halloween costume, posed provocatively, with a bunch of leaves. Then he brought up the photo's caption, I can't remember exactly what it said. Basically, he said that because of the photo he wouldn't reflect the values of the frat," Mr. Black said.

"There was a big argument afterward and we tried to change his mind but he was really firm and said he wouldn't.

"I felt really uncomfortable the whole time. To me, it seemed like [John Doe] wasn't getting in because his Instagram post and the way he acted made people uncomfortable.

"It's true, all of it's true. [John Doe] didn't get in because of a stubborn brother who was uncomfortable with his Instagram. I would call it discrim-

ination."

The student who voted no in both Mr. Red's and Mr. Black's narratives did not respond to multiple inquiries. Mr. Red, however, claimed to have spoken with him over the summer about the incident.

"Over the summer [he] ended up texting me after I posted on Instagram how my fraternity denied someone because of its fragile masculinity," Mr. Red said.

"He texted me and said, 'I don't find it okay that you called me out on social media.'

"I said, 'Well it's a problem, let's talk about this.' I actually explained to him why it was wrong to do what he did. He told me he was going to apologize afterward."

According to John Doe, the student never apologized to him.

John Doe's Story

John Doe, too, believed he was denied a bid from Sigma Nu due to his sexual expression. He evidenced this with conversations and texts from current and former Sigma Nu brothers and their close friends. All Sigma Nu brothers mentioned were members of the fraternity at the time of the alleged incident.

"I decided to rush second semester and do it formally. I went to multiple parties throughout first semester and everything seemed fine until I started the rush process," John Doe said.

"Things were normal until at one of [Sigma Nu's] parties a brother came up to me and told me that he 'really, really' wanted me to be his brother but that I didn't know how hard the process is.

"I said, 'Oh no, I do know how hard the process is, every brother has to say yes.'

"He said, 'It's harder than that for you.' That's when I knew something

was happening but I didn't know what was going on. So, I just left it at that."

While a Sigma Nu brother at the time of the conversation, the brother John Doe referenced no longer attends Rhodes.

John Doe continued, "Then the day of bids came and I didn't get a bid.

"Later that day, I found out through people close to the fraternity that I didn't get a bid because a brother was uncomfortable with my Instagram post. My Instagram is very normal, I'm very open with my sexuality and some of my captions have very gay vocabulary. Apparently, one of the brothers felt uncomfortable with that.

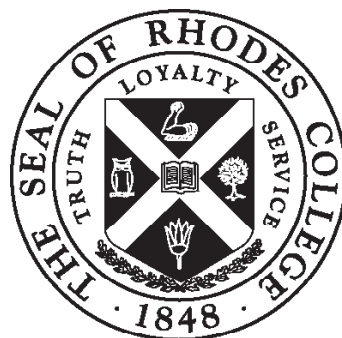
"The first text message I received came from someone close to a brother. It said how upset he was and that what they did was wrong. At the end, he said, 'We have to take care of our community.'

(continued on pg. 3...)

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NEWS, CONT'D

(...*Spotlight continued*)

“He was referring to the queer community.

“The next message I received was from a brother. He hinted at homophobia but he didn't want to say it.

“I wanted to hit you up to 1: tell you how sad I am that you were not given a bid by the chapter and 2: explain a little bit about that. From what I could see and hear, you were denied a bid despite most efforts to rightfully show how wonderful and sweet of a person you are. To me the conversation was very whitewashed and tone deaf and I was severely disappointed in my fraternity. While the conversation was not explicitly discriminative, I was nonetheless disgusted by what I heard and while I'm really upset I won't be able to call you a brother this semester, I am thankful that you'll avoid certain members of the chapter and their closed minds and hearts. I want you to know you're always welcome at our parties and functions and I'm sorry that you put in effort in the rush process to have it go to waste from low key bigots. I'm so sorry dude. In my mind you would have been a perfect brother and I'm sorry other people couldn't see that

I wish I could offer more explanation but unfortunately the argument of the opposer was just that stupid

I'm really sorry though. A lot of the chapter is pretty upset about it so I want you to know that you were really important to a lot of people and we feel that. I'm not sure what else to say but know that a lot of us are really bummed you won't be a part of the fraternity

Cause you deserve it” [sic]

The brother who sent this text message to John Doe has since graduated.

John Doe continued, “The third message was from another brother who I'm good friends with.

“Hey man. I am truly upset you didn't get a bid. I vouched for you along with a large majority of the fraternity, but we have unanimous bid decisions and after two discussion periods there was still at least 1, and I think only 1, dissenter. I'm so sorry. I really wanted you to get in. You are 100% free to come to anything we have. My entire group supports you and if you have any problems, just refer them to me and I will fight tooth and nail for you. Of course. I don't stand for that shit. Good vibes all around -” [sic]

The brother who sent this text message to John Doe no longer attends Rhodes.

John Doe continued, “The fourth message was from someone I rushed with. He didn't get in either but had

found out what had happened to me.”

“Hey dude. I gotta tell ya I can't stop thinking about how sig nu really fucked you over. It's really fucked up. I'd totally support you pressing charges or whatever but I understand if you don't want to. Just know that there are people out there that also recognize that what happened is as I've said fucked up.” [sic]

“After I figured out who [voted no], I messaged one of the brothers, ‘I get that you can't tell me but is it him? I want to make sure I watch out for myself.’ He confirmed it was him.

“What also upset me was that practically half the school knew I didn't get a bid and the reasons why before me. I felt like I was just an object of discussion and not a human being.

“I don't go out to frat parties anymore, specifically that frat, just because I don't feel comfortable in it. It's not just that one of the brothers is openly homophobic, it's the fact that his brothers didn't reverse the decision even though I know that most of them are not homophobic. It's kind of upsetting but there's nothing I can do about it.”

Sigma Nu's Denial

Sigma Nu Commander Brannin Weber '18 denied the claims. According to him, the discussion of John Doe's sexual expression took place but was not the reason for his denial.

“What you just said is incorrect. The person who said one of those quotes was not the person that said that. Another person brought up the social media and that led to a heated discussion. Bid decisions always do this; it's always a heated conversation,” Weber said.

“The discussion did lead to specific people arguing but there were multiple people arguing both sides. [Sexual expression as a reason] was immediately shot down and invalidated. We did not accept that as a reason. More reasons were brought up that were appropriate.”

Weber, however, said other aspects of John Doe's social media were factors in John Doe's ultimate bid decision.

“Social media was a factor. Social media is a factor with our bid decisions. After the specific reason you just mentioned was shot down, social media was continued to be discussed. It was for other reasons than the reason that you said.

“There are things we cannot discriminate someone against. We have very clear rules against that. We cannot deny someone initiation as a candidate based on their sexual expression.

According to Weber, the primary reason someone is denied a bid is how that person comports themselves publicly and the make-up of their character. Weber provided reasons in this same vein.

“In terms of things we look at, we look at their standing with the school, we look at if they've had run-ins with campus safety, if they've had situations where they've been in bad standing with the school because of academic reasons, if there is any reason they may have been considered for academic probation, any reason they wouldn't be able to continue being a part of our fraternity after they finished our candidate process. We also look at social media pretty heavily. We really care about how people are presenting themselves publicly on social media, in the sense of if they're being respectful, if they're being honest on social media, if there is any situation where they are fighting or arguing with people. We really don't look for guys who are doing that. We look for generally respectful people in all forms of life—even when they have the anonymity of the internet,” Weber said.

“We've had people give bids that have, I don't know the wording for this, that doesn't sound like I'm saying, that they attempted something inappropriate where they've said something or acted upon something that can be deemed inappropriate to someone who was a part of the fraternity or not part of the fraternity. We talk to people who are outside of the fraternity and how their experience is, because we want to know.

“We don't want to accept someone who already has a bad name among people or makes people uncomfortable. We don't want anybody in the fraternity who makes people uncomfortable. If they don't make us comfortable, we don't want them to be part of our image.

“So, there are a ton of things. It's very little about, as a person, who they are. It's more about how they present themselves and how they carry themselves and how they act in the public world.”

Weber also described the bid decision process and noted some of the rules chapters must follow to determine the relevance of various comments.

“In terms of my fraternity, specifically, it's a long process where we compile a lot of information about the person. All of which is based on their morals and how they hold themselves as a person. That's what we put on our slideshow and our information packets that we hand out

to our brothers. We get that to them so, prior to bid decisions, they know who they're going to see on the screen and who they are going to be voting for. Also, 99 percent of the time they've all met and interacted with these persons. There's very little situations where an opinion is brought up of someone who they haven't met before. We also deny the validity of someone's opinion if they haven't met them before,” Weber said.

While Weber was informed the article would be about Sigma Nu denying a gay student a bid due to his sexual expression in Spring Semester of last academic year, he thought the article would feature a different student than John Doe. He did not realize otherwise until almost halfway through the interview.

“I came in here with prepared information for someone else who I thought this discussion was going to be about. I'm very surprised that this is the reason because that was a heated discussion but there have been more people that have been more heated and more inflammatory accusations have come afterward,” Weber said.

Ultimately, Weber said he wanted John Doe in the fraternity but other brothers prevented his admittance.

“I was very much for him being a part of our fraternity and I feel like the majority of our chapter was but because we have a unanimous bid decision and based on the information provided it was a no and that's just how it worked out,” Weber said.

Sigma Nu Fraternity Executive Director Brad Beacham released a statement to the “Sou'wester” following a request for comment.

“To be eligible for membership in Sigma Nu Fraternity, a person must be a student at the institution where the collegiate chapter is located, must be a man, have the character and bearing of a gentleman and must not be, or have been, a member of another general college fraternity,” Beacham said.

“Sigma Nu Fraternity's anti-discrimination policy is as follows: ‘No member of Sigma Nu Fraternity shall discriminate, with respect to fraternal decisions, on the basis of race, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, age and/or national origin.’

“Sigma Nu Fraternity reviews, and investigates as necessary and appropriate, reports alleging violations of its policies.”

Beacham declined to comment on if...

(continued on pg. 4...)

NEWS, CONT'D

(...Spotlight continued)

the organization explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual expression, what it defines sexual expression to be, if they monitor levels of diversity in their chapters, what the proper procedure is if a brother presents an illegal reason during bid decisions, if whistleblowing brothers receive protection from retribution and if there have been similar incidents in the past.

The College's Response

President Marjorie Hass restated her commitment to an inclusive campus and recognized additional work needs to be done.

"Our goal should be to create an inclusive environment, one where every student feels welcomed and at the center of our campus community. As a newcomer, I've been learning about the ways Rhodes has worked to improve diversity and inclusion over the last several years. I am pleased with that progress. But there is still more work to be done. My hope is that the 'Sou'wester's' reporting will renew an important conversation on campus that will result in positive change," Hass said.

Dean of Students Russ Wigginton expressed concern and urged students to report any discrimination they may witness or encounter.

"I'm troubled by the issues reported by the 'Sou'wester.' I encourage any student who has experienced discrimination to report it to the college. We will investigate every report we receive. There is no place for discrimination in

our community," Wigginton said.

"The student handbook requires fraternities to abide by and enforce campus regulations. The failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.

"I will not rush to judgement but I am disappointed by the narrative described by the Sigma Nu sources. We will investigate this situation.

"There is opportunity for discussion and education with our students, alumni and national organizations."

According to a college spokesperson, the college has multiple anti-discrimination policies and any discrimination claims should be reported quickly.

"The college investigates all reports of discrimination. The Rhodes Commitment to Diversity states: 'Rhodes College does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender identity or expression, color, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and national or ethnic origin, and will not tolerate harassment or discrimination on those bases,'" the spokesperson said.

"The Rhodes College Social Regulations Council Constitution states: 'Any member of the Rhodes community having knowledge of a possible Social Code violation should report it to the Judicial Officer or to the President of the Social Regulations Council in a timely manner.'

"Any member of the Rhodes community who experiences or witnesses a violation of the college's Social Regulation Code, Commitment to Diversity or Title IX policies has a responsibility

to report the violations."

Additionally, the college will continue its review of social policies and intends on establishing relationship statements with its national fraternities.

"Dr. Wigginton began the process of reviewing all Rhodes College social policies when he was appointed Vice President of Student Life. The review will continue throughout the year. A dialogue and ensuing relationship statement between our national fraternities and the college is needed to ensure clear expectations," the spokesperson said.

The Policies of Greek Life

Student Activities Director Keith Hembree explained the administration has very little say in Greek life's membership process.

"Membership selection is the sovereign right of each organization. They get to select their members," Hembree said.

He later added, "I don't know why anyone gets cut; they just tell us they got cut and we have to deal with the students after they get cut or they don't get into the chapter they want."

Hembree also explained the disciplinary and adjudication process for Greek life.

"We review each case by case basis to see if it breaks college policy. IFC and Panhellenic Council have governing councils that govern their organizations as well, while each chapter is supposed to govern their own members. So, there is a judicial board that governs each member in their chapter. Each council

has their own judicial board and procedures that govern themselves," Hembree said.

He later added, "Basically, it's a system where we look at campus safety reports and things we get from other places and the administration comes together to see if college policy has been broken. Each chapter's judicial process is confidential in their things."

When asked if the college investigates Greek life wrongdoing proactively or reactively, Hembree said, "We don't sit out there as a watchdog and go, 'I'm going to hand the hammer on this,' we just handle it by a case by case basis."

According to Hembree, the college's entire fraternity policy is obtainable in the online student handbook. The policies within this handbook indicate fraternities must abide by general college policies. The handbook does not, however, specify for what reasons an individual may be discriminated against in the membership selection process of each fraternity.

Fraternities, however, do have individual anti-discrimination policies.

"The fraternities recognized by Rhodes College each have an organizational statement that precludes discrimination. Moreover, the college expects all students and student organizations to abide by the Social Regulation Code, Commitment to Diversity and Title IX policies," a college spokesperson said.

(...Queer Students React continued)

"So while it may seem severe to say that they should not take new members until this is resolved, that is the minimum.

"So long as they have a space at Rhodes, there is a case of eminent domain and they should not be completely autonomous."

BSA President Jamarr McCain '19 said he heard about the alleged incident last year. He also called for significant changes, mainly in the form of increased oversight.

"This is not my first time learning about it. I learned about it the day that it happened, actually. I'm disgusted but not surprised. It's a sad reality," McCain said.

"I don't know what their exact anti-discrimination policy is in their recruitment process. It should include sexuality and sexual expression. Let's assume you do have that. It's just making sure [Rhodes] enforces it. I think over-

sight is necessary. Self-accountability is a whole thing for our fraternities but I still think some type of oversight is necessary from the college as long as they have property on the college campus."

When asked if denying a gay student a bid because of their sexual expression was tantamount to denying that same student due to their sexuality, Kezar said, "Yes, since their sexual expression is a piece of their sexuality.

"Sexual expression, to me, is a piece of sexuality and in a lot of different scenarios it is a piece of sexual orientation but I want to be careful to not equate them—especially, since the queer community is already facing so much stigma. So, the fact that a fraternity member used sexual expression as a reason to deny a bid, I see that more as a reflection of the ignorance around sexual freedom and the way that we see our bodies."

McCain agreed that discrimination by sexual expression is equivalent to

discrimination by sexuality.

"I was trying to think about differences but sexual expression is a branch of your sexuality. That's how you express yourself. If people are trying to argue they're different they're just trying mince words," McCain said.

B. Lever '21, who identifies as gay, expressed a growing sense of hopelessness. Additionally, Lever's ambitions to go Greek were cast in doubt.

"I chose Rhodes because I was assured of how open Rhodes is and how progressive it is and how I'll feel comfortable and find a place. Most of the time, I don't feel any hostility. When I came here, I expected to be looked at and I expected to be gawked at, possibly even made fun of or mocked but I didn't expect for people to ignore me or for people to glance at me and look away as if they were seeing right through me. I think that has been more damaging than anything—the whole erasure of

my presence," Lever said.

"I want to rush and I want to have a fraternity experience. I didn't think that my sexuality would affect my ability of getting into a fraternity... I feel radical every time I go outside and dress the way I want to and I don't want to feel radical every time I go outside. I feel conflicted with what I thought Rhodes was and what I'm finding out Rhodes is.

"I'm feeling hurt that this happened. If that's what happened and he made it all the way to the end of the process then there's nothing to be done for students like me who are gay."

Other students also felt they had little chance of receiving fraternity bids due to their sexuality and sexual expression. Steven Mysiewicz '19, who identifies as gay, said, "If I wanted to rush, I don't think that I would get in. I'm too flamboyant and my sexuality would ruin...

(continued on pg. 5...)

WITHIN THE GATES

(...*Queer Students React continued*)
 "...my chances. So, there's no real point. Of course, the majority of them are really accepting and great guys but I just don't think it's enough to make a difference."

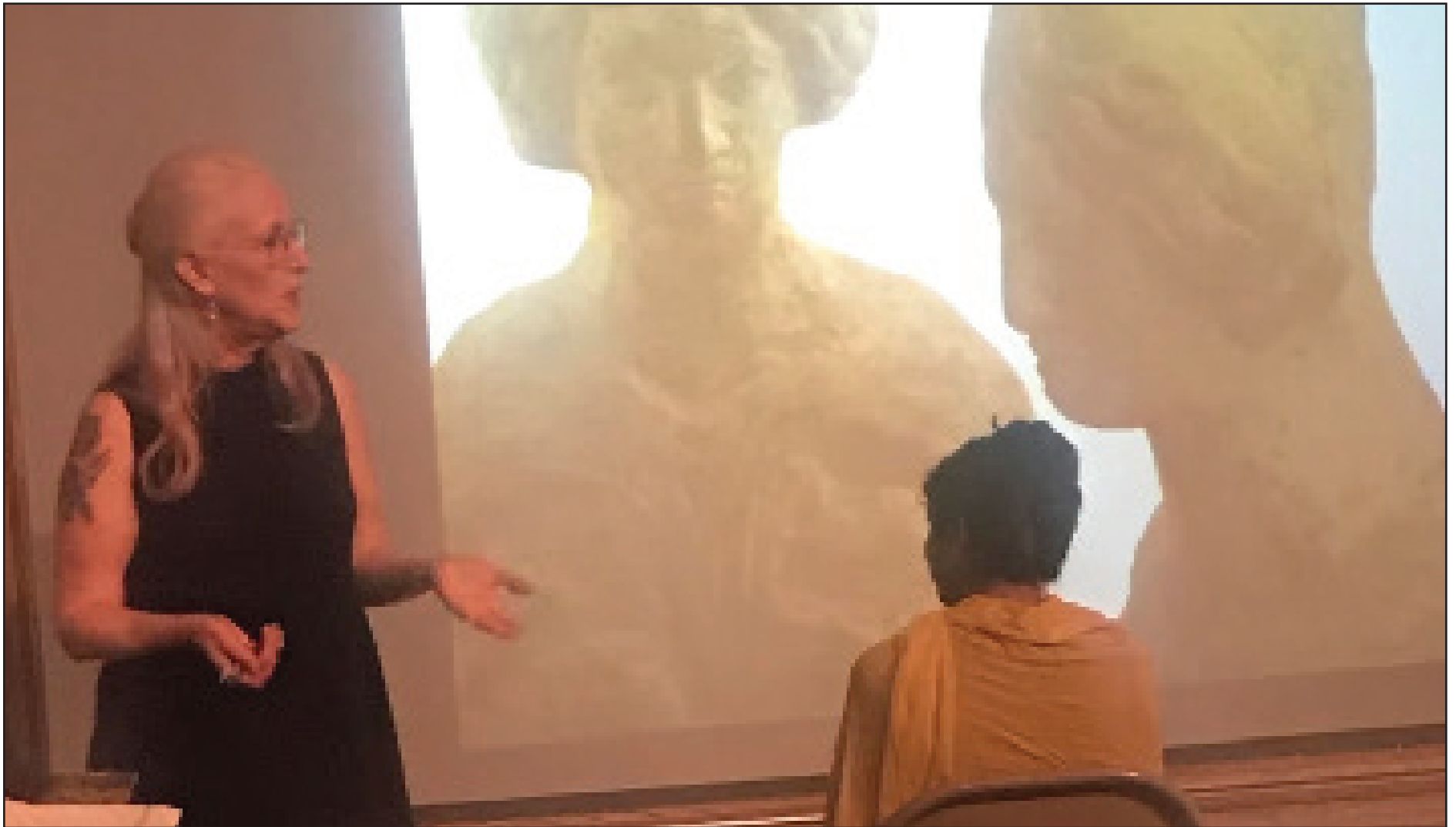
McCain said, "My sexuality would definitely diminish my chances. The

reason that I say that is because, looking at fraternities here at Rhodes, the closest one I could imagine to be really accepting is Sigma Nu but I know of instances where peoples' sexuality has kept them out. They didn't say that overtly but that was one of the reasons behind him not being accepted."

As these reactions attest, queer students on campus remain concerned and disheartened following the allegations against Sigma Nu. Moreover, the students interviewed do not appear to doubt the truth of the allegations. The allegations in question challenge some students' perceptions of a tolerant and

inclusive Rhodes. The question that remains on many students' minds is: In the wake of these allegations, will aspects of Greek life at Rhodes stay the same or will they change?

Rediscovering Ancient Roman Hairdressing: Speaker Janet Stephens



Janet Stephens (left) answers a question, after recreating Julia Domna's hairstyle—displayed on the screen in the background—on the seated volunteer.

Photo by Jack Patton

BY JACK PATTON '18
 STAFF WRITER

For centuries scholars believed Ancient Roman women's hairdos were created with fake hair. Janet Stephens, hairdresser and experimental archaeologist, recently changed that assumption. On Feb. 1, Stephens visited Rhodes to speak about her findings and style hair as part of her lecture "Rediscovering Ancient Roman Hairdressing."

Stephens became interested in Ancient Roman hairstyles in 2001 when she went to Baltimore's art museum,

the Walters, and spent time checking out Roman portrait busts including one of Julia Domna (pictured above). Upon getting home from the museum, Stephens tried to recreate Domna's hairstyle on a mannequin but could not get it to work. Researching the topic, Stephens was surprised how historians assumed the use of fake hair in Roman hairstyles based on little evidence.

"As a hairdresser I saw the behavior of natural hair," Stephens said.

She set out to prove it. Reexamining Domna's hair, it reminded Stephens of something sewed. Digging deep into

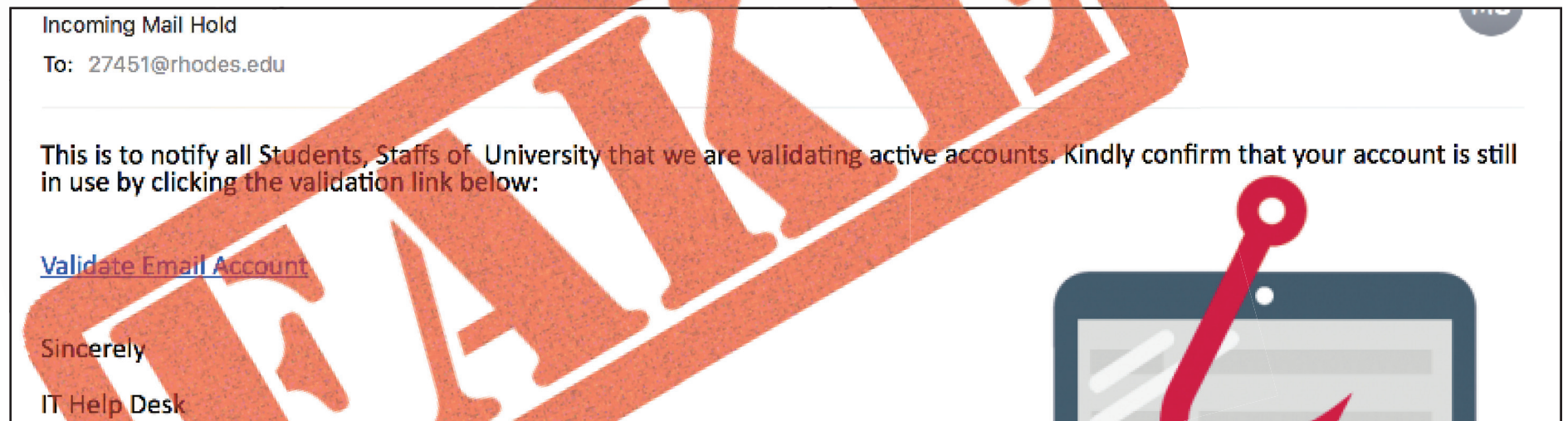
museum archives, Stephens eventually found an Ancient Roman hair kit that include a very nice sewing needle, providing evidence for her hypothesis that Ancient Romans styled their real hair by sewing it with a needle and thread. Using real hair and thread and needle, Stephens became the first person to successfully recreate an Ancient Roman hairstyle in modern times. In 2008, seven years after starting her investigation into Ancient Roman hair, Stephens published her research in the "Journal of Roman Archaeology."

Stephens braided and sewed volun-

teers' hair into different Ancient Roman hairdos on stage, starting with Domna's. While she worked, Stephens took questions. Asked by a professor if her liberal arts education at Whitman College helped with her research, she smiled and said yes. Stephens also confirmed she has used Ancient Roman hair techniques to do hair in modern day.

"I use the stitching in bridal hair and it's really stable and comfortable for the wearer but it can be a little strange for the wedding night," Stephens said.

WITHIN THE GATES



Gone Phishin'

By ROHAN KAZA '21
STAFF WRITER

A series of spam attacks have reached within the Rhodes Outlook email system. Coming in the form of an “incoming mail hold” or an “Office 365 email verification,” the emails prompted users to click on a link and provide their login information. The tactic used in these emails were a common form of “phishing” which have tricked many recipients into giving out valuable information.

Professionals have classified phishing as separate from outright hacking. While hacking has exploited technology, phishing has utilized social engineering. While this particular scam took the form of an email, phishing has also come in other forms such as phone calls. Phishers have historically misrepresented themselves by claiming to be an external authority: a college administrator, technical support, a representative from the bank or even the government. The motives of each attack have varied although they usually aim to obtain either information or money.

The tone of the emails have been urgent and prompted immediate action. Once phishers have obtained personal information, they will use it to spread the scam under the victim’s name. This will put every person the victim knows at risk since the phisher will gain access to contact lists.

A large number of phishing emails have been circulated throughout the Rhodes system and students have begun to fall victim to the tactic. Due to growing concerns, Director of Rhodes Information Technology Services department (ITS) Richie Trenthem sent a legitimate email to the student body to warn against fraudulent messages.

The series of attacks on Rhodes was a result of a larger trend that has been going on for several years. Higher education facilities have been targeted even more than other industries. According to Trenthem, ITS believed the reason behind this was phishers seeing student populations as susceptible. Incoming first-years have not necessarily known the environment or the system well enough to know what kinds of emails were to be expected. This resulted in

them being more vulnerable to a phisher who claims to be with the Rhodes staff.

Anyone who has fallen victim to a phishing scam ought to immediately change and discard their old password from all sites. If it has happened on a Rhodes email account, the user should contact the Help Desk at 901-843-3890 or email helpdesk@rhodes.edu to notify them of the situation. It would also be beneficial to flag the email to help ensure they will not pop up again. An entirely new account will not be created. Rather, the existing Rhodes email account—as the entry ticket into Moodle, Box and printing—will need to be secured as soon as possible.

Education will be a major component in ensuring these scams stop spreading. Users will need to assess three components when opening a potentially suspicious email: the sender, the link and the content of the email. The sender’s address will need to be examined first. Stopping at this step, however, will be an easy way to fall prey as another account may have been compromised. Next, hover the mouse over the link or

copy/paste it into the search bar or a Word document to see if it looks legitimate. The “Incoming Mail Hold” and “Office365 email verification” emails contained links to a website called “silobeatgame.net” which did not sound like something a Rhodes staff member would send. Finally, the content of a scam email will raise a few red flags. If it sounds pressuring, has inconsistent grammar and spelling or asks for personal information, it will be safer to flag and ignore it. However, if the email has pressed for some kind of action that may be legitimate, log in through a known and credible address such as express.rhodes.edu to resolve it. Though inconvenient, this will assure a safe connection.

Even though the ITS department has established basic information security such as firewalls, phishing tactics have been evolving. As society has shifted towards more advanced technology so will hackers and scammers. People will need to continue to become more familiar with not only phishing but any possible cyber threat.

BEYOND THE GATES

“Black Resistance” ft. Ernest Withers



Famous photograph by Ernest Withers capturing the Memphis sanitation strikes. Ernest Withers' work was featured at the Feb. 2 event titled “Black Resistance” at the Brooks Art Museum.

Photo by Ernest Withers

BY PRAMIKA SRIRAM '21
CITY EDITOR

February is Black History Month and the city of Memphis and its residents have already begun to commemorate it. On Feb. 2, dozens of people filled the Brooks Museum of Art in Overton Square for an event titled “Black Resistance.”

The event featured photographs taken by the renowned photographer Ernest Withers and included a panel of local African-American leaders. Ernest Withers was a native Memphian and prominent civil rights photographer who documented the Civil Rights Movement in Memphis. His most well-known works include images of Martin Luther King, Jr. during the Memphis sanitation strikes. Withers was the photographer who captured the immediate aftermath of Dr. King's assassination in Memphis and his works have been archived by the Library of Congress.

Ernest Withers' daughter, Rosalind Withers, presented a collection of her father's photographs to the Brooks Museum. She emphasized that although many people have seen the pictures of the Memphis sanitation strikes, not many are aware of the narratives behind the pictures. Withers revealed that a feature film about the Memphis sanitation strikes has been in production. She stated this film will allow black Memphians to tell a part of their story that has remained unrecognized. Withers also highlighted the importance of Memphis to her late father's work, saying it was “so refreshing to see the appreciation” of the city.

Additionally, a panel discussed the history of the Civil Rights Movement as well as the current fight for justice and equality. The members of the panel were individuals who were uniquely connected to Ernest Withers' photographs, as their family members had featured prominently in his works. One

of the panel members was Elliot Perry, a retired NBA player and a minority owner of the Memphis Grizzlies. He spoke about his grandfather's role in the Civil Rights Movement and noted that older generations “had to fight” to give younger African-Americans opportunities. He emphasized cooperation among all citizens to defeat inequality.

“[Inequality] is not a black or white issue. It is a people issue,” Perry said.

William Jones, a retired Navy pilot, was another member of the panel. Jones focused on the definition of freedom and also stressed the importance of cooperation, noting that “we have more commonalities than differences.”

The members of the panel stressed the need for younger generations to continue the work older generations have pursued. The panelists also spent time highlighting current inequalities in a variety of areas from education to professions. Although they acknowledged inequity, they did not dwell on

its existence. Rather, they maintained a hopeful tone, encouraging audience members to speak up and make change when they see fit. The panel encouraged unity among people, regardless of race, religion or background in order to achieve true reform.

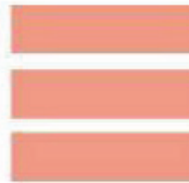
Ernest Withers' photography directed national attention towards the Civil Rights Movement and grave injustice in the South. He captured an estimated 1.8 million images which are in the process of being digitized. The digitalization of his pictures will allow his work to be circulated and appreciated on a larger scale.

This February, celebrations of black history and conversations about racial inequality will continue. Black History Month provides time to reflect on the advancements that have been made and the reform that is yet to come. The event “Black Resistance” started a vital and timely conversation in Memphis.

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