

**Addendum**  
to  
Ethics Complaints  
filed against  
Lars Grevstad  
Austin Harris  
&  
Clay Hine  
by  
Bob Snelling  
Submitted to  
Barbershop Harmony International  
Nashville, TN

September 12, 2019

This ethics complaint narrative will be the same for all three of the accused violators because the events in question are all related to the same sexual exploitation court case which began in approximately April 2017. All events in this complaint relate to that same court case, some before it happened, some during the case, and one event that occurred on the day that the defendant, Brian Scott Williams, former member of the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS), pleaded guilty in Cobb County Georgia Superior Court to four charges of sexual exploitation of a child.

**CANON OF ETHICS VIOLATED:**

BHS Code of Ethics (COE) article 2 (deportment reflecting credit)

BHS Code of Ethics (COE) article 3 (conforming to Society rules)

BHS Code of Ethics (COE) article 4 (good character)

BHS Code of Ethics (COE) article 8 (controversy hindering enjoyment)

BHS Youth Policy Statement/Members' Responsibility

"It is the responsibility of **every** Society member to be aware of the impact that his conduct may have upon Youth who may be present at any Activity. It is also the responsibility of **every** Society member to bring to the attention of any member whose conduct at any Activity may seem inappropriate, the need to correct the situation immediately. In the event the situation is not promptly corrected, or if the nature of the conduct (whether corrected or not) is deemed serious enough to warrant further action, it is the responsibility of the Society member(s) observing such conduct to report the same to an appropriate Society, district or chapter officer. Upon receipt of any such report, it is the responsibility of the Society, district or chapter officer to evaluate the same, and to take such further action, pursuant to the Society's Code of Ethics, or otherwise, as is deemed necessary or appropriate."

## **THE COURT CASE**

On August 29, 2019, Brian Scott Williams, a former member of the BHS, pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation of a child. The victim was my grandson who, at the time, was also a member of the BHS as a Youth. At the conclusion of the court proceeding, Williams was sentenced to 20 years, 7 to serve in confinement, and was given sex offender status for the remainder of his life. A copy of the sentencing documents is attached to this complaint including the stringent requirements of those identified as sex offenders. The sentencing could have ended a painful three-and-a-half-year ordeal that began for our entire family well before the formal and official investigations related to this case began. However, It did not end, as will be revealed in this complaint.

During the hearing, evidence, either sworn testimony or forensic analysis, showed that Williams:

1. Secretly took illegal and offensive pictures of my grandson with a disguised remote camera in a bathroom during an official activity of the BHS Dixie District after which he attached the photos to his computer hard drive;
2. Told my 14-year-old grandson that he, Williams, was not satisfied with his sex life at home and was ready for "one more fling";
3. Showed my grandson pornography, some of gay men;
4. Served my grandson alcohol when he was away from his parents in what his parents believed was in the care of a trusted friend, Williams;
5. Offered my grandson some homosexual favors which my grandson refused.
6. Offered to give my grandson a thumb drive containing pornographic images which again he refused.

## **THE STORY**

For purposes of this document I will not provide the names of my family members for their protection. If the Society Ethics Committee needs them, I will provide all names they need, but not in print. My family has been hurt enough already.

When my two grandsons, brothers, approached me when they were 15 years of age and 14 respectively, and asked if they could sing Barbershop Harmony with me, this proud Grandpa did not hesitate and within weeks both were singing every Monday night. They would sing in the car to and from rehearsals whether with me or other Big Chicken Chorus (BCC) members who volunteered to transport them. They loved the craft and simply could not get enough of it. We formed, with another BCC member, the quartet, "56-Year Spread" and proudly got evaluated only three months later.

Both grandsons, my son-in-law, an adult friend of my son-in-law, and two of his sons all joined the Society and began singing with the BCC. There were six new and good quality voices singing with the Big Chicken Chorus, including four new young singers.

But slowly and subtly Brian Williams grooming of my grandsons and family began. He took many steps to strengthen friendship with our family so my children, my grandson's parents, entrusted Brian Williams with their care, including custody during official Barbershop activities.

The abusive acts perpetrated upon my grandsons began and continued over a lengthy period, perhaps as much as a year. On one occasion, word got to the family that Williams was serving alcohol to my grandsons. He was confronted by my son-in-law, but

Williams denied the accusation and, much to our long-term regret, our family believed Williams.

Sometime in 2016 my grandson stopped his very successful schoolwork, became very reclusive, talked of suicide, and began cutting himself with sharp objects. His parents had no choice but to seek psychiatric and psychotherapy. This placed a very large financial burden on our family. The therapy had limited short-term effect therefore had to continue.

After about a year in therapy the therapist learned of the sexual exploitation of one of my grandsons and immediately notified his parents and the Georgia Department of Family and Children's Services. In April of 2017, during a Dixie District convention, this information was given to me for the first time. As I remember it, my children had already contacted Cobb County law enforcement, so steps began to investigate Williams.

It took two- and- one-half years for this legal process to come to completion. The prosecutor obtained undeniable forensic evidence of the pornography and the secret photos of my grandson. My grandson also had the courage to provide sworn testimony about what Williams did to him over time.

When the prosecutors took their first actions, Williams resigned from the Society, Atlanta Vocal Project, Big Chicken Chorus, and, of course, was naturally withdrawn from the judging program. According to Society records, Williams' membership was cancelled in August of 2017.

Because I knew of the friendship between Williams and Mr. Grevstad, I sent a text to Mr. Grevstad from Portugal offering to talk to him if he needed to talk. Within minutes he asked me to call. I did call, at my expense in an attempt to soften the blow.

Over time, the prosecution continued to assure us that justice would be done, and that Williams had agreed to plead guilty to the charges. We were relieved that there would be no trial. But the wheels would grind slowly. After two delays in 2019 we finally were notified that this case would conclude with a plea hearing on Thursday, August 29, 2019. We would have our day in court.

I cannot describe adequately all that I felt when I saw Misters Grevstad, Harris, and Hine parade toward the courtroom lobby accompanying Williams. We learned that they had arrived to become character witnesses on behalf of the sexual predator who abused my grandson for over a year. It became quickly clear that they were there to get Williams' sentence reduced.

I could not speak, but my daughter, the victim's aunt, confronted Mr. Grevstad and Mr. Hine. Mr. Grevstad would not look her in the eye until she demanded that he did. When she asked Mr. Hine what he would do if the victim was his son, he stood speechless. She reminded both of them of the egregious nature of the acts committed by Williams on my grandson for over a year. They didn't have much to say in response.

My family entered the courtroom seeing that those who, in their testimony, identified themselves as somewhat high-profile members of the BHS, lined up in support of the criminal. Four members of the BHS stood with the criminal. The only member of the BHS that stood with the victim, my grandson, was me.

Mr. Harris, Mr. Hine, and Mr. Grevstad all testified on behalf of the criminal who had just pleaded guilty as stated above. Mr. Hine and Mr. Grevstad mentioned that they were musical directors of local Society chapters. Mr. Harris' testimony was perhaps the most offensive of all. He was asked about private conversations he had in the car with my teenage grandson about sex. He was in the car with Mr. Harris who at the time also, I

believe, was a teenager. In Mr. Harris' testimony the allusion was clear that my grandson was somehow partially to blame for his own abuse because he dared talk about sex to another teenager in a private conversation in a car.

I was told that, during plea bargain negotiations, the prosecution offered the defendant a deal in which he would only serve five years in confinement. The defense refused the offer. After all the character testimony was complete, the judge seemed to hear it for what it was and issued the sentence as described earlier, exactly what the prosecution thought was appropriate. In my view the judge's action speaks volumes about his thoughts concerning what he had just seen paraded before him! Williams was then escorted out of the courtroom in handcuffs headed to spend the first night of his sentence.

Much to my dismay I later learned that Mr. Grevstad contacted my grandson twice by telephone in the week leading up to the hearing. My grandson told me that Mr. Grevstad's message was that "jail is a bad place, bad things happen in jail, Williams didn't need jail because he was sorry that he did what he did, and that all Williams needed was rehabilitation". I will tell you simply, in a euphemistic manner, that my grandson does not have fond memories of that phone call series.

### **MY PERSONAL RESPONSE**

I realize that the BHS is not in the business of dealing with my feelings. I appreciate that fact yet am compelled to tell you about my personal response and ask some questions.

When I first heard of Williams having sexually exploited my grandsons, I took the high road. To protect my family and the Marietta Chapter I chose not to disclose what had happened for almost two years. Very few in the chapter knew the secret. When the court case was imminent, I did tell the entire Marietta Chapter of the sexual abuse. I also told them that I clearly understood that this was an individual act on the part of Williams alone, not to be blamed on the Society. For that reason, I stayed active, continued to sing in my quartet, became a member of an in-house ensemble, joined the music team, and worked alongside Mr. Grevstad as Assistant Musical Director, and attended district conventions.

But, because of their feelings, my family members and their friends left the Society and cannot even attend a BHS function because of the deep wounds inflicted upon them. The Big Chicken Chorus lost seven high quality voices because of the abuse. I no longer even try to sell tickets to my family members.

None of the character witnesses had the courage to call me before the hearing and tell me what they were going to do. In the previous two years where I had served under Mr. Grevstad's leadership as Assistant Musical Director of the Big Chicken Chorus, I thought we had established some form of personal relationship. Mr. Hine and I had been long-term albeit distant friends. My feelings of personal betrayal cannot be adequately described. Our family agrees, to the person, that we were blind-sided. Williams sexually exploited our child, yet these three high-profile BHS members appeared in court in his defense. I simply cannot process that in my mind as hard as I try.

In a conversation with Marty Monson I learned something about the training all staff and board members are required to take on this subject. Marty told me that they learned that only 10% of sex offenders are convicted and that 90% are "running around loose in society". Please know that I am proud of my grandson and family for having the courage to stand up in court and call Mr. Williams to account for what he did. Again, I simply cannot process how the three people named in this complaint could defend him.

When Mr. Grevstad was first notified of the abuse, he did not report it to the BHS as is required by the Youth Policy. **Question: Is that a violation of the Youth Policy and COE item 3?**

Further questions:

1. **Did the court appearance of three BHS members violate the Youth Policy (It is the responsibility of every Society member to be aware of the impact that his conduct may have upon Youth who may be present at any Activity)?** In this case the activity was a public appearance in court. The noted courtroom conduct clearly impacted my grandson who, by the way, would still be a member of BHS if it were not for Williams. After the character testimony, my grandson is more deeply impacted in life and in his attitude about just what does the BHS really stand for.
2. **What does it say about the BHS that four members of the BHS came to the courtroom, three who testified in support of Williams, and stood with the criminal while there was only one BHS member standing with the victim, me?**
3. **Did the noted actions by the noted three BHS members in the courtroom violate COE articles 2, 4, & 8 as described above?**
4. **Did Mr. Grevstad's phone calls to my grandson violate the Youth Policy and COE articles 2, 3, & 4?**
5. **Did Mr. Harris' testimony alluding that my grandson was partially culpable violate COE articles 2 & 3?**

It is probably obvious that my answers to five of the questions is "yes". I could pontificate in my answer to question #2 but I won't.

I will complete this complaint by asking a more personal question to all who will be forced to deal officially with this unpleasant subject: **If your child was in the place of my grandson, having been violated by a member of the BHS who is now a sex offender, having been forced to sit through a courtroom proceeding where three high-profile members of the BHS sat in defense of the criminal, what would you do?**

I look forward to hearing from you.

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Signed and submitted  
Bob Snelling/ Marietta Chapter, BHS

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Date