

Fall 2018

## Utah State University Residence Life Behind Closed Doors Pet Policy Actor

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### Recommended Citation

Rhoades, Mo, "Utah State University Residence Life Behind Closed Doors Pet Policy Actor" (2018). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 553.  
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Hannah McDonald  
Logan, Utah  
November 2018

Behind Closed Doors  
Occupational Rite of Passage

**Informant:**

Hannah McDonald is a 21 year-old journalism student at Utah State University. She grew up in Las Vegas, and she came to USU because she wanted to be farther away from home. She got a job as a Resident Assistant during her sophomore year of college because her parents offered to pay for her freshman year housing, but she needed to pay for it on her own the rest of the time. She was assigned to work in the Student Living Center, and she worked in San Juan Hall for two years and Snow Hall for one. She considers the resident assistants on campus to be her main friend group.

**Context:**

This story was given to me while Hannah and I sat in the Lundstrom student center in the back couches. We were sitting so that she was facing forward off the couches, and I was facing Hannah. Hannah is a third year RA and went through her stories by year. We were with a couple other resident assistants, and I had asked about what everybody still remembered about participating in Behind Closed Doors (BCDs) from the beginning of the semester. I had also prefaced that I wanted to record the stories on my phone for this project. We have all participated in the event and were just telling casual stories with various highlights and points that really stuck out to us. This was the second story Hannah shared, though it didn't directly follow her previous story.

**Text:**

So it was my second year as an RA and I was [grumbled word]. So my first year going through BCDs had been a bit stressful. And so my first year as an actor for BCDs, I wanted to be a little nicer to the people who are going in. And I was assigned to it. Was assigned to work with two other Ras. We were just hanging out in a room with the hamster that we'd accidentally gotten in our housing area that nobody would take care of. So we were hanging out with Charles Xavier he hamster, just telling people what to do about policy. It's pretty chill. We just sat on couches and talked the entire time until Charles Xavier escaped. Then we had to chase him around the apartment. That happened about three times. He was terrible. Awful. Anyway, I think that's that.

**Texture:**

Hannah talks very smoothly with lots of pauses and turns. She talks all the way through until she is almost running out of air. When talking about Charles Xavier, her voice was full of disgust, and she stared off into space a lot. She took her time with describing how much she hated that hamster. Hannah was comfortable sharing this story, and she talks with confidence about her experience and knowledge of the event. Normally, stories about BCDs are shared between returners when the area staff first meets up for fall training. Some areas go to great lengths so that newly hired resident assistants and people in the class to be hired to be RA's don't hear about BCDs until they go through them. Stories are also shared when BCDs are over for the day and the returners and new RAs meet back up for staff bonding or dinner. They compare stories and experiences and brag about returners' acting abilities.

Hannah has talked about the pet policy story a lot also in conjunction with stories about Charles Xavier, the Student Living Center staff hamster. I've heard her tell this story with a lot of bitterness that was only present when she specifically complained about the hamster. Hannah shares her stories all the time, but she sometimes needs goading or encouragement even though you can tell that she wants to share.

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Introduction to Folklore/English 2210  
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Fall 2018