

AFFIDAVIT OF VERMONT MURDICH

I am the editor of the *Monroe Wretched*, the student newspaper at the school that I attend, Monroe High. I am a Senior and plan on going to college next year in order to become a journalist. I come from a family of journalists including my father, Connecticut Murdich, who owns a chain of newspapers in Northeast Pennsylvania dedicated to ferreting out the truth. I am inspired by newspapers like the National Enquirer, The Star and television shows like TMZ. They really get at the hard news that mainstream news agencies ignore.

I have written articles for the *Monroe Wretched* since I was a Freshman. I started out writing articles about various school clubs. My early articles were about the Debate Team, Chess Club, Computer Club, the usual bottom feeder activities engaged in by the losers at Monroe High. Eventually I was able to start writing about the sports teams my junior year, the so-called popular activities engaged in by the "golden ones" of the high school class. All of these activities are just so lame. I was able to write one article about tenure and teacher evaluation policy at Monroe High. It caused quite a stir since I discovered that many teachers received poor student evaluations and that these evaluations played a role in whether the teacher would get tenure. I had to cut some corners in order to get my information, but the 1st Amendment is more important than some school rules.

I won a close competition with Shay JONAS for editor of the paper for the 2008-2009 school year. JONAS was one of the "golden ones" who seem to glide through high school on a silver cloud. The only articles JONAS had ever written for the newspaper were "puff pieces" about whatever sports team was in season, or how school spirit was

somehow equatable with the rights of man! I was looking forward to choosing the topics and writing editorials about important issues so that my voice could be heard and the student lemmings would be exposed to the truth. I knew what my first editorial would be about: the fascist dress code adopted by the school board that went into effect this year. I worked hard on the editorial and feel it is my finest piece of work to date. It speaks for itself and I feel no need to go into it again in depth.

On September 26, 2008, my first edition hit the stands. I was proud of the editorial and the overall content of the paper. I noticed that many of the students were excited about the editorial; even the ones who wore Beat Tech pins seemed to be talking about it. In addition to the editorial, we also covered the upcoming homecoming game so the jocks would have something to read about, at least those that knew how to read.

I went to my 3rd period Honors English class. The discussion about *The Crucible* was pretty sophomoric. Most of the kids seemed to be more interested in witches and Wiccan Religion rather than McCarthyism and the Anti-Commie Campaign of the 50's. Anyway, all of a sudden FALEM starts freaking out, yelling and screaming at McFLY, a quiet kid in class. FALEM kept screaming "Take the damned button off!" I turned around to look at McFLY and noticed a tasteful Obama button on McFLY's shirt. This was in contrast to some of the members of the Cheer Squad who had multiple BEAT TECH buttons all over their outfits. McFLY was very respectful but kept saying "NO. It is my 1st Amendment right." This got me excited and I began taking notes for my next editorial. Pretty soon other students started to discuss the buttons and the dress code policy recently adopted by the school board.

This was really right up my alley. No wading through letters to the Editor, I could get immediate feedback on my editorial. A lot of the students actually quoted my editorial. Other students parroted the school administration policy. All the while this discussion was going on, FALEM kept screaming "Take off the damned button!" McFLY kept answering in a normal voice "No, I have my rights." The next thing I know, the campus security came into the room and took McFLY out. Some of the students began to chant "GITMO, GITMO!" I was never so proud of my work.

The whole situation, in hindsight, seems very strange to me. McFLY is a very inoffensive student. McFLY is on the debate team, a collection of nerds and pseudo-intellectuals who think they know more than anyone else. The actions in the classroom that day were not the result of McFLY wearing a political button, but the inability of FALEM to keep an orderly class. There was no riot. The only person who was disorderly was FALEM. I really see this as an attempt by FALEM to find a scapegoat for FALEM's poor teaching.