

Entry 3 Jones Deposition

DEPOSITION SUMMARY OF RUFUS T. JONES

I am a 36-year-old African American man currently employed as a faculty member at Brahmin Preparatory School. I have my master's degree in history from the University of Oregon. I have received excellent reviews by both the community college I worked at before, as well as in my current position at Brahmin Prep.

On September 28, 20XX-2, I learned that Walther von Stroheim had been invited to speak in the yearly public issues forum at Brahmin Preparatory School. As an educator in the area of racial justice, I was well familiar with the writings of von Stroheim. He considered them highly offensive to many people, including persons of color within the Brahmin Preparatory community. I decided to raise my objections to the invitation at the monthly faculty meeting on September 30th, 20XX-2.

When recognized to speak by Head Master Winslow, I rose and expressed in forceful terms that the invitation of von Stroheim to the school as an endowed speaker went far beyond academic freedom, putting the question to the assembled group: "Why is our school bringing a racist ideologue to campus? Who is responsible for this outrage?" I readily admit that I raised my voice and was angry. But,

Though I suspected that both Francis Winslow and Lynn Polonious were involved in this decision, neither acknowledged their role after I raised the question. When silence followed his questions, I responded, "Whoever was responsible for this atrocity is lacking the courage of their own convictions. They are ignorant."

Following my challenge, another teacher, Pat Meeks, rose up and physically moved forward toward me, shouting angrily at me. Other faculty members were frightened by the behavior of Meeks, thinking that he was going to physically attack me.

After the meeting Vice-Head Master called me into her office a couple days later and at this private meeting, Polonious ordered me to make an apology to all faculty, telling me it was "the gentlemanly thing to do." I refused and told her that this was a deeply held matter of conscience for which no apology was necessary. I reiterated that von Stroheim's views were particularly offensive to faculty of color.

Eventually the invitation to von Stroheim was rescinded.

On October 21, 20XX-2, I was called into the Vice-Head Master's office and told that I was on formal probation. I told her, "I am just being made a scapegoat for calling attention to the racism that exists at this school." But I neither raised my voice at any time during this meeting nor did I challenge the authority of the Vice-Head to take this disciplinary action.

The following day, I defended himself in an e-mail sent to both the Head and the Vice-Head and indicated a willingness to remain open to further dialog on the issue

I took the stated goals of Brahmin Prep as a truthful indication of the culture of this school. However, both the invitation of Walther von Stroheim and the discipline of me by the administration for objecting to this have shaken my faith in the school.

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I have been selectively targeted as a troublemaker here because of my race. Other teachers, such as Robin Peterson, feel exactly as I do. However, the difference between Robin Peterson and me is that she is White and I am Black. That is why I have been disciplined and she was not.