

- **Series of troubling incidents happen in region following election**

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- Published November 10, 2016 , Updated November 11, 2016

The days following the election of Donald J. Trump as president have brought a series of troubling incidents in the region.

A softball dugout in Island Park in [Wellsville was defaced](#) with the words "Make America White Again," accompanied by a swastika.

At Canisius College, two separate incidents involving a black doll, one in which it was hanging from a curtain rod, inflamed students over racial issues and resulted in suspensions.

And [on Grand Island](#), a man trying to catch a bus found the glass on a bus shelter covered with drawings of nooses and written messages that read "----- die here."

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Jordan Sanders on Wednesday night found the bus shelter glass near Bedell Road and Grand Island Boulevard covered with the messages. He said the words made him cry.

"I felt so small in that moment," said Sanders, a 23-year-old black man.

Scott Zylka, spokesman for the sheriff's office, confirmed deputies responded to a criminal mischief call at the bus stop, but said there was nothing in the incident report about whether or not there was anything written on the shelter's glass.

Sanders criticized the response, saying a dispatcher told him that the sheriff's department doesn't "have the tools" to clean the glass. He said he was told he should call the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority in the morning. By the time he got off the phone, the dispatcher said she would call someone about it.

That wasn't the end of the situation. Four police officers in four police vehicles later showed up at his house, where his girlfriend and 1 1/2-year-old child were. Sanders said he never gave the police his home address, which was roughly 75 yards from the bus stop.

Zylka, the sheriff's spokesman, said Sanders hung up on the dispatcher when he was told deputies couldn't clean the glass. That led the sheriff's office to use caller ID to track the call to the name on the wireless account and to find his address, according to Zylka. Two sheriff's vehicles were dispatched on the call, he said.

If Sanders filed a complaint but then hung up, the sheriff's office has to perform the due diligence to verify the complaint, Zylka said. Deputies took the initiative to find Sanders, but it's not the sheriff's office responsibility to clean up NFTA property, he said.

Sanders said he believes it was a public servant's responsibility to make him feel safe.

"I was in complete shock and awe after what the police said to me," he said.

Late Thursday morning, the sheriff's office spokesman told The Buffalo News the agency's Professional Standards Division began an investigation into the interaction between the deputies and Sanders. The investigation began after the office saw Sanders' video on Twitter, Zylka said.

Douglas Hartmayer, spokesman for the NFTA, said Thursday the agency will send a maintenance crew to the site to clean the bus stop. If the messages can't be cleaned off, the glass or plexiglass would be replaced, he said.

The anti-Semitic graffiti in Wellsville in Allegany County was discovered Wednesday morning and, by the afternoon, a group of volunteers painted over the message and symbol.

"There's enough bad going on in the world. Wellsville people are always good at getting things done," volunteer Skip Carter told the Wellsville Daily Reporter.

At Canisius, a black doll was left in a Frisch Hall laundry room by a young visitor to the campus on Tuesday. At about 5:20 p.m. that evening, some students saw the doll on a chair and put it in the Frisch elevator, reportedly as a prank to startle people when the elevator door opened, according to the college's investigation of the matter.

The doll appears in photos shared on social media, in the elevator and propped against or behind the railing along the wall of the elevator, as it was repeatedly moved and repositioned over the next 90 minutes. There are two strings at the doll's neck that are part of the doll's construction that were initially identified as a noose by some people who saw the photos.

Then, at some point in the evening, a student took the doll out of the elevator and to a residence hall room where it was hung from the curtain rod and participants took photos of it. One student created a meme with language about "Trump fans" and sent it to friends on social media. It was soon seen by a number of students, some of whom called it to the attention of Public Safety officials.

"It's evident that what may have started as a thoughtless, insensitive prank earlier in the evening in the elevator degraded into a very offensive, inappropriate act later that night," Canisius President John Hurley said in a statement.

The incidents aroused strong feelings on campus. More than 300 students, faculty and staff attended an event in the Student Center on Wednesday to talk about race and the Canisius community, according to the college.

"It was emotional and heartfelt, and I want to assure our students that your college has heard you loud and clear. It is clear to me that this episode has exposed some deeply-held concerns among our students of color and that we need to go well beyond addressing the immediate incident involving the doll," Hurley said.

Hurley said the principal participants in the residence hall room incident were involuntarily suspended, pending an adjudication of their disciplinary cases that could end in dismissal from the college. The college declined to offer any other details, citing student privacy laws. Hurley also said the college will retain an outside investigator to review the results of the investigation and recommend whether the acts should be prosecuted as hate crimes.

The incidents come after a bruising presidential campaign filled with tension that has led to similar outbursts around the country.

"There is a larger implication to these incidents in that they reflect the intensifying climate of real fear people have," said Kari Winter, professor of American Studies at the University at Buffalo. "Public discourse has sunk to a level that I never saw in my lifetime. What was once unspoken is now being spoken."