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News

Former CU Student Arrested For E-Mails Sent to Professors

By Molly Melican
Spectator Staff Writer
February 05, 2004

A former Columbia student was arrested in early January for harassing two Columbia faculty members via e-mail.

The student, Ashish Sirohi, attended both the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science and Columbia College from September 1985 until October 1988.

Sirohi sent the e-mails on Jan. 2 to a variety of people at the University, including President Bollinger, members of the Barnard central administration, some biological sciences faculty, and a few of the faculty active in the Columbia 250 organization.

The e-mails contained allegations and threats from Sirohi against Barnard College Dean of Studies Karen Blank and former Columbia College Dean of Student Affairs, now Columbia University faculty member Robert Pollack.

Sirohi was arrested on Jan. 13 in his downtown apartment by Detective John Garvey of the New York Police Department's 26th precinct.

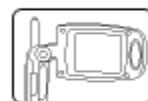
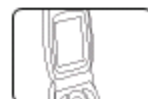
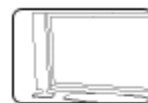
After less than a day in jail, Sirohi was released with a criminal court appointment for Feb. 25, 2004.

The e-mails contained a variety of allegations against both the faculty members. In the e-mail regarding Blank, Sirohi stated that "Dean of Studies Karen Blank will be involuntarily departing Barnard in 2004, never to return."

The e-mail pertaining to Pollack said that Pollack was "secretly fired" from his position as dean of Columbia College. It also accused Pollack of "oppressing and harassing foreigners," and exploiting those who are vulnerable.

The e-mail went on to state that Pollack received the Alexander Hamilton Medal because he administratively "decided that telling the alumni the truth [about Pollack] would hurt fundraising."

Blank declined to comment for the article, and Pollack could not be reached. Columbia University's Office of Public Affairs could not answer questions regarding this case due to a





standing policy not to comment on ongoing police investigations. The NYPD also declined to comment.

According to his personal Web site, during his arrest, Sirohi spoke to a neighbor and accused Detective Garvey of being "on a mission for Columbia University."

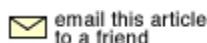
Pollack and Blank now hold restraining orders against Sirohi, which prohibit all direct contact, and have handwritten stipulations stating "No third party contact, no contact at all." Professor Ron Prywes and Barnard College General Counsel Michael Feerman, both of whom received the e-mails, also obtained criminal protective orders.

According to his Web site, Sirohi believes he was arrested because he threatened to put the content of conversations and meetings with Columbia administrators that he has taped over the years on the Internet.

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Arrested for sending an Email

Columbia University uses NYPD to silence criticism

by OfficialSpin NewsDesk

New York, N.Y. -- (OfficialSpin) -- 27/01/04 -- Former Columbia University student **Ashish Sirohi** isn't happy with the way faculty handled his complaint regarding what he says amounts to some lost records and a number of other issues involving former Columbia College—now Columbia University Professor Dean **Robert Pollack** and former Columbia College Associate Dean of Student Affairs—now Barnard College Dean of Studies at Columbia University **Karen Blank**. Sirohi further alleges bias and prejudice on behalf of Pollack and others within the Columbia University system.



Sirohi, a mathematician, simply wanted to voice his opinion following what he believed was unacceptable behavior by Columbia officials and so on January 2, 2004 while most of us were nursing our hangovers, he fired off two Emails, copied to a total of just 13 people. OfficialSpin has read the Emails, both of which can only be described as tame—not even close to a proper flame.



On January 13, 2004, at around 5:30 pm, New York Police Department (NYPD) Detective **John Garvey**—working out of the 26th Precinct—arrested Sirohi at his apartment, making sure that he had disarmed him of all calculators, slide rules, and an abacas it is alleged he had strapped to his thigh.

During the arrest, one of Sirohi's neighbors spoke to the prisoner as cops were placing





him in the squad car. Sirohi told his neighbor that Garvey was not working for New York City but was on a mission for Columbia University and that the detective was dangerous. In the drive uptown Garvey's partner said: "Mayor Bloomberg also works for Columbia." It is often said that many a truth is said in jest.

After almost 20 hours, and after having been moved to three different jails, Sirohi was released and ordered to reappear in the Criminal Court on February 25, 2004.

In fact, the Emails were about the two people mentioned but were sent to others and were not sent to either Pollack or Blank.

After his release, a Court immediately ordered protection orders for Pollack, Blank, **Ronald Prywes** and **Michael Feiekman**. As a condition of his release, Sirohi may not contact these four terrified people in any way, and the order even prohibits all third party contact—which may be difficult given such a broad statement basically rules out speaking to anyone else on the planet.

One positive note I guess, is that the police didn't shoot him, which seems to be a traditional knee-jerk reaction for the NYPD.

It would appear from documents inspected by OfficialSpin (see below), that the complaint to police was false. It alleges the informant "felt threatened, alarmed and scare." **Pleeease...** Grow up. Why didn't you simply exercise your right to hit the "delete" key?

Related Documents (PDF)

[Charge Sheet](#) [Pollack Email](#) [Blank Email](#) [Pollack Order](#) [Blank Order](#) [Prywes Order](#) [Feiekman Order](#)

If you need to obtain Adobe Acrobat (Reader), you may download it by clicking on the link below.



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