

Fall 2018

## Utah State University Residence Life Behind Closed Doors New RA 2016

Mo Rhoades  
mor.rhoades@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student\\_folklore\\_all](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all)

---

### Recommended Citation

Rhoades, Mo, "Utah State University Residence Life Behind Closed Doors New RA 2016" (2018). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 487.  
[https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student\\_folklore\\_all/487](https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/487)

This G7: Occupation/Avocation is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Folklore Fieldwork at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in USU Student Folklore Fieldwork by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



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. We were with a couple other resident assistants, and I asked about what everybody still remembered about participating in Behind Closed Doors (BCDs) from the beginning of the semester. We have all participated in the event and were just telling casual stories with various highlights and points that really stuck out to us.

BCDs are a mock walk through of a building in the Living Learning Community. New RAs go through the building where the returning RAs are acting out incidences that might be encountered. Some returners are very mean and make their incident very hard. However, at it is very much a learning experience and whatever you put the new RA through, you have to be able to coach them through on what they can do to improve or work through. It's a chance to practice calling and reporting big incidences to USU police and the prostaff.

**Text:**

I don't remember too much of it. I remember that most people are assigned to go with a partner or a trio. And for some reason I was assigned to go alone. I don't know why, especially since I had just been hired over the summer, so I had less training and I came in late because I had been working in Maine that summer. So I came in about four days late, so I had less training than anybody else there and I was going through alone; it was very stressful. Well, I mean, it was stressful, preparing for it. It wasn't as stressful in the moment as I expected it to be. I think people are a little easier on me because I was doing it completely alone, and I had no idea what I was doing. So that was reassuring. I guess I remember the only situation I remember dealing

with was Sara Crandall. And she was acting as though she was being stalked, which was a stressful one. I remember nothing else. I remember working on a bulletin board while I was preparing for it ...

So, BCD stands for “Behind Closed Doors,” and it’s an opportunity for new resident assistants or people who didn’t go through fall training the previous year to practice dealing with incidences they might see there, when they’re an RA going on rounds or something or just walking through the buildings or when they get a call. So it’s just they try, generally the actors and BCDs try to make it as hard as they possibly can, partially because it’s more fun for them and also partially so you can feel a little bit better that you’ve dealt with a more difficult situation, even in a fake way. That’s cool.

**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. She was comfortable sharing this story, and she talks with confidence about her experience and knowledge of the event. She told this story in a “I didn’t really do anything interesting” kind of dismissive kind of way. If we had pestered her, she probably would have told more, but she let her story be completed there.

Mo Rhoades  
Utah State University  
Introduction to Folklore/English 2210  
Dr. Lynne McNeill  
Fall 2018