



EC VIOLATION HEARING

1. Call to Order: 5:23 PM
2. Roll Call & Verification of Quorum: 7/4

Name	Email	Initial	Final
Supervisor of Elections Luke Brown	sga_ec@ucf.edu sgec9@ucf.edu	P	
Assistant Supervisor of Elections Alyssia Wright	sga_aec@ucf.edu sgec3@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner Norah Sackett	sgec1@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner VACANT	sgec2@ucf.edu	-	-
Commissioner Aneesha Nayak	sgec4@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner Amarah Presley	sgec5@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner VACANT	sgec6@ucf.edu	-	-
Commissioner Jessica Vitarelli	sgec7@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner Brianna Phillips	sgec8@ucf.edu	P	
Commissioner VACANT	sgec10@ucf.edu	-	-

- a. Introduction of Violation Hearing:
 - a. Supervisor Brown: On February 28th, Brandon Garrett submitted an affidavit regarding slander/libel made about his campaign on Discord, Reddit, and Instagram from the Grouse & Alsaad campaign. Today the Election Commission will be determining if this is a

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violation of the Election Statutes under Title VI, Chapter 606.4, Section E stating that
“Committing slander or libel against another candidate/ticket”

- b. Statement of the Filer:
 - a. Garrett: I believe that the evidence that we submitted is proof that there has been a violation. Stating that Michael Kostis our campaign manager which is false. As well as calling him campaign antisemitic
- c. Statement of the Accused:
 - a. Thank you for taking this time. The statements made against our campaign are false. The evidence does not prove this true. We never endorsed anyone outside our campaign. We never called anyone on his campaign or him or anyone antisemitic.
- d. Questioning of the Filer:
 - a. Alsaad: What evidence do you have that someone from our campaign called anyone anti?
 - i. Garrett: the discord chat. They said he was bats***. They claimed he was antisemitic. The article from the discord said he was an antisemite and should be called out.
 - b. Alsaad: What makes you think the person from this article is from or related to our campaign?
 - i. Garrett: They had the title as your manager in their discord bio. The username was Hailey, which is someone apart of your campaign
- e. Questioning of the Accused:
 - a. None
- f. Questioning of the Filers Witnesses and Evidence:
 - a. [Filer Evidence](#)
 - b. Witness Seltzer: To Whom it may concern, I, Max Seltzer, swear that the evidence Brandon has provided is factual and unedited and I was a witness to the discovery and analysis of these screenshots and correspondence with the Grouse Campaign. For context, I am the campaign manager for Garrett-Casco The campaign manager for Grouse, **Hailey Donahue**, reached out to me on the official garrett.casco Instagram. The reason for the correspondence was to post a graphic condemning the threats of violence against certain candidates. We began conversing and the first message I sent said "Hello It's Max, campaign manager for Garrett-Casco..." Her harassment of our campaign began when I revealed that Michael Kostis was working on our campaign and helping us design our logo. Around a week after that revelation, Ms. Donahue submitted an affidavit of fraudulent claims that Mr. Garrett had been acquitted of this morning. Yet, she continues to harass us at the debate, calling Kostis a "holocaust denier", making disparaging remarks about his appearance and continuing to lie and link him to be directly managing our campaign. Furthermore, on the Grouse campaign

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official server "National Penguin Society". She along with other members directly affiliated with Grouse Campaign staff continue to call Mr. Kostis and Anti-semitic and Jew-hater while directly linking him to our campaign with a ***continuous and slanderous lie that he is our manager***. The final straw was yesterday during a Reddit AMA for the candidates we received a comment from "LaxKostis2023", an account controlled by Ms. Donahue accusing of stealing and infringing on copyright for a logo she did not make, and that Mr. Kostis approved us to gather inspiration from. Right after we called her out, a burner by the name "Low_Bandicoot3443" posted verbatim, "Garrett/Casco campaign has a very controversial manager" with a portion of an article written by Mr. Kostis talking about the Israeli-Palestinian War. The only person to know of this article, to know of the deeply personal things said in the burner rant would be Ms. Donahue, campaign manager for the Grouse Campaign or someone closely affiliated with the Grouse campaign as she has repeatedly spread these lies on their official campaign server. They used to be close friends, and are using this to retaliate and take revenge against Mr. Kostis for a falling out her boyfriend and him had. I will say this and I don't like to bring this up but I am Jewish and have had over 28 members of the Seltzer family get systemically murdered in the Holocaust. To have some of my closest friends be accused of being anti-semites and Holocaust deniers by ***Ms. Hailey Donahue, Campaign Manager for the Grouse Campaign*** when it is not even true is not only blatantly slanderous and damaging to the image of this campaign and these young men's careers it is just hurtful. The Shoah is not an event to be politically charged even for something as minuscule as a student government election, and to see the trauma my family has faced to be falsely weaponized against members of this campaign some of who is Jewish is heartbreaking. I do not say this as a campaign manager, or a Jew (as Ms. Donahue likes to refer to me as), or even as a student but as a person just like you. Do not let this libel and slander continue, do not let these lies perpetrated against Mr. Garrett, Mr. Casco, and Mr. Kostis continue, and do not let the tragedy that took the lives of my family and millions of others be used to score political points for a student government election. I trust you will do the right thing.

- c. Witness Kostis: (need to add in statement from folder)
- d. Vitarelli: Are you affiliated with Garret campaign in any way?
 - i. Kostis: I have been giving them advice since I was a candidate in 2023. I was told by a colleague to speak with them, and we had a meeting once. I, however, am not their manager
- e. Brown: Are you their manager or only giving advice?
 - i. Kostis: I am only there to give advice
- f. Nayak: Regarding the post, how do you know it was made by Donahue?
 - i. Kostis: As i stated, it may be someone with the same name. However, they mentioned something from my Substack that only Lax knows about

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- g. Presley: Have you reached out to Hailey to try to solve the issue?
 - i. Seltzer: I tried to reach out on her Instagram, but she never accepted my follower request
- h. Alsaad: Do you have any other evidence to believe that Hailey or Lax would be coming after you other than the fact that you think you are obsessed with you?
 - i. Kostis: Yes, I think the last name Donahue is specific. Also, we had just spoken to me at the Presidential Debate and made posts following the event
- g. Questioning of the Accused Candidate/Ticket's Witnesses and Evidence:
 - a. [Accused Evidence](#)
 - b. Witness Kaprow: Yesterday, I was approached by Nathan Law and was told to speak on our past connection. We worked on a bill to condemn antisemitism. Nathan made it very clear and had to promote the bill. Nathan told me that he had different views from Kostis, and it was very conflicting. As the vote got closer, he told me that he spoke to Kostis and needed to add something to the bill. The main reason I am here is that I was told to confirm that Kostis is antisemitic. I had had conversations with staff about what it means to be antisemitic. He had ended because it went against his political beliefs
 - c. Brown: Can you provide a clear statement on what Kostis did that was allegedly antisemitic?
 - i. Kaprow: He was calling it an ethnic cleaning and was calling for genocide to be added to the bill. It was a double standard and was deemed as an antisemitic statement. It seemed that he was trying to exploit Lax's beliefs and values
 - d. Witness Lax: My name is Nathan Lax. Before I begin, I have a couple of questions. One, is there a time limit? Two, who took responsibility for telling Hailey that I quote "went off the deep end" after October 7th? Alright, let's get into it. Two years ago, in 2023, I was introduced to Michael Kostis as a potential candidate to run with for my Student Body Presidential Campaign. A then-mutual friend, Jason Tache who was a student government senator and co-chair of the Young Democratic Socialists of America encouraged us to run together. Over the course of the campaign, we managed to forge a strong friendship with one notable exception. This difference was over the topic of Israel. Michael's roommate at the time, Yusef, refused to vote for me after asking me about my stance on Israel. Of course, he only asked me after seeing that I wore a kippah regularly, but the people that Michael keeps the company of is not the point of my statement. After this disagreement between Yusef and myself, Michael began to grow distant as things fell apart with the campaign. He would regularly get into arguments with me, stemming from seemingly nowhere. Where we had previously managed to keep things "comradely," a term paraded around by the socialists at the time, things began to become heated between the two of us. After we lost the presidential campaign, we became friends outside of the campaign. I loved him like a brother, and I mean that genuinely. He was there for me as I became the co-chair of the Young Democratic Socialists of America on UCF's campus. October 7th, my world fell apart. This is why I take

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particular interest in who exactly said I went “off the deep end.” I spent two weeks scrolling through the Discord server full of people I thought were my friends watching celebration after celebration of violence against Israeli citizens. Men, women, and children. I’ll give a content warning now for discussion of violence towards women and children, a luxury that I was never afforded. Videos of women being paraded around town squares with bloodied crotches where they had been violently raped were posted alongside celebrations of the Palestinian uprising. The rape, capture, and murder of civilians was an act of liberation in the eyes of my friends. All this while I was unable to get in touch with my family because they were under rocket warnings. For all I knew, those were images of my family. And, in the eyes of the Garret/Casco campaign, sent through direct messages by the account instagram, it was “going off the deep end” for me to leave this environment. How dare you? After I left the socialists, Michael granted me his seat in the senate for the remaining two weeks of the semester, specifically so I could pass a bill altering the statutes of elections and making it easier to gather petition signatures. Granted, still not as easy as it is when you’re allowed to hand out tangible campaign materials as a part of gathering petitions, but my sign over seat was terminated before I could see the bill through the process of the senate. The reason for this termination was that I refused to sabotage a bill which I had worked tirelessly to amend in ways that would be acceptable to both Hillel, the Jewish organization on campus responsible for lobbying on behalf of Jewish students, and the Palestinian Student Association. Let me just clarify the significance of that. I was put in the senate for one week, which happened to be the week that we were trying to make peace in the middle east. I passed a proclamation to give Student Government a groundwork to go off of, the acknowledgement and adoption of the UN’s definition of Islamophobia and the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s definition of antisemitism. I made sure that Student Government was coming from a place opposed to both of these ideas, so that future endeavors into the concept of student safety and support through such a divisive issue could be stabilized. For this, Michael terminated my signover. In his statement, he claims that this was a political disagreement. It was a moral one, wherein I wanted students to be able to attend campus safely and without fear of islamophobia and antisemitism. Michael, evidently, disagreed. Almost two years and at least 10 milligrams of lexapro later, I am again in a place where I can be comfortable. I am again able to maneuver through daily life without constantly looking over my shoulder for which friend would want my family dead next. But now, after having the misfortune of seeing him at the student body presidential debate, I have been stalked and harassed to the point where I needed to file a Title IX report against him and notify UCFPD. I will not go into the privileged information surrounding an ongoing conduct investigation into a faculty member (Michael) who takes time out of his work day to harass two students. I trust the university to see this case through and handle it as is appropriate. However, due to the significance of his inability to leave us alone some of the

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evidence submitted for this hearing was also compiled in my report to the Office of Institutional Equity, Student Victim Services, and now the Anti-defamation league. This brings me to a new dilemma since the affidavit was filed leading to this hearing. Is a campaign responsible for everything members of their staff says? If so, please let me know and I will amend my reports to include the names of individuals that have trusted Michael to represent them. Is it the standard practice of Brandon Garret and Liam Casco to harass students at the university? If the pattern of behavior exhibited by their staff member, Michael Kostis, is anything to go by I have to express serious concerns it may be to the affirmative. Finally, I would be remiss if I did not address an outrageous comment that was made in the statement of Max Seltzer, the campaign manager of Garret and Casco. The idea that the holocaust should not be “made political” is absurd. The holocaust was political. It was the result of years and years of political violence inflicted against the Jews, socialists, and other individuals deemed to be lesser than the ruling class and party in power. Before I close, I want to address that the Holocaust, or Shoah as it is often called in yiddish-speaking circles, started from a big lie. Hitler rose to power on one lie he repeated over and over and over. It morphed over time, picking up pieces of other antisemitic rhetoric, but there is a reason why he came to power after the end of World War 1. The big lie was that Jews everywhere were responsible for action taken regarding the military of a sovereign nation which had its own government. Don’t tell me that doesn’t sound familiar. Finally, I ask something of the election commission. If it is a violation of your code to call out hatred, bigotry, and antisemitism where it can be found; what does your code stand for?

- e. Witness Donahue: First, I would like to acknowledge that I did use the wrong term for Mr Kostis’ involvement on the campaign. I was told he was involved, and based on his qualifications, I assumed he would be in that kind of leadership role. However, after I was corrected, I apologized in the discord. Onto the subject matter at hand. First and foremost, I did not make the reddit post in question. Sam, another witness, did. Secondly, the statements I made in discord are based on pure opinion. Pure opinion on a matter of public concern is protected by the first amendment, and a libel action based on such a statement cannot succeed. The facts of the matter are that I was told my Sam his opinions on Mr Kostis’ substack piece, and as I assumed that he would have experience in handling matters of antisemitism, as he is a Jewish student and has participated in Jewish student organizations, I believed him and accepted what he said as an interpretation of fact. I shared this concerns with others in a discord group chat. Furthermore, the statements made within the article include elements of holocaust inversion (which is recognized by the IHRA as a form of antisemitism), as well as using a common dog whistle that is often used to signify antisemitism (i.e., the usage of the word “bribe” in regards to the media and American public). The content of the article made by a member of your campaign staff included material that a jewish student thought was antisemitic. finally, I was not told by John or lara

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to make any statements in the discord. it was going on during the debate, and I shared my opinions on other candidates as well. They expressed my concerns about the candidates and their policies.

- f. Witness Sheldon: I made the post and am not associated with the Grouse/Alsaad campaign. I found an article on his Substack and found that the statement that he made were antisemitic. I had briefly talked to Hailey about the article. I am just a student who is concerned about the state of Jewish RSO's if Garret/Casco are elected and are associated with Kostis.
- g. Presley: Since reddit is anonymous but you mentioned the username, were you reached out to by the campaign about this?
 - i. Sheldon: Hailey did not know I was making the post. However, I did make the most and she guessed it was me. She texted me and asked me to be here. The account was deleted because I panicked and deleted it. I will reiterate, the campaign had nothing to do with the post I made.
- h. Sackett: Could you clarify about which post was yours
 - i. Sheldon: It was the Reddit post
- i. Sackett: Do you know why Donahue name was in the username
 - i. Sheldon: It was not that post
- j. Garrett: For Sheldon. You aren't talking to Hailey at all about this or in this discord and this was posted very soon after the post in the discord was made. How did you know Kostis was in my campaign?
 - i. Sheldon: I reached out to Hailey and asked who is this guy. I saw him at the debate and put two and two together. I have no relation at all to her campaign
- k. Garrett: For Sheldon, you mention that I would have Kostis on my cabinet, were you aware that he is not currently a student so he wouldn't be eligible?
 - i. Sheldon: I was not aware.
- l. Garrett: For Donahue, you said you reached out and apologized for believing that Kostis was our manager. Can you provide the place where it was sent?
 - i. Donahue: It was on the discord chat
- m. Garrett: You said you apologized however, you don't seem to apologize, you just state that you were given new information
 - i. Donahue: I thought that I was saying my bad. But I will apologize now for stating that he was your campaign manager
- n. Vitarelli: For Donahue, are you the campaign manager of the accused?
 - i. Donahue: Yes I am
- o. Vitarelli: Are you aware that candidates are responsible for the actions of individuals who are representing their campaign
 - i. Donahue: Yes, I am aware

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- p. Garrett: For Donahue, at the beginning, you said this was pure opinion and not recognized as libel or slander. Opinions can be harmful. Do you not believe that this opinion can be harmful?
 - i. It is a statement of pure opinion and is free speech. It was more about you campaign and those around you. It is concerning for students. As someone who was sharing opinion, I think that based on legality, you are allowed to share your opinion. I also shared opinions on other candidates
- q. Nayak: on your discord, are there moderators to delete messages considered harassment?
 - i. Alsaad: There are moderators
- r. Nayak: Do you think that some of Haliey's messages on your discord could have been phrased better?
 - i. Sure, better, but not in a way that is sweeter or kind. It is what it is. Antisemitism is not sweet or bubbly or fun. So actually, no I don't think so.
- s. Presley: How many members are in your discord?
 - i. Grouse: About 120
- t. Garrett: For Donahue, are you aware that in your statement that these messages were not made on behalf of Grouse/Alsaad but as they were made in the chat, and you are their manager it could reflect them
 - i. Donahue: I made it as a statement. I was not aware because I made the statement as a person on the discord.
- h. Final Questioning:
 - a. Presley: Has the reddit post negatively impacted you in any way? Has anyone said anything negative?
 - i. Garrett: No, we don't believe anyone has actually reached out to us and they believed it was a spam account posting this. It has affected our mental health, and Kostis has had to back away. I have been stressed due to miss-information as I want to ensure people are aware I am not anti-semitic
 - b. Brown: To Alsaad/Grouse: taking out the personal bias some of these people may have, like the relationships do you believe any member of your staff has acted in a way that could be considered harassment?
 - i. No, I believe that everyone has the right to their opinion. I don't think that it was slander or libel. Donahue did not mean any harm
 - c. Brown: To Garrett, do you truly believe that this slander/libel has negatively affected your campaign to be deemed as sure.
 - i. Yes, especially since the post is still up and there are still claims going around that we are antisemitic. There is a lot of misinformation going around from slander and libel

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- d. Sheldon: I would like to clarify; my statement did not call you guys antisemitic. I said who you were associated with might be seen as that. My intent was to inform the people of who they might be voting for. All the info was from the public articles. I did not intend harm, it was to inform people on who they might be voting for.
- i. Closing Statement of the Filer:
 - a. Garrett; thank you all for having me and listening to me. I believe that all the evidence supplied that Kostis comments to the Israel/Palestine War. I believe that we have correctly filed this affidavit, and I believe that this has posed a high risk to our campaign.
- j. Closing Statement of the Accused Candidate/Ticket:
 - a. Thank you everyone for your patience. The last hour and a half had the filer carry the burden of [roving my campaign managers guilt- they did not succeed. I do not think the evidence provided by the filer proved anything but her fully entitled to express her opinions (not slander). Hailey said her opinions, it was misinterpreted and that's why we are here. No one really meant to take down your campaign.
- k. Election Commission Deliberation:
 - a. Executive Session
 - b. 7-0-0, a violation did occur
 - c. Vote to Sanction Reddit: 3 : 4 : 0
 - d. 7-0-0 Sanction: The Grouse & Alsaad campaign will private their Discord, from this point forward. All current and future members of Discord must be fully aware they represent the campaign by being members of the electronic service (606.12 All candidates/tickets must be aware that they are liable for actions in violation of any provisions of the Golden Rule, Student Body Constitution, or Student Body Statutes by an induced or condoned person because of authorization, assistance, or advisement from said candidate/ticket.). A member of the commission must have full visibility of this discord, either as an admin or full viewer/member of this server until the Election has fully ended.
 - e. To make this decision the commission consulted Black Law Dictionary, in which the term libel is defined as: "A defamatory statement expressed in a fixed medium, esp. Writing but also a picture, sign, or electronic broadcast. Libel is classified as both a crime and a tort but is no longer prosecuted as a crime. Also termed defamatory libel. 2. The act of making such as statement; the unprivileged publication of defamatory matter by written or printed words, by its embodiment in physical form or by any other form of communication that has the potentially harmful qualities characteristic of written or printed words. Also termed (in sense 1 & 2) written defamation. See Defamation. Cf. Slander."
 - f. We would like to preface our sanction by saying that the Election Commission is a non-partisan organization and came to this conclusion solely based on evidence pertaining to the affidavit that was filed. Any evidence or personal statements not directly related to the accused or filed were disregarded. This sanction was chosen due to the reach that Discord

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servers have to the UCF student body and the actions that have taken place within them. We fully believe that these servers are spreading more bias/misinformation than general information pertaining to the campaign tickets and their policies. This sanction was also chosen to ensure accountability of members in these servers and the roles they have within the campaign as their members actions have been deemed harmful against another ticket. We also recommend that the Filer follow this sanction as well, however we cannot require this.

- g. Much of the debate and questions we saw tonight was not about the affidavit itself, but rather personal feelings against members of the campaign teams that have no place inside of this election nor are the responsibility of the Election Commission to mitigate. We also encourage both tickets to seriously consider what it means to have individuals with this degree of personal bias and feelings involved in their campaigns.
 - h. Thank you for being here tonight. We highly encourage you all to reflect on tonight's events, and what every student has said. Being student leaders on campus requires you to be professional leaders and representatives of this student body. Now, in this potential position you all will continue to have freedom of speech, but you are not free of the consequences your words and those that you associate with will cause. Have a great night and we look forward to seeing you all next week.
- l. Final Roll Call: 7/4
 - m. Adjournment: 7:38 PM

Key:

- P - Present
- A - Absent
- E - Excused
- MTD - Move to Debate
- MTV - Move to Vote
- MTA- Move to Amend
- MSQD – Motion for Speech, Questioning, & Debate Time
- PP - Postpone
- PPI - Postpone Indefinitely
- GC - General Consent

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