

Exhibit 13

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NoFap Founder Is Suing a Neuroscientist Who Thinks Masturbating Is Fine

Alexander Rhodes, the owner of the NoFap trademark, filed a complaint against a neuroscientist who studies porn and sexuality, for libel and defamation.

By Samantha Cole

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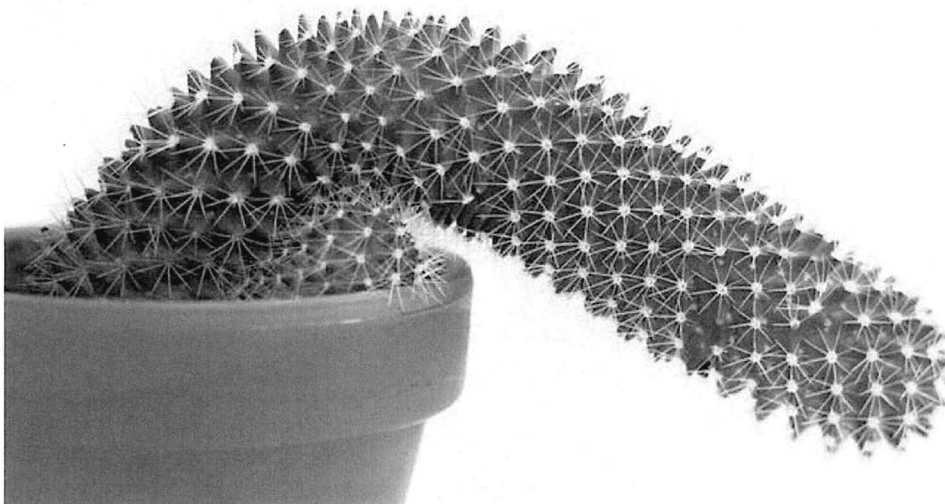
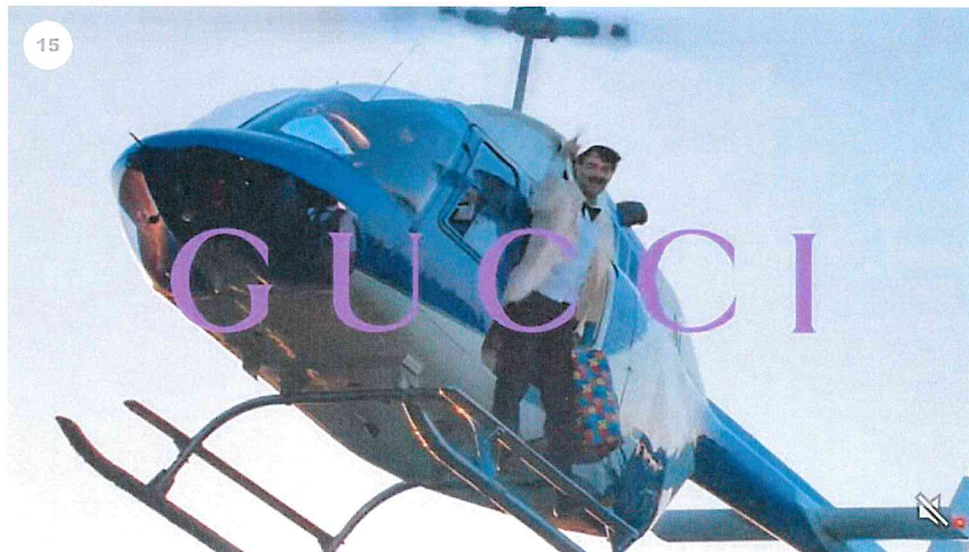


IMAGE VIA GETTY IMAGES

The owner of the NoFap trademark and website, Alexander Rhodes, is suing a neuroscientist for defamation, claiming that she has made “numerous false and defamatory statements” about him and his work.

Rhodes founded NoFap in 2011 after—as he tells it in the lawsuit—a lifelong addiction to porn beginning at age 11. His work, put simply, is to help men resist jerking off. The tenets of the NoFap website state that it's merely trying to help people break porn addiction by abstaining from masturbating. The website is careful to claim that it's just a website, that it's not a movement, even though it was spawned from an associated subreddit with 515,000 subscribers and a Twitter account with more than 19,000 followers.

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NoFap is most commonly associated with #NoNutNovember, an online challenge in which men try not to masturbate or otherwise orgasm for a month. As with many male-focused online communities, there are parts of the community that are focused on men's rights, are misogynistic, and that have harassed people. A 2018 study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Sexualities* found that members of NoFap online communities don't see women in porn as "real women," and that "real sex" is seen through the predominately male, heterosexual worldview of its members.



Let This Be the Last No Nut November

SAMANTHA COLE

Nicole Prause, a neuroscientist who studies sexual science through a neuroscience and physiology lens, has researched so-called "porn addiction" and found no scientific basis for it. "These online communities have whipped themselves into a frenzy when in the past men wouldn't have been concerned," Prause **told the Guardian in 2016**. "Then the next time they go to have sex they are causing themselves more distress."

Prause has said publicly that she is regularly harassed by NoFap followers, and in posts in the last few days, she's claimed that harassment and death threats from Rhodes' fans have escalated to the point that the FBI and local law enforcement are involved.

In the lawsuit, Rhodes claims that Prause's statements are false, and have caused him to suffer "significant reputational harm and sustained actual damages" in lost revenue, productivity, and expenses in amount amount exceeding the jurisdictional minimum of \$75,000.

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"Alexander Rhodes and NoFap's lawsuit has no merit nor do his libelous and unfounded assertions regarding me, my character, or my business," Prause told Motherboard. "He is entitled to his opinions, however he is not entitled to spread complete falsehoods about me to profit himself and silence speech."

Rhodes' attorney, Andrew Stebbins, told Motherboard that Rhodes will not tolerate "malicious personal attacks from those who seek to discredit, disparage and otherwise injure him through false statements designed to

assassinate his character and reputation. This case is brought solely in response, and properly limited in scope, to such attacks."

Rhodes also launched a crowdfunding campaign where he aims to raise \$200,000 to pay for the lawsuit. At the time of publication, he has raised \$34,327.89.

Sex educators, adult industry groups and therapists told Motherboard that they are scared of legal action from NoFap, and some of them weren't willing to speak openly about masturbation and the stigma of watching porn.

Max Bennet, Vice President of New Media at amateur camming platform Stripchat, said that Stripchat decided to start hosting a weekly interactive stream for users with therapist David Ley, after conducting a user survey.

The informal survey found that many of the people who watch the platform feel bad—or at least anxious—about their porn and masturbation habits. Of the 6,300 Stripchat users they surveyed, 42 percent said they experienced at least "occasional anxiety" about their cam-viewing habits.

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On Thursday, Ley will host a special No Nut November-themed stream. But Ley and Stripchat are hesitant to even mention NoFap in announcements, because they fear harassment from people in that movement.



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"These folks are some of the most obsessive, hateful folks I've ever encountered online," Ley told Motherboard. "They rabidly attack anyone who disagrees with them, with extraordinary black and white thinking... My impression is that they tend to be highly obsessive individuals who transmute their obsessive use of porn into an obsession with attacking people who might expose that the problem is in them, rather than the porn. Ultimately, they're the problem, not the porn."

The phrase NoFap was **trademarked by Rhodes in 2013**. The **NoFap website states** that "using the NoFap Marks as a generic word for quitting porn or abstaining from masturbation" isn't an authorized use of the trademark.

"The need [for Stripchat's therapy chat] is there, in part I believe because of the anti-masturbation messaging put out by different groups," Bennet said. "When it came to #NoNutNovember, we decided to focus specifically on this topic, but we avoided using certain phrases in our conversations and posts because of the trademark."

"There's reason to be concerned about the way in which the trademark of NoFap by Alexander Rhodes might be used to silence criticisms of anti-masturbation campaigns, which have historically been referred to as NoFap," Mike Stabile, communications director for adult industry advocacy group Free Speech Coalition, told Motherboard. "This makes it tremendously difficult for critics of these anti-masturbation campaigns to reach an audience, because they can't use 'NoFap' without fear of legal retribution. As a result, scientists, therapists and others who have spoken out about the anti-masturbation community's anti-semitism, misogyny and harassment find themselves targeted if they use the phrase."

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All of this—the slippery nature of NoFap's founding principles, Prause getting harassed online—are typical when trying to understand the topic of groups like NoFap and No Nut November. **Last year, Motherboard examined**

the origins of the anti-masturbation movement: Orgasm denial and control over one's own sex drive are key principles of historically fascist and white supremacist groups, including the Proud Boys and the Klu Klux Klan. (In 2016, Rhodes appeared on former Proud Boys leader Gavin McGinnes' podcast, and in 2018, denied knowing at the time that the Proud Boys was a white supremacist group.)

"It's endlessly fascinating to me how these folks take on the role of besieged martyrs, fighting against evil, but then claim their arguments are not based in morality," Ley said. "I'm personally and professionally troubled that they present men and masculinity as being so weak that dirty movies overwhelm our reason, our self-will, and cripple our penises. It's a disturbing presentation of their idea of men."

TAGGED: SEX, MASTURBATION, NOFAP, NO NUT NOVEMBER

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