

News

- [Sports](#)
- [Obituaries](#)
- [Business](#)
- [E-Technology](#)
- [Southern Style](#)
- [Food](#)
- [Home & Garden](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Columnists](#)
- [Weather](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
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- [USA Weekend](#)

[The Madison County Herald](#)

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- [Careers](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Real Estate](#)
- [Apartments](#)
- [NewHomeNetwork](#)

[Online Postcards](#)

[Home](#) | [Mississippi News](#) | [Story](#)

November 13, 2001

Photo leads to frat suspension

The Associated Press

The University of Mississippi suspended a fraternity for at least one year Monday that had two members appear in a photograph posted on the Internet that depicted a man dressed as a police officer holding a gun to a man in blackface.

Alpha Tau Omega expelled the two members shown in the picture and one other last week. The students have not been identified by the school.

The group is prohibited from meeting or conducting social activities until November 2002 and members living in the campus fraternity house must vacate the residence by the end of the 2001 semester.

All fraternity officers have resigned their positions effective immediately, and an alumni board will assume control of chapter operations.

"The actions of the two students were offensive to the university as well as the fraternity. This outrageous and totally unacceptable behavior has no place in our society and will not be tolerated," Ole Miss chancellor Robert Khayat said.

The school will provide sensitivity training for all fraternities and sororities.

Alpha Tau Omega released a statement taking total responsibility for the actions of the individuals involved and has agreed make a public apology in the student newspaper.

"Based on the progress of the chapter, ATO may be allowed to reopen its house next fall, but the suspension will not be lifted until November 2002 at the earliest," Vice chancellor for Student Life Thomas Wallace said.

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[Obituaries](#)

[Special Reports](#)

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Mississippi State Football
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High School
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