



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on July 11, 2012

Police: Lesbian Staged Campus Hate Crime

Another day, another fake hate crime. This time, [police allege](#), the faker is a lesbian at [Central Connecticut State University](#).

The [Hartford Courant](#) and [other media have reported](#) that Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) has expelled Alexandra Pennell, and now the unhappy college girl faces eight felonies and 17 misdemeanors. Although Pennell pleaded not guilty, police caught her on tape and she confessed to her roommate, the [newspaper reported](#). Staging hate crimes is now a common occurrence. In May, for instance, police in Colorado [arrested a pair of lesbians](#) for staging a phony hate crime at their home.



The latest hoax began March 7-8, the [Courant reported](#), when five notes were written on or slipped under the door of sophomore Pennell's dorm room. "Mark McLaughlin, spokesman for CCSU, said all the notes contained homophobic messages and slurs and two told the students to 'die'," the *Courant* reported. The university, the spokesman said, "takes these things very seriously," the newspaper reported.

A week later, 300 students [rallied against hate](#). "Lexi [Alexandra] Pennell, a sophomore from Trumbull, was one of the targets of the notes and was one of the first to speak at the rally," the [newspaper reported](#).

"Central is my home just like it is everyone of yours, and I'm proud to call it my home," she said to applause. "I stand here today speaking to the person responsible for this, and all I have to say is that I'm not going to be run out of my home and I will not be intimidated by hate."

Not surprisingly, her roommate, also unnerved by the notes, added her voice to those who say "NOH8," as the bumper strip/Twitter patois [puts it](#). "Her roommate, Siobhan Dooley, a junior, said the notes have made her feel unsafe, particularly in large crowds," the [newspaper reported](#).

"I don't like that when I walk into the dining hall that I feel like I'm not safe," she said. "I don't like that when I sit down, I think my attacker is somewhere near me, waiting for me to leave so that they can follow me back to my home to terrorize us. It's not a comfortable feeling and it's not right."

The rally, she said, showed that there's support on campus for victims of such crimes.

The college president said he was dead serious about getting to the bottom of the terrible deed. He would not, he said, allow it on his campus. At CCSU, tolerance is paramount. "We must identify the people who are engaged in this behavior on campus," [he told](#) the *Courant*. "This is not some slap-on-the-wrist crime. This is something that's going to be on your record for the rest of your life."

But the police didn't buy Pennell's tale of torment, and indeed, the *Courant* reported, began to question her account of the notes the day she was speaking about hate at the campus rally.



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[According to](#) the *Courant*, “Twice the video surveillance system placed in Pennell’s room to help police identify the person responsible for scrawling the notes had been disabled, in one case just before a note was slid under Pennell’s dorm room door.” A second hidden camera, unknown to Pennell, revealed the hoax.

“When first confronted by police about the notes, they say Pennell became defensive and insisted she did not place them on her door or slide them under her door,” the *Courant* reported. But then the police told about her about the second camera. “She said she had only left one or two of the notes, but she insisted the rest were real. When told the second camera had been recording for a long time, Pennell confessed to planting all the notes, according to the warrant for her arrest,” the [newspaper reported](#).

Pennell admitted to police that she faked the hate notes to get Dooley’s attention, hoping Dooley, the newspaper reported, “would spend more time with her.”

But police had more than video surveillance and the confession to prove their case. They had a written confession. It was a note to Dooley, who gave that incriminating evidence to police.

Pennell wrote that her girlfriend might leave her. “She continued writing and leaving the notes, she wrote in the letter to Dooley, because of the attention it brought her, especially from Dooley and another friend, the [Courant reported](#).

Pennell also wrote in the letter to Dooley that she understood the severity of what she had done, took responsibility for it, turned herself into police and signed a confession. Police noted in the warrant for Pennell’s arrest that Pennell denied involvement with the notes until confronted with the video evidence.

Demonstrating Pennell’s desperation is the story behind the second video camera. Pennell, police say, disabled the first camera and then left another note that she reported to the police. That was the day of the rally. When one of the detectives investigating the case asked her about the disabled camera, she answered that “she may have accidentally caused the cable to come out when she opened her desk drawer,” the [Courant reported](#). The detective proved that such an event was unlikely, so he and a partner set up another camera. Pennell didn’t know about it.

“On April 5 at 3:35 p.m., [the detectives] went to Pennell’s room to remove the recording device left there, telling Pennell they were sending it out to be repaired,” the [newspaper reported](#).

Less than an hour later, CCSU police received another complaint from Pennell about another note. Two officers took Pennell’s complaint while [one detective] retrieved the second recording device.

That video shows Pennell walking off with a friend, then returning a moment later, speaking with two friends before going into her room. Two minutes later, she came out, looked around and then slid a note under her door.

A short time later, she is seen returning to her dorm room, walking in with a friend, then walking out three minutes later with the note. She headed to the resident assistant’s office to report the incident.

Police confronted Pennell on April 13, and arrested her on May 2. Now Pennell is charged with eight felonies for manufacturing evidence and 17 misdemeanors: eight for lying to police, eight for filing false reports, and one for making a false statement. She will appear in court on July 26 to defend herself, the [Courant reported](#).



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Hate-crime hoaxes are [nothing new](#), and this one is at least the second involving lesbians in the last few months. In May, [police charged](#) two lesbians in Colorado with two counts of criminal mischief and two counts of false reporting for staging a fake hate crime at their home.

The women spray painted “Kill the Gay” on their garage door and, adding an extra touch, hung a noose from the handle of their front door, as [ABC news reported](#).

The women expected police to believe that neighbors and their homeowners’ association threatened them with the anti-homosexual slurs because they did not clean up after walking their dogs.

Photo of Central Connecticut State University



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