

Dan Kellar

Column Name: Being the change (yeah I know I am claiming huge, but it is my website as well!)

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Article Title: Oppressive cops in a 'democratic' state

As I watched the youtube video showing Andrew Meyer, a University of Florida journalist student being assaulted, tasered and arrested after asking American senator John Kerry a series of questions, I couldn't quit humming Neil Young's *Ohio*.

On May 4th 1970, after days of protests against the American invasion of Cambodia, at Kent State University, 4 students were murdered and 9 others gunned down by an aggressive Ohio national guard. The force was authorized by the governor of the state and the president of the school to disband these 'riotous' students who were exercising their rights of free assembly and speech.

On Monday September 17th, at an open forum with Kerry, Mr. Meyer decided to ask the former presidential candidate three questions:

1. Why, in the face of wide-scale voter fraud did you concede the election?
2. Why do you not act to impeach Bush before he can invade Iran? (He also mentioned how Clinton was impeached for a blowjob).
3. Were you a member of the Skulls and Bones Society?

As Meyer was asking his questions, members of the police force tell him to hurry as he was going over his time limit (he spoke for a total of 1:30). As he finished his third question the microphone was cut off and police started their assault.

Since he had done nothing wrong, Meyer resisted the officers' advances by wriggling and shouting for help. Eventually 6 officers pinned him down, tasered him and cuffed his hands. The police led him out of the auditorium and informed him that he was being arrested for inciting a riot.

Firstly, there was no riot so how could he be arrested for inciting one? Secondly, how does shooting a student with 50 000 volts of electricity calm down a crowd that is apparently rioting?

The charges were eventually reduced to disturbing the peace and resisting arrest, which is felony and will if convicted make Meyer, like 7% of Floridians ineligible to vote in America's future elections (they hand out felony charges like WLU's parking police hand out tickets).

Though not as brutal as the Ohio slaughter, this was another case of aggressive action against free speech. The fact that they tasered and arrested an unarmed and confused student while nobody did anything is another example of fear of those who we are supposed to trust with our protection; an ingredient in a police state.

The fact that Meyer was attacked after asking Kerry a question about the Skulls and Bones is a whole different matter (more ammo for 'conspiracy' theorists).

What happened to free speech in America? When were police told to attack all dissenters and ignore personal moral thoughts?

In recent years any protest has been downplayed by our political leaders while the media shows the attacks on the protesters without covering the reasons they are

protesting (G8 Quebec, G7 Seattle, SPP Montebello). In this case we have undeniable proof of over reaction by police which was recorded and disseminated across the world.

Don't think that we in Canada are so far off from the American example. On August 20th in Montebello Quebec, police from Ontario et la belle province fired tear gas and rubber bullets into crowds of peaceful protesters, some of whom are WLU students, who were there to show their disagreement with the undemocratic Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP).

This police aggression was queued by internal police provocateurs sent out to incite a riot and were caught and unmasked by a CUPE leader who was at the police line. These agents were then 'arrested' and led away by police, their initial plan failed but the cops moved in on the protesters anyways.

With the SPP our security/human rights standards will be degraded (along with a slew of other standards) to the level of the USA. How long before our campus police are carrying tasers and attacking our students who have asked Paul Martin tough questions?

Some argue that Meyer was hogging the microphone and used vulgar language and that is why he was approached by police. If that is the case, why didn't the police ask him to leave instead of attacking him? When did speaking freely, without inciting hate, become a punishable offence?

We can't be afraid of dissent or voicing our opinions; else we have lost our freedom, lost our democracy.

Watch the videos on youtube and if you feel disgusted for this travesty of democracy, tell the UF officials about it (president@ufl.edu, updinfo@admin.ufl.edu). Meyer also has a website (www.theandrewmeyer.com) which has writings that are critical of the Bush administration.

Tin Soldiers and Nixon's comin'

We're finally on our own.

This summer I hear the drummin'

Four dead in Ohio.