



Student editor says university 'doesn't care' about recent newspaper theft

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MARYLAND — A student editor at Johns Hopkins University said around 900 copies of his independent, conservative publication went missing shortly after they were distributed May 13.

Jered Ede, editor of *The Carrollton Record*, said he suspects the paper was stolen in response to the cover story in the issue titled, **"Depthroating Hopkins, How Your Tuition Hike Pays the Gay Porn Industry."** The article reports on the showing of the 1972 adult film "Deep Throat" and a campus visit by gay pornography director Chi Chi LaRue, which were paid for with student fees.

Matthew Viator, co-director of the Diverse Sexuality and Gender Alliance, which sponsored Chi Chi La Rue's visit, said there are a number of inaccuracies in the story, which Ede wrote. He said La Rue spoke on how the taboo was removed from safe-sex practices and the talk was not a "porn" event as the newspaper described it.

But Viator's organization has a problem specifically with the **cover** of *The Carrollton Record* issue, which he said contained pictures of DSAGA members taken from a group listing on the social networking site Facebook without the members' permission.

"By associating our faces with using student tuition money to pay for porn, they are defaming our character," Viator said.

But Viator said he did not confiscate any of the stolen newspapers and he is not aware of anyone in DSAGA who did either.

When Ede tried to report the theft to campus security, he said the office would not allow him to file a report and referred him to Dean of Students Susan Boswell.

Ede said Boswell told him the newspaper was removed from residence halls because it was banned from distribution there.

A secretary in Boswell's office said Boswell was not speaking publicly on the incident and referred calls to Dennis O'Shea, a university spokesman.

O'Shea said a school policy states that only the university's student newspaper, *The Johns Hopkins News-Letter*, can be distributed in residence halls.

"*The Carrollton Record* is welcomed to distribute this issue at the usual places on campus where periodicals are distributed," O'Shea said. "Those places do not include residence halls. We don't want them cluttered with the many student publications."

O'Shea said copies of the conservative paper that were distributed in the residence halls had been collected by administrators. But he said they were not disposed of, and they could be picked up for redistribution outside the residence halls.

Shelly Fickau, director of residence life, did not return a call seeking comment.

Ede said his publication has been distributing on campus for five years, and "we've always distributed in the residence halls." He said other publications have distributed there as well.

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O'Shea said Fickau "has no memory of [*The Carrollton Record*] being in the residence hall," and that the policy against distribution by publications other than the student newspaper is only enforced "when it comes to the attention of residence life." He said it is possible that a student complained about the publication being in the residence halls.

Student press advocates said the policy O'Shea is describing amounts to viewpoint based censorship.

"They are basically deputizing complaining students to decide what's going to be censored, if that's how they are working," said Robert Shibley, vice president of the **Foundation for Individual Rights in Education**. "Going to viewpoint based censorship in response to complaints is something that is contrary to the very notion of the freedom of the press.

"In general, Johns Hopkins is a private university, not bound by the First Amendment. But as one of our nations leading universities, [and one] that is committed to freedom of speech and academic freedom, we would expect Johns Hopkins to treat all viewpoints equally."

O'Shea said Johns Hopkins is committed to open discourse and administrators were simply enforcing university policy in this instance.

Ede said he contacted FIRE after his publication was stolen and the security office would not allow him to file a theft complaint. Shibley said the nonprofit organization is currently looking into the situation.

Aside from the estimated 300 copies distributed in the residence halls, which Ede said administrators have returned to him, Ede said he has reason to believe close to 1,000 newspapers at distribution points around campus were stolen as well. But because the security department would not investigate the theft, "we have no evidence whatsoever," he said.

O'Shea said he was not aware that campus security did not allow Ede to file a report, but that "if there was evidence of theft, security would be the place to report it."

Ede said he filed a complaint with the university's Office of Equal Opportunity, arguing the university did not take the theft seriously. He said a complaint had been filed with the office against the newspaper in response to the stolen issue.

Viator said his group has asked administrators to remove the newspaper from campus because it violates student code of conduct policies against harassment and intimidation.

"They are straddling the fence," Viator said of the university's position. "They say we aren't going to pull the publications, but you are welcomed to file charges of harassment.

"By crying for the First Amendment to protect anything and everything, it is my opinion that you in fact, actually abuse the liberty."

O'Shea said someone did make a discrimination complaint against the conservative newspaper with the office, and that "we are obligated to follow up on complaints. I wouldn't say any more about it at this point." In response to Ede's allegation that the university discriminates against conservative viewpoints, O'Shea said, "there have been conservative viewpoints on campus regularly, and they are welcomed along with any other viewpoints."

Ede said he estimates the theft has cost the newspaper \$1,000. The newspaper was denied funding by the student activity council and is independent from the university, he said.

Although Ede said it is difficult publishing a conservative newspaper on campus, he did not expect to be in the situation he is in.

"I'm disappointed, angry, frustrated. Every time *The Carrollton Record* or a conservative group on campus brings up something of controversy, we are chastised,

accused of harassment, discrimination, anything to get us to stop," he said. "The hardest thing to deal with at this point is that the university just doesn't care. It's kind of a blow to the stomach."

—by *Evan Mayor*, SPLC staff writer

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