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## EDITORIAL: Punished for the crime of satire

### And on a college campus, no less

What do Colorado College administrators have in common with Islamic radicals? Besides having absolutely no sense of humor, they share the insane opinion that any satirization of their sensibilities constitutes an act of violence.

Recall the international furor created more than two years ago when a Danish newspaper published a dozen cartoons of the prophet Muhammad. An exercise in free speech spawned waves of deadly protests around the world and calls from leaders of Muslim theocracies to prosecute the editors and artists involved. When dumbfounded Europeans tried to explain that free expression is a core Western liberty that makes the observation of even the most intolerant faiths possible, the Islamic world defended its overreaction by claiming that speech which offends them amounts to violence.

Now the politically correct, ivory-tower academics of Colorado College have thrown in their lot with the Islamic fascists -- the faculty and students of the Colorado Springs campus are so sensitive and so unable to defend their dogmatic beliefs, that anyone who dares to make fun of them is engaging in a physical attack.

Student Chris Robinson was found by the college to have violated its "violence policy" for posting a flier that parodied another flier distributed by the school's Feminist and Gender Studies program. And not even a pillorying by the national press nor the intervention of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education has persuaded the college to rethink its absurd ruling.

Earlier this year, the college's feminists posted the latest installment of their newsletter, "The Monthly Rag," in restrooms around campus. The flier included an excerpt from "The Bitch Manifesto," an announcement about a lecture on "feminist porn," references to a "toothed vagina" and male castration and an explanation of "packing," where women pretend to be men by stuffing paper in their pants to create the appearance of a penis.

In an interview with the Colorado Springs Gazette, Mr. Robinson said the flier "begged to be satirized."

So he and a buddy wrote, printed and distributed a newsletter called "The Monthly Bag." The flier, written under the pseudonym "The Coalition of Some Dudes," had an excerpt from Teddy Roosevelt's "The Man in the Arena," republished an explanation of a sexual position from Men's Health magazine, had references to "tough guy wisdom" and "chainsaw etiquette," reprinted a quotation about female violence from the Web site batteredmen.com, and included trivia about the range of a .50-caliber sniper rifle.

Mr. Robinson told the Gazette he and his friend dedicated the newsletter to "guy stuff" to counter "radical feminist propaganda." He employed a principle that dates to this nation's founding: fighting free speech with more free speech.

Needless to say, college officials were not amused. President Richard F. Celeste sent out a campus-wide e-mail hours after "The Monthly Bag" surfaced, condemning its "threatening and demeaning content, which is categorically unacceptable in this community." Stacks of the fliers were seized by school officials on the grounds that the chainsaw and rifle references constituted a threat.

Mr. Robinson and his friend (who has remained anonymous) stepped forward as the authors. Despite the fact that college policy says "no viewpoint or message may be deemed so hateful that it may not be expressed," the young men were found guilty of "bias" and violating the school's policy against violence. "The juxtaposition of weaponry and sexuality" following shootings at other colleges made students subjectively feel threatened, college Dean of Students Mike Edmonds said. "In the climate in which we find ourselves today, violence -- or implied violence -- of any kind cannot be tolerated on a college campus," he said.

Implied violence? There's nothing sexually violent about castration?

Letters about the case will remain in the files of Mr. Robinson and his friend until they graduate, and they were told to -- get this -- lead a discussion on free expression on campus.


"As long as they are deemed guilty for engaging in satire, the school's extensive promises of free expression are brazen misrepresentations," said Foundation for Individual Rights in Education President Greg Lukianoff, who brought the case into the national spotlight.

Such nonsense is par for the course at colleges across the country, where no one is grown-up enough to tell the easily offended to manage their insecurities by engaging in open debate.

How can this country defend its liberties against cultures that advocate censorship and limits on free expression when our own institutions of higher learning actively restrict the lively exchange of ideas?

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