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Subject: Press Release—Personal experiences in the Gallaudet protest by Brian Riley  
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For Immediate Release

It's 3:20 a.m. on the Saturday of the big march to the Capitol, and I'm stuck in a 24-hour Kinko's on K Street. I thought about taking a cab to Gallaudet and getting a few hours' sleep on the property line at the front gate of Gallaudet, but it's just too cold.

I slept several feet over the property line last night at Gallaudet, in violation of the persona non-grata [paper that was given](#) to me only a few hours after my [letter to the editor](#) appeared in the DC Examiner earlier in the day. I found a semi-comfortable lawn chair and hid myself in a blanket. I figured campus police wouldn't dare touch me, if I slept next to the hunger strikers.

It rained hard at times last night and the thin blanket I scrounged up didn't really do the job. I couldn't stop shivering in the wee hours of the morning, then when I did manage to doze off, I was awakened by a hook-and-ladder fire truck and ambulance plowing through the front gate, even though we were supposed to be blocking it.

For the last couple months I have had to live under a constant sense of unease and sometimes fear. I exposed the secret [Board of Trustees meeting at the Dulles Hyatt](#) and Jordan tried to make up a reason to arrest me. Little did I know that Patricia Kunkle called the Fairfax police, lying through her teeth, causing the brass there to "freak out," as it was put to me later.

Whatever lies she told the Fairfax police, she caused them to assign undercover cops at the Dulles Hyatt and make it a major operation. How innocent of me to just waltz right into the hotel, right into the lion's den, and simply ask for a key to the room I reserved! Twenty minutes after checking in, Jordan sent a whole squad of cops up to knock on my door. I answered, let them in, and began to feel as if I lived in Nazi Germany.

There were a couple of cops dressed as waiters. I found out they were Gallaudet campus police officers. They had a scary look in their eyes, the kind of disturbing look you would expect to see on the face of a brainwashed victim of a religious cult, and I'm not exaggerating.

I grew up around police officers, since my mom was a secretary to a chief of police, so I felt a little bit of a sense of control, in spite of the oppressive nature of the situation. One police officer approached me and questioned me abrasively. The only thing I could think to do was tell him I would be happy to talk to him if we could speak alone. He asked the others to leave and they went and stood out in the hall.

We sat on adjoining couches and for the next three hours I gave him a lesson about the protest. The turning point came fairly early on, when I mentioned to him that Jordan makes about \$650,000 per year, including benefits. His eyes lit up in an expression of understanding. I knew I had converted him to our side right at that moment. That amount of money is simply way out of line for Jordan's position as president of a small university. It's three or even four times the amount what most governors make.

So I used my laptop to show him the [video of Ryan getting pounced on](#) within four seconds of raising his hands at the assembly on May 1. Why was there a cop standing by with orders to apprehend people? That was the obvious question. Jordan even admitted in print that he thought there might be a protest when Fernandes' name was announced as the choice. To me that shows consciousness of guilt on Jordan's part—the presidential selection process was rigged.

The officer who was questioning me was told that there existed a high threat level at the conference and he wanted to see if I was a threat. He could see that I am a mild-mannered person and am quite rational. I explained to him how I was waging a propaganda war against the Jordan administration and I was following the "Bobby Fischer Strategy." Gradually he felt more and more comfortable with me, realizing that I posed no threat, and he started to talk to me like a friend, even saying we should get together for a beer after the protest is over.

He left the room and went to explain to his boss about my [Bobby Fischer Strategy](#)—how Bobby Fischer used emotional tactics and tricks to psych out his opponent, Boris Spassky, in 1972 to win the International Chess Championship. I was doing the same thing to Jordan, getting under his skin, attacking his morale. I was told that Patricia Kunkle was livid when she found out that there were no grounds to arrest me.

The officer told me, "You have done more to make these people upset than if 500 protesters had showed up outside." I felt a tremendous sense of relief. My tactics were working. I was on the right track. Wow. I couldn't help but smile and keep smiling.

I had been working so hard, usually between 12 and 20 hours a day, just working on the protest. It seemed like I forgot what a normal night's sleep was like. Now I knew that we could win the protest, we just had to try harder and hope things worked out.

What drives me is the vision of the faces of thousands of deaf kids in the future. I simply couldn't betray them and just give up and quit protesting. I am a teacher and I knew that this is one of the most important things I could do in my life as a teacher—fight for justice at Gallaudet.

[Jordan had sent spies into the main protest group](#) last May and had rendered it temporarily ineffective. So the burden fell to me during the summer to run with the ball, and try to keep things stirred up and keep people interested in the protest. Something tells me we succeeded.

So many people didn't understand what I was doing, and I ruffled a lot of feathers. Finally now, people are understanding and I'm hearing things like, "Brian was right all along!"

So here we are, five hours before the march to the Capitol. It seems that Board does not even have plans yet to have a meeting, and Fernandes is scheduled to appear on [online radio show](#) on Monday to explain why she's not resigning.

"She's friggin' nuts," is what one friend told me when she found out about the scheduled appearance. Yes, she has to be, really. How else can you explain her behavior? Any rational person in her person situation would have resigned a while ago. You can't lead if you don't have followers. This is America, not fascist Italy or Nazi Germany.

How in the hell are you going to drag thousands of people along with your "leadership" ideas if they absolutely (and [for just reasons](#)) despise you? It ain't gonna happen. She's nuts to think that it will. That reason alone is enough reason to fire her.

Let's try to follow their reasoning. They say that she has good organizational skills and would be good for the university. Hey, wait a minute. Hitler supposedly had organizational skills, I wonder, if Hitler were still alive, whether he would make a good director of the US Holocaust Museum?

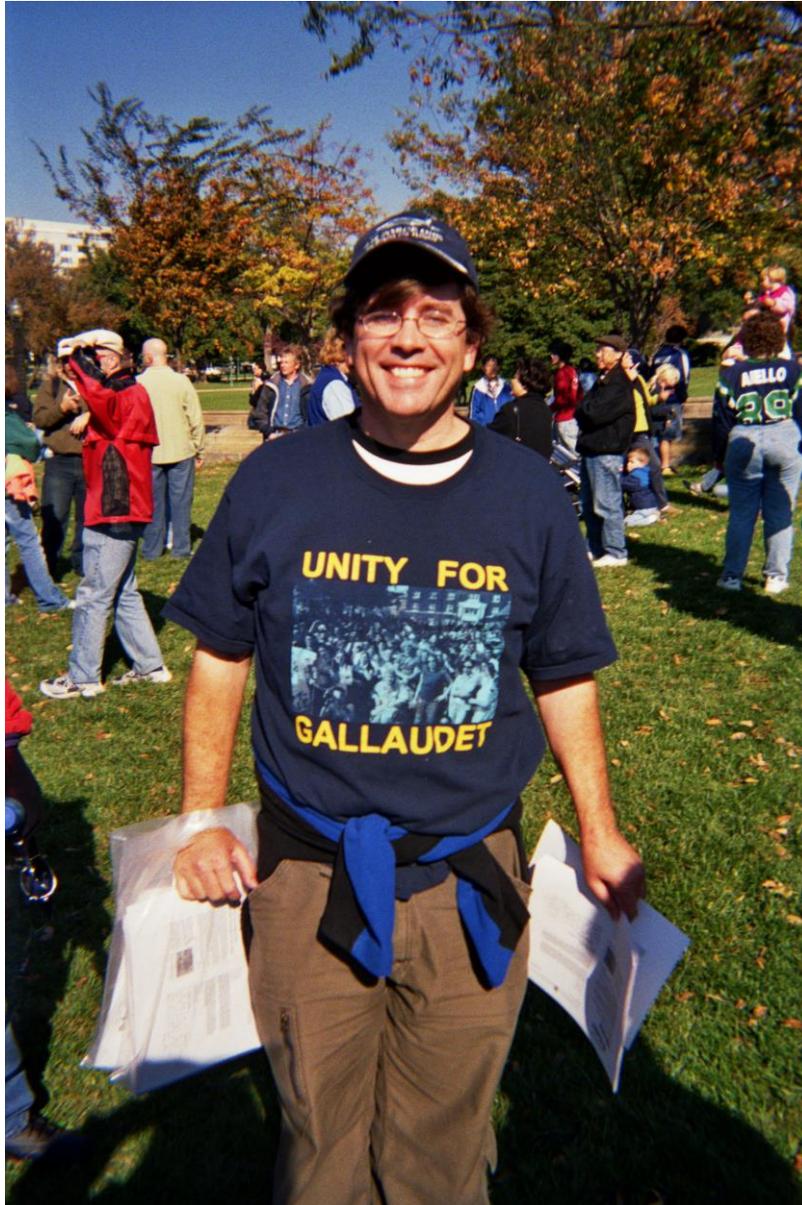
I hope I didn't offend any Jews by using this example, but it is too powerful of an illustration not to use. How in hell is Fernandes supposed to run Gallaudet if people, for good reasons, see her as being the worst possible candidate for the job? No amount of "dialog" is ever going to change that.

And we protesters are not deluding ourselves. You just can't sweep under the carpet all the [horror stories](#) about Fernandes that [have been surfacing](#). Fernandes has zero people skills. In terms of her statements to the press and her public relations moves, she is just following the advice of paid handlers. She's a cardboard cut-out being propped up from behind.

She ain't got it. She never will have it. She has already been on the Gallaudet campus and has been showing us all for the last 11 years that she will never get it and she will never improve. Enough is enough. It's time to bring this educational nightmare to a close, and the only way for that to happen is for her to resign or be terminated.

Period.

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*Handing out [flyers](#) at the rally at the Capitol*

It's now 6:09 a.m. Sunday morning, the day after the massively successful march to the Capitol. My body contains such a jumble of emotions that it's hard to sort them out.

The march was a spectacular success beyond our wildest dreams. As we marched down 8th Street from the Gallaudet campus yesterday, following the street as it gently sloped downward then upward, you could look backwards and see a sea of humanity stretching for blocks. People of so many different backgrounds were marching with us and we were all united for such a tremendously positive goal.

What could be more reasonable than insisting that justice prevail at Gallaudet? Our message is finally getting out to the people who need to hear it, in spite of the tremendously evil and viciously false propaganda campaign being waged by the forces of the status quo. How dare Fernandes attempt to rip the Deaf world into factions by her blatantly false rhetoric, attempting to manipulate public opinion by using all the right words, except that her words do not match her actions.

What we are witnessing here is the ugly, ugly behavior of a tiny group of people, I. King Jordan, Jane Fernandes, Patricia Kunkle, Paul Kelly, and a couple others, who have seized a public organization, Gallaudet University, for their own purposes. It's a shameful and disgusting to see.

All you have to do is look at Gallaudet tax return. A recent one is posted here:

[http://www.gallyprotest.org/Gallaudet\\_2004\\_Form\\_990.pdf](http://www.gallyprotest.org/Gallaudet_2004_Form_990.pdf)

On the very first page, look on Line J: "Organization type (check only one) X 501 (c) (3)"

No matter what Jordan tries to claim about Gallaudet allegedly being "private," Gallaudet truly is a 501 (c) (3) organization, and that means that it has a public purpose.

Therefore, the protesters are very, very correct to say that their voices should not be ignored. Jordan says that the Board of Trustees did already listen, but simply disagrees. Yes, we know that Jordan, but we cannot allow the Board to continue with the status quo.

The Board is not the final authority. The final authority is the American people who send their representatives to Congress to write laws that allow 501 (c) (3) nonprofit corporations to be created. The whole purpose of a 501 (c) (3) is to serve the public, not serve a tiny number of people who manage to hijack the operations of one.

As for my participation, there are still a few people, not many, who do not appreciate my involvement. These are the people who supported Jordan in May and they were attempting to protect their friend Jordan, but at the same time have a protest against Fernandes. It's easy to understand why that would not work, because Jordan was acting like the Wizard of Oz, moving all sorts of levers and pulling every possible trick he could invent to thwart the protesters.

I understood Jordan's moral turpitude very early. I was lucky enough to have been ejected from the campus on May 10. It didn't take me very long to figure out what had happened to me and who the person was who gave the order to eject me. I was kicked off campus precisely because I was part of an FSSA committee that drafted a letter to Congress. We were moments away from making the announcement of plans for a trip to Capitol Hill when we were intercepted by Jordan's agents. I was kicked out immediately after that.

These people who were trying to help their friend Jordan, but at the same time protest against Fernandes, were killing the protest, even if they did not intend to. I had to fight an incredible battle of psychological warfare and every other legal and moral tactic that I could think of to go around these people, to embarrass them, or do anything possible to get them out of the way so that we could attack Jordan.

We would never have made the breakthrough yesterday necessary to eventually win the protest if we did not attack Jordan with absolute full force. I was the first person to do this, simply because I was the first person to become aware that Jordan was the biggest enemy who was controlling everything (using the university's \$148 million dollar budget to pull every possible string he could pull). His influence was pervasive and he almost beat us.

But we got him (or we will get him) in the end. There were times when I actually felt that [my life was in danger](#). I will tell the full story later. There were other times when I was called the absolute worst possible names that could be imagined and I risked having my life ruined by people libeling and slandering me. Yet I forged ahead and attacked Jordan in every possible way that he deserved. I did it because I cannot get the image out of my head of the thousands of deaf kids in the future whose lives would be ruined if Jordan and Fernandes beat us. We can't let them down.

Most everybody understands and likes and appreciates me now, except for some lingering remnants of people who do not understand everything that has happened. I don't mind. It's good to have someone to act as a lightning rod to attract criticism. When people criticize me, that means some of the other protesters are able to escape some of the negativity. The negativity gets directed at me and therefore deaf people and the other protesters remain blameless. That seems like a pretty good strategy to me.

Brian Riley

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For questions about this press release, contact Brian Riley, preferably by e-mail at [brian@gallyprotest.org](mailto:brian@gallyprotest.org) or by phone message at (559) 431-6284 (takes time to respond to phone calls).

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