

Facetious e-mail leads to lawsuit

By Eric Bradley • er Bradley@enquirer.com • May 5, 2009

DELHI TWP. – A sordid, fictitious description of a New Year’s Eve outing is at the center of a defamation suit brought by a township trustee’s daughter against Kevin M. Rhodes, a political opponent of her father.

The suit was filed in March of last year by Delhi Township resident Laura Braun and her husband, Jeff Braun, a Delhi Township police officer. Laura Braun is the 34-year-old daughter of Delhi Township Trustee Al Duebber.

An e-mail, allegedly sent by Rhodes from his Cincinnati Bell account to various parties, compares the Braun and Duebber families to characters in “The Dukes of Hazzard” television show. The e-mail is written in such a way as to seem to be from the Braun family and mirrors the format of an annual Christmas letter sent by the family, according to court documents.

The facetious rendition of a Braun family night out also contains sexual elements and has caused the two plaintiffs “mental and emotional distress” and is part of a pattern of activity designed to “embarrass, annoy, harass and humiliate” the Brauns and members of their family, a court filing said. The complaint for damages also alleges invasion of privacy and identity theft and seeks compensation in excess of \$25,000.

Rhodes, 43, is the son of Hamilton County Auditor Dusty Rhodes. He has run unsuccessfully for Delhi Township trustee in the past and has, at times, been a vocal critic of the board’s actions.

• **[Read a copy of the letter \(PDF\)](http://news.cincinnati.com/assets/AB13422855.PDF)** <http://news.cincinnati.com/assets/AB13422855.PDF>

Reached by phone, Rhodes denied that he sent the e-mail and referred further questions to his attorney, Bernard Wharton.

Wharton did not return several phone calls seeking comment.

Documents filed by Wharton on behalf of Rhodes call into question an Internet Protocol address relied upon by the plaintiffs to identify the location from where the e-mail was sent.

Wharton said Laura Braun gave conflicting testimony on the subject to authorities during a deposition; Braun, Wharton wrote, three times gave a different version of how she obtained the IP address.

Following a hearing before Hamilton County Common Pleas Court Judge Robert Ruehlman, a subpoena was issued to Cincinnati Bell to compel disclosure of the individual assigned to the IP address. It belonged to Kevin Rhodes, Cincinnati Bell said.

Charles Brigham, attorney for Laura and Jeff Braun, declined to comment on the matter, citing ongoing legal proceedings. The case is scheduled to go to trial June 8.

<http://news.cincinnati.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/AB/20090505/NEWS01/305050089/>



[one-dirtysanchez](#) wrote:

Replying to Applebutter:

I don't think the school disciplined her. Oakdale Elementary didn't hire her for a full-time position and she took a job with the Mason school system and quit on them mid school year. I am sure that looks good on a resume!
I noticed the PDF copy of the letter was printed from Oak Hills Schools...Another great use of tax payer dollars!! Laura Braun reading her personal e-mails at school on taxpayers time and printing it out on Oak Hills (taxpayers) paper. What a joke! I hope the school has disciplined her!!!!!!

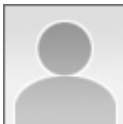
5/11/2009 6:14:49 AM



[MOJORISING81](#) wrote:

whatajoke39 -simmer down- Just laugh at the Duebber-Brauns, it seems everyone else is.

5/8/2009 3:45:27 PM



[whatajoke39](#) wrote:

Lt "no one likes me Jeffy" must have completely missed the police academy training day on the US Constitution, Does anyone remember the little thing called the First Amendment! You know, Free Speech! This guy is truly scary and they actually allow this man the ability to carry a gun and have given him arrest powers? What the hell is the Chief of Police thinking? well actually he is not allowed too without first asking daddy warbucks, silly me! My bet is the Lt

"Barney" Braun has one silver bullet in his pocket! I wonder how the the officers that sacfrice so much on a daily basis deal with this moron. Again, silly me, I heard they created a special spot for him so he could not supervise any officers, thank god that someone had the foresight to make this command decision. Lets just say that I was GIVEN a promotion that I did not deserve, was the laughing or crying stock of the police department, why would I want this attention, VERY VAIN

5/7/2009 10:58:28 PM



whatajoke39 wrote:

Laura "I love spandex" Braun & her goofus husband " Jeff "they created a new police position so he could be promoted" Braun have been groomed well by Daddy warbucks. Just one question, " Lt " I am not allowed to supervise anyone" Braun, ? Did you sue every suspect that ever called you meany name when you were patrolling the streest, or did you just stay in the police car when everybody else got out? Its hard to beleive as a supposed season officer that your skin is so thin that this could begin to penetrate your skin, and your wife, no way it penetrates her! Grow up, get a set of nads, tell Warbucks and the troll to knock the crap off, and save your own dignity and self respect or whats left of it. Face it, you and your selfish other half have made complete laughing stocks of yourself, and have done nothing but bring unwanted attention to our Township. Tell the troll that Jerry Springer is no longer on the air !

5/7/2009 10:35:49 PM



whatajoke39 wrote:

Troll duaghter learned thecropes from daddy! Ww remember when daddy warbucks Duuebber remodeld his lot w/o permits his store,and completely blew off all permits then just hire dhip "2nd rate attorney" Bringham to save the day. Like daddy like troll, she and her police officer "be careful of friendly fire" Jeffrey flipped the big finger at everyone and undertook a massive and disasterous campaign to remodel their rear yard, opps, I did not know that the back hoe and 10 tons of dirt (not the troll), and redirecting storm water actually required a permit! Screw the neighbors, we do what we want because daddy will cover my large rear end. They got busted ,but no problem, Warbucks made sure they could get the permits after they started with thier Bart Simpson directed project. Even funnier, Jeff "I was handed my promotion" Braun is still popping on his neighbors lawn, a highly esteemed city police capt. So much for the Brotherhood! There are the Duebbers and then us!

5/7/2009 10:17:28 PM



Applebutter wrote:

I noticed the PDF copy of the letter was printed from Oak Hills Schools...Another great use of tax payer dollars!! Laura Braun reading her personal e-mails at school on taxpayers time and printing it out on Oak Hills (taxpayers) paper. What a joke! I hope the school has disciplined her!!!!!!

5/7/2009 3:42:55 PM



itcob wrote:

Laura Braun, the only daughter of wealthy parents, who regularly exerts petulant behavior in order to get everything she wants and desires just made her first friend known as Bugs Mom

5/7/2009 2:37:58 PM



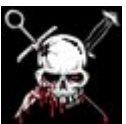
BugsMom wrote:

I support you, Laura!

Without knowing much about Kevin Rhodes, it may sound trivial and immature. However, if you have followed politics in Delhi at all you would know that Kevin Rhodes is a jerk and someone MUST stop him. It seems like every week or two there is a letter from him in the local paper where he just says STUPID things and attacks people personally. He is rude to others and has many enemies.

Thank you, Laura for stepping up and fighting him.

5/7/2009 1:58:30 PM



itcob wrote:

Identity theftThat's funny! Who in their right mind would want to be Laura Braun? Most can't stand her. I'll bet this girl doesn't even like herself. The rumor is, when she goes to her husbands place of employment everyone runs because of her overbearing, holier than thou persona. Same goes when she is running her mouth in the bleachers at Delhi Park.

Laura would be best described as Veruca Salt (Willy Wonka), the only daughter of wealthy parents, who regularly exerts petulant behavior in order to get what she desires.

DADDY, DADDY I WANT KEVIN RHODES' HEAD, AND I WANT IT NOW!

5/6/2009 8:08:30 PM



[MOJORISING81](#) wrote:

I think Laura Braun and her obviously befuddled lawyer Charles Brigham bit off more than they could chew. I am glad Kevin Rhodes is standing up to these jerks. This appears to be nothing more than extortion and Braun's vindictive father (Al Duebber) continuing to be a pompous bully. I think they have met there match. The playground bully only needs their butt beat once!

5/6/2009 3:16:37 PM



[bakeboy](#) wrote:

"Silver Spoon" Laura Duebber is an idiot. I hope you learn a lesson. Don't waste the courts time with this non-sense. Your daddy better look over his shoulder. His next election will be his last. Go back to PTA and being a spoiled "soccer and baseball" mom. Many of us are laughing at you. And your husband has lost respect because of your poor decisions.

5/6/2009 11:27:29 AM



[Trixiesdelight](#) wrote:

The Judge and the Ohio Bar Association should sanction Attorney Chip Brigham for abuse of the legal system and fine and/or prosecute Laura and Jeff Braun for malicious prosecution as well as their selective memory as to where they got Rhodes' IP address. This is just a small example of what a few sleazy lawyers pull every day in Hamilton County Courts. The Judges should put a stop to it. I am glad this is being exposed and I hope Kevin Rhodes sues the pants off of them.

5/6/2009 6:49:19 AM



[amlivingthedream](#) wrote:

This says the email posted "is part of a pattern of activity designed to embarrass, annoy, harass and humiliate...." So, there are more? Let's see them too!! The Braun's have done nothing but draw what you would think is unwanted attention to this situation. They should be sued for stupidity. This is embarrassing, annoying and humiliating to Delhi and the Delhi Police Dept. Geez, grow up people, your lives can't be that dull!

5/5/2009 9:56:31 PM



itcob wrote:

When is cincinnati.com going to post the Christmas letter.....maybe that has goats,midgets and tranny hookers

5/5/2009 9:48:13 PM



stevexumba wrote:

This is stupid, it wasn't offensive, it wasn't even funny. If i wrote the letter it would involve goats and midgets and tranny hookers... Come on- if you're going to get sued, at least make us laugh!

5/5/2009 8:30:37 PM



Mtlookoutgirl wrote:

The Enquirer calls this letter SORDID?? Ha!

5/5/2009 8:17:52 PM



4skins wrote:

I have two predictions: #1 there will be no Christmas letter this year from the Braun's (surely not to Rhodes) and #2 the Braun's will not let their father/father in-law (Al Duebber) hire a cheesy, leisure suit Larry to represent them again.

5/5/2009 6:16:49 PM



Martialis wrote:

Pathetic all around.

5/5/2009 5:50:56 PM



Riso204 wrote:

I don't know who any of these people are or what their politics are but I think that letter is STUPID. It's not clever. It's not funny. And if that were directed at my family - I'd be p.o.'d too. I think Rhodes messed up and should pay for any undue insult he's caused this family. I mean, seriously, a 43 year old grown man did this? Unbelievable. If that's how he "fights back" then I'll say he fights like a little girl.

5/5/2009 5:46:10 PM



markf-1 wrote:

We're reading about a letter from New Years Eve from 2007 into 2008 from the date. My gosh what was 2008/2009 like?

How ridiculous to call this a defamation suit.

They 'defamed' themselves by filing a lawsuit. They are showing everyone how little they think of people of Delhi if they think anyone would believe such a letter. Then again maybe they letter is true and thats what they ddin't want us all to know....

5/5/2009 5:44:32 PM



DOWNTHE DRAIN wrote:

ThisMomRox78 is right. Laura Braun needs to put on her big girl panties (and I do mean BIG) and that will happen as soon as her husband takes them off and starts ruling the roost instead of letting his father in-law Al Duebber fondly known as BOSS HOGG rule his household.

5/5/2009 5:35:20 PM



Mtlookoutgirl wrote:

Dear Laura Braun:

Everyone is sided against you. This entire lawsuit is moronic. Get over it.

5/5/2009 5:32:07 PM



[ThisMomRox78](#) wrote:

I've lived in Delhi for a few years, and have been a westsider all my life. This kind of behavior *from both Rhodes and Duebber is reminiscent of high school, no make that elementary school. Anyone who receives the Community Press in Delhi knows about the whiny, insulting letters that Rhodes sends to be published. One said that the White Castle and the Check Cashing store on Delhi Pike is drawing "unsavory" people here. Then, he published a website where he posted pictures of homes that he deemed "unsatisfactory". Some of these homes were owned by older people, or were just purchased and were in the process of being renovated. I guess he just has too much time on his hands. He thinks he is better than anyone else and needs to be knocked off his high horse. On the other hand, Duebber and the rest of the "good old boys" of Delhi need to grow up, and quit with their shady deals and self-promotion.

Laura, yes Mr. Rhodes is a pompus arse, but put on your big girl panties and deal.

5/5/2009 5:17:56 PM



[priscillaann](#) wrote:

Sounds like Mrs. Braun is bored and looking for attention. Some people thrive on attention, even if it's negative and like to play the victim. She is truly her father's daughter. What a bunch of yahoos. I feel bad for Jeff Braun. He probably rues the day especially after this mess. Just WOW.

5/5/2009 4:39:38 PM



[cincy_lawyer](#) wrote:

Unfortunately, lawsuits like this represent real travesties and abuses of the system.

I would have laughed these people out of my office. The e-mail is only offensive to extremely thin skinned paranoid nut-jobs. I will bet any amount that Judge Ruehlman is just rolling his eyes at this.

This is nothing but a small town mentality running amok with small town politics.

5/5/2009 4:38:02 PM



[itcob](#) wrote:

What would make this story complete is the Braun's Christmas Letter

5/5/2009 3:47:49 PM



[pizzlerot](#) wrote:

Low fat milk and boffing!!!!!! Woo-Hoo, I can't wait until midnight December 31, 2009

5/5/2009 3:30:42 PM



[amlivingthedream](#) wrote:

This is hilarious! Wow...like someone said, I wonder how they feel now that they world can see the letter?? Duh, all their suit has done is make a mockery of them. No one would remember this or be talking about it now if they had ignored it like grown up people do. What a waste of taxpayer's money dragging this to court....I can't believe it got this far! I hope they get what they deserve. Whoever wrote the letter....LMAO!!!

5/5/2009 3:28:29 PM



[arw1225](#) wrote:

Reading this about this ridiculous lawsuit has caused me "mental and emotional distress". I'm going to file a lawsuit.

How do people like this are obviously emotionally unstable to begin with function in society? Get a grip and GROW UP!

5/5/2009 3:24:57 PM



[rojomi](#) wrote:

The e-mail is priceless. I really needed a good laugh!

5/5/2009 3:23:03 PM



TastyPhlegm wrote:

Tell the Brauns to put on their big girl panties and get over it.

5/5/2009 3:07:12 PM



lawildcat wrote:

If they were embarrassed before, I wonder how they feel now that this letter is now being read by the greater Cincinnati/northern Kentucky area on this website. Pretty stupid lawsuit. Nothing slanderous about that letter. I hope it gets thrown out.

And people wonder why our court systems are so clogged.

5/5/2009 2:55:21 PM



sinestrojoe wrote:

People really need to grow up.

5/5/2009 2:52:53 PM



PhlemPickens wrote:

The facetious rendition of a Braun family night out has caused the two plaintiffs "mental and emotional distress"

It's sad that people suffer from mental illness. I hope the Braun Family seek a Mental Health Professional with the expected future court earnings received from the damages.

5/5/2009 2:52:43 PM