

# Uncle Bill's Bathroom Reader

The More You Go, The More You Know

Issue 74, February 2019

## Top Revenge-Is-a-Dish-Best-Served-Cold Student Action

The following story was awarded “Top Revenge-Is-a-Dish-Best-Served-Cold Student Action” from The National Jurist – The Magazine for Law Students (a reminder that we, students, can make change, and that the Innocence Projects like our very own HIP, are so important)

Six years ago, the Black Law Students Association at Columbia University said it was not pleased with Elizabeth Lederer serving as a part-time lecturer at the school. After all, she was a key player in the prosecution of the Central Park Five, a group of minority teenage boys. They were wrongly convicted of beating a jogger in Central Park. They spent years in prison.

Soon after, a Ken Burns documentary on the subject fired up the students. But Lederer’s role at the school continued until the recent release of a Netflix mini-series on the subject, “When They See Us.” That again riled the Black Law Students Association, which again demanded that the school get rid of Lederer. The group wrote a letter, noting: “Since Lederer’s integral role in the case has received a national spotlight, there have been multiple efforts urging Columbia Law School to take action.

In 2013 a petition was circulated, which gained thousands of signatures and demanded the removal of Lederer.” That didn’t happen. This time, though, the pressure proved too much. Lederer resigned in June.

## How A Fungus Altered Paradise

‘Ōhi‘a (*Metrosideros polymorpha*), a keystone species in Hawai‘i’s native forests, faces a new threat in the form of a new fungal disease called Rapid ‘Ōhi‘a Death (ROD). First detected on Hawai‘i Island more than four years ago, it has since affected more than 135,000 acres of ‘ōhi‘a forest on the largest of Hawai‘i’s islands. Hundreds of thousands of trees have died. The disease has now spread to Kaua‘i, Maui, and O‘ahu. There is currently no known cure for affected trees, so preventing the spread of this disease is vital.

The ‘ōhia lehua is a flowering tree and is endemic to Hawai‘i. As an early colonizer after a new lava flow, it’s a foundational species of the Hawaiian forest and is considered critical to the function of Hawaiian watersheds and the ecology of Hawai‘i. ‘Ōhi‘a produces a myriad of flowers that range in color from fiery red to bright yellow and can grow to 100 feet. Over millennia different species and

varieties have evolved to adapt to the numerous different micro-climates found in Hawai‘i, from sea level to Kauai’s tallest peaks.

Scientists have determined the disease enters the tree through open wounds (naturally through broken limbs or exposed roots). Once the fungal spores enter the trees, the disease advances by cutting off the tree’s flow of water.

To help avoid the further spread of ROD, 1) **Keep your eyes open** for an ‘ōhi‘a limb or crown turning brown; 2) **avoid injuring ‘ōhi‘a**; 3) **clean gear and tools** before and after entering the forest and areas where ‘ōhi‘a may be present; and 4) **don’t move ‘ōhi‘a wood or ‘ōhi‘a parts.**

