

A Bathroom Story That Doesn't Involve The "Bathroom Bill" Meme

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Abstract

There's an interesting, but sad story found on the Army Times website entitled West Point sergeant charged with filming naked female cadets. From the article: A sergeant first class on the staff of the United States Military Academy at West Point faces charges for allegedly filming numerous female cadets without their consent, sometimes when they [...]

Article

There's an interesting, but sad story found on the Army Times website entitled West Point sergeant charged with filming naked female cadets. From the article:

A sergeant first class on the staff of the United States Military Academy at West Point faces charges for allegedly filming numerous female cadets without their consent, sometimes when they were in the shower, according to the Army.

The suspect, Sgt. First Class Michael McClendon, faces charges under four articles of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for indecent acts, dereliction in the performance of duty, cruelty and maltreatment, and actions prejudicial to good order and discipline. He currently faces 35 specifications in total.

...At West Point, McClendon served as a tactical noncommissioned officer, which is a staff adviser responsible for the health, welfare and discipline of a company of 125 cadets. The person in the position is expected to "assist each cadet in balancing and integrating the requirements of physical, military, academic and moral-ethical programs," according to the West Point website.

No word on what the Army is going to charge the sergeant with yet. I guess we can conclude from this story that all military men are bathroom predators...hell, that all men are bathroom predators...right?

Well, maybe not.

Seriously, one can't judge every heterosexual male by the actions of one heterosexual male. There have been men who crossdressed to get access to women's restrooms and locker rooms in the past: here, here, and here, for example, but I can find other stories of heterosexual males filming women in restrooms and locker rooms, such as here and here. And of course, my first civil rights effort was reporting four shipmates for peeping on my then division officer as she showered.

One can't judge every straight man by a small minority of straight men who engage in unlawful voyeurism; one can't judge every trans woman by a small number of crossdressing males who engage in unlawful

voyeurism.

To me, the "bathroom bill" argument as a tool to argue against civil rights for trans women is a fail. Yes, one can find a number of stories of crossdressed voyeurs fouling the discussions on civil rights based on gender identity, but one can find a number of stories of non-crossdressed voyeurs too that could be used to make the case that the doors on women's public bathrooms aren't magical things that keep all predators of all sorts out. It's peeping that's the crime, not crossdressing while peeping. Crossdressing is just a tool some voyeurs use in an attempt to make themselves less visible, but most often it makes them stand out more than they otherwise would.

In the end, it's sad to read that female plebes at West Point have to deal with sexual harassment in any form, let alone this form. As a someone who's was sexually harassed by military men myself -- let me say that all women, men, girls and boys deserve better than being treated as sexual objects while going to the restroom. Women servicemembers at West Point deserved better than they apparently received from a sergeant assigned to their command.

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