

BREAK-IN | Intoxicated man gets through night monitor, up stairs to students' room

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John Mounsey, coordinator of facilities and process design for Residence Life, said O'Haver and Brookhart received word that Couch had "left the area."

"[DPS is] going to review the tape and see if there's something our night monitor could have said more clearly so they understood where [Couch] was and also if he identified himself clearly so that they knew to check in with him," Mounsey said. "So there's a few things we're looking at to see if we can tighten up a little bit."

Couch climbed several flights of stairs and entered a room. According to the probable cause statement filed by O'Haver, he got into bed with one of the sleeping students, who he did not know, and attempted to sexually assault her.

It is unclear whether the room was a random choice or a predetermined destination, although Mounsey and Chrissotimos said Couch, who was heavily intoxicated, might not have realized he was in Dobson Hall and might have been seeking a similar-numbered room in a different residence hall. Mounsey said the night monitor reported that Couch mentioned a room number during their short interaction but that it isn't clear whether he arrived at the same room he mentioned.

Adair County prosecutor Mark Williams, who filed the felony charges against Couch, said the student was able to get away from Couch.

"She was able to [get] him off the bed, and he landed on the floor," Williams said.

According to the probable cause statement, the two residents exited the room to get help. At 4:17 a.m., their student adviser placed another 911 call, and DPS, already near the building, responded immediately.

"By that point, [Couch] had passed out on the floor," Mounsey said.

In the probable cause statement, O'Haver wrote, "I began speaking to the male, but he did not respond. I applied pressure to the male's right hand pointer fingernail in an attempt to wake him up. The male opened his eyes. I informed him that I was a police officer and that I needed to speak with him. The male told me to stop lying to him."

Couch was taken quietly from the building by DPS so as not to cause a commotion, Chrissotimos said. He was placed in protective custody, then a 24-hour investigative hold while charges were pending. His arrest warrant was served the following afternoon, and he remains in the Adair

County Detention Center.

"I can't just sit back quietly"

The resident whose bed Couch climbed into said all the members of the Truman community connected with the incident did their best but that the incident does signify a campus problem nonetheless. It is Index policy not to release the names of victims associated with sex-related crimes.

"What happened to me is not the fault of Residence Life, it's not the fault of the night monitor, it's not the fault of DPS or the SAs, and I think that everybody truly did their job to do whatever they could to help the situation," the resident said. "But I also can't just sit back quietly when I hear students and University officials and professors saying that there is not a problem with security in the residence halls. Because if there wasn't a problem, he wouldn't have even gotten a foot in the building, let alone up several floors, especially in the state he was in."

She said she does not want anyone else to have to endure a similar situation.

"I would feel morally wrong if I went through all of this only to have nothing change and to have someone else have to go through what my family and my friends and myself are all experiencing right now," the resident said.

She said she recognizes that change is not instant but that a student employee is not sufficient to keep intruders out of campus buildings.

"But I want some kind of security on the outside of the door," the resident said. "There's nothing keeping people from coming in right now. The only person that's there to stop them is some student frail little night monitor sitting at the desk who's not allowed to leave their post."

Although she said she should have locked her room door, she does not know if that solution would be adequate in all cases.

"I understand I didn't lock my door," she said. "That was a mistake. People make mistakes, and I made a mistake by not locking my door. But if somebody, heaven forbid, with an even worse intent [entered the building], even a locked door

is not going to stop them. And we have no security measures right now to keep them out of the building at all."

"Students have to be aware"

Mounsey and Chrissotimos, as well as Von Abbott, assistant director of DPS, said Truman has considered implementing card-swipe access at the residence halls and employing additional security personnel at the residence halls. But these options have disadvantages as well and also might not be fiscally feasible, they said.

Abbott said he didn't think the incident calls for a policy change.

"I can see a need to make sure that the language that is used is specific and not open for interpretation," he said. "... Fifteen minutes from the time we got the call to the time he was pinpointed in this room is not very long at all, but when you're out looking for someone, it seems like an eternity. And I'm sure these young ladies whose room he's in felt like it took forever for things to take place."

Abbott said an emphasis on awareness, however, is important.

"Change in policy?" he said.

"Probably not. There's always a security update that can be done if people have the money. The whole campus could be run like a prison camp, and that takes away students' freedom. But students have to be aware ... it doesn't take any time at all for somebody to get in. Awareness more than, I think, a policy change."

He pointed out that with a card reader, unlicensed individuals still could follow behind students, which he called tailgating.

Abbott, Chrissotimos and Mounsey all said the University does not currently have the funds to station security personnel in front of each residence hall.

"It's hard to predict right now where it goes"

Abbott said police still are sorting out the details of the crime, and they might not conclude the investigation until the end of the week or the beginning of next week.

DPS still is trying to determine what, if any, association Couch has with Truman and how he ended up at Dobson. He told O'Haver he had been "drinking with bud-



Mark Hardy/Index
Dobson Hall Desk worker sophomore Jiao Rao swipes resident freshman Kip Mountjoy into the residence halls late Wednesday evening. An intruder passed this spot early Sunday morning without presenting identification.

dies" at Leisure World earlier in the night, according to the probable cause statement.

"We know that he had been partying somewhere, was supposedly partying with some Truman students, so that's another part of the ongoing investigation, to find out who those [were] or where this was taking place," Abbott said.

He said DPS has one student's name who might be associated with Couch.

Prosecutor Williams said he doesn't expect to file any more charges against Couch in addition to those already levied.

Couch's attorney requested bond reduction Wednesday morning, but Associate Circuit Judge Kristie Swaim denied the request. Abbott said a \$75,000 bond is not unusual for an individual facing two felony charges.

Williams said that, if convicted, Couch could receive anywhere from five to 15 years in the Department of Corrections for the burglary charge. For the attempt charge, he could receive up to four years in the Department of Corrections or a year in the county jail.

"It's hard to predict right now where it goes, but the victims will have a lot of say in it as far as what they believe ought to happen," Williams said. "Ultimately it'll be up to a judge and jury."

Couch pleaded guilty to a class B misdemeanor of excessive blood alcohol content in September 2007. He received a suspended sentence, a \$300 fine and two years unsupervised probation for the offense. A case review was scheduled in November for today.

ADDRESS | Dixon cites areas needing improvement; changes in University and community impact at first-ever State of the University address

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small-town life in Kirksville.

Dixon also discussed some of the new developments at Truman, which include the re-organization of the academic structure, the creation of 23 departments and department chairs to oversee them and the University's new strategic plan.

"We're focused on a three- to five-year window and identified very specific actions that we need to accomplish," she said.

That plan has six major goals, including the development of a new curriculum and an increased emphasis on external constituencies.

Dixon discussed Truman's financial situation at length, presenting charts and graphs showing where the University

receives its revenues and how the expenditures are divided. She said Truman slots 45 percent of its expenditures for instruction, a higher percentage than most universities. Student aid and institutional support are second and third on the list of expenditures, respectively.

Dixon also talked about the need for state appropriations, saying that the state made a significant effort last year to reinvest in higher education.

"Higher education has not had a really great share in recent years," she said.

Truman currently is involved in such state-funded programs as Preparing to Care, which would bring more revenue for health care programs if Truman graduates 17 more nursing stu-

dents and three more communication disorder students annually, and the Lewis and Clark Discovery Initiative, which has allotted \$21.6 million for Pershing Building renovations.

Throughout the address, Dixon noted several ways in which Truman contributes heavily to the Kirksville community and that the University and the city depend on each other.

"We need Kirksville to be thriving in order to attract students," she said.

Dixon said Truman is the largest employer in Adair County, with a total of 1,048 direct and contracted employees and that the University pays \$59.8 million to those employees in salaries and benefits. She also said Truman raised \$59,638 for

the United Way in 2007 and that students came together to complete a total of 21,000 volunteer hours in the community. Truman also brings a number of visitors through Kirksville annually, including more than 50,000 for sporting events and more than 2,500 for move-in day in the fall.

Kirksville tourism director Debi Boughton said the Chamber of Commerce collaborates with Truman during some of those events — for example, setting up a booth during visit days to answer questions about attractions in Kirksville.

"We're just thrilled when Truman brings people to town," she said.

Boughton said she works

with lots of different people at Truman to coordinate events, and that a new staff member, Beth Tuttle, recently was hired at Truman to act as both the director of Greek Life and conference coordinator with the city.

City councilmember Jill McCord, who also attended Dixon's address, said she thought it was a very positive thing for the community.

"The Council had suggested that maybe that [should] happen to bring a sense of community unity and so people would know what's going on at Truman and the plans for it, and I think she covered it very, very well," she said. "I would like to see that continued."

McCord said she agrees with Dixon that Truman and Kirks-

ville depend on one another, and she said the impact of the students is very apparent during the summer months.

"You can tell a change in the businesses, the amount of business they do when the students are gone, so I was hoping that with the revamping of the dormitories, that sort of thing, that maybe more classes could be offered during the summer that would keep more students here," McCord said.

The Council also is currently looking at ways to make the downtown area more attractive for students, and McCord said one project that currently is underway is a walkway and bike path from Truman's campus to Jefferson Street.

DRUGS | DPS finds marijuana in Dobson Hall

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residents, and upon investigation three subjects were arrested for numerous state violations," he said.

Whittom said the students were brought back to DPS, where they were issued citations and released.

"We will get our report together along with all the paperwork, and we'll forward it to the prosecutor's office, and then the prosecutor will take over the case at that point, and it will get forwarded to the court," he said.

John Mounsey, coordinator of facilities and process design of Residence Life, said that at the University level,

the incident reports will be passed on to the student conduct office where the cases will be heard by David Hoffman, assistant dean of student affairs. Mounsey said this is the first drug incident in Dobson this school year, although drug and alcohol situations are not uncommon throughout the year.

Mounsey also said incidents such as this usually are easy to spot in the residence halls.

"Any time we smell smoke it's pretty easy for us to respond because our buildings are smoke free," he said. "Incense, smoke — it's an easy thing to respond to, and we always do."

KUHNS | Truman staff member and eight others declare candidacy for City Council

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the board of the Curtain Call Theater Company, an active church member and part of the local Rotary Club. Kuhns said he thinks his personal history and honesty make him a strong candidate for City Council.

"I think in me most people will find honest leadership," Kuhns said. "I am not coming in with an agenda, I don't have anything to prove. ... I'll be a good representative from

what the people tell me they're interested in. I'll be able to carefully consider all the options before making my decision."

Kuhns, like many of the other candidates, has no previous experience on the Council. However, City Manager Mari Macomber said political history isn't necessary.

"You have to be 21," Macomber said. "You have to be a resident for at least a year, and you have to fill out some paperwork."

Among those on the ballot, only one has previous experience on the Kirksville City Council, mayor pro-tem Martha Rowe. On Nov. 29, 2007, the Index reported that Rowe would not be seeking re-election. However, Rowe said she has since reconsidered in light of the number of vacant seats.

"Several people have urged me to file again to offer stability ... so there are not three new people on the Council," Rowe said. "Jill

[McCord] has been on longer than one term, but that would just be two of us."

Rowe declined to comment on whether she would consider taking on the position of mayor again.

In addition to Rowe and Kuhns, Kevin Alm, Gail Brown, Terry Flanagan, Joe Conway, Charles Canaday, Richard Detweiler and Larry Logston have filed for candidacy. Voters will elect City Councilmembers April 8.

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The presentation is the first of the semester's Folklore Colloquia, sponsored by the Folklore Minor as part of IDSM 300, Folklore Colloquium.

Wednesday, Jan. 30

**Baldwin Hall
Room 218**

5:30-7:00 p.m.