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[Sheehan Arrested before Speech](#) •

What Really Happened

By Cindy Sheehan

truthout | Perspective

Wednesday 01 February 2006

As most of you have probably heard, I was arrested before the State of the Union address last night.

I am speechless with fury at what happened and with grief over what we have lost in our country.

There have been lies from the police and distortions by the press (shocker). So this is what really happened:

This afternoon at the People's State of the Union Address in DC, where I was joined by Congresspersons Lynn Woolsey and John Conyers, Ann Wright, Malik Rahim and John Cavanagh, Lynn brought me a ticket to the State of the Union address. At that time, I was wearing the shirt that said: 2245 Dead. How many more?

After the PSOTU press conference, I was having second thoughts about going to the SOTU at the Capitol. I didn't feel comfortable going. I knew George Bush would say things that would hurt me and anger me, and I knew that I couldn't disrupt the address because Lynn had given me the ticket, and I didn't want to be disruptive out of respect for her. I, in fact, had given the ticket to John Bruhns, who is in Iraq Veterans Against the War. However, Lynn's office had already called the media, and everyone knew





I was going to be there, so I sucked it up and went.

I got the ticket back from John, and I met one of Congresswoman Barbara Lee's staffers in the Longworth Congressional Office building and we went to the Capitol via the underground tunnel. I went through security once, then had to use the rest room and went through security again.

My ticket was in the 5th gallery, front row, fourth seat in. The person who in a few minutes was to arrest me, helped me to my seat.

I had just sat down and I was warm from climbing 3 flights of stairs back up from the bathroom so I unzipped my jacket. I turned to the right to take my left arm out, when the same officer saw my shirt and yelled, "Protester." He then ran over to me, hauled me out of my seat, and roughly (with my hands behind my back) shoved me up the stairs. I said something like "I'm going, do you have to be so rough?" By the way, his name is Mike Weight.

The officer ran with me to the elevators, yelling at everyone to move out of the way. When we got to the elevators, he cuffed me and took me outside to await a squad car. On the way out, someone behind me said, "That's Cindy Sheehan." At which point the officer who arrested me said, "Take these steps slowly." I said, "You didn't care about being careful when you were dragging me up the other steps." He said, "That's because you were protesting." Wow, I got hauled out of the People's House because I was "Protesting."

I was never told that I couldn't wear that shirt into the Congress. I was never asked to take it off or zip my jacket back up. If I had been asked to do any of those things ... I would have, and written about the suppression of my freedom of speech later. I was immediately and roughly (I have the bruises and muscle spasms to prove it) hauled off and arrested for "unlawful conduct."

After I had my personal items inventoried and my fingers printed, a nice Sgt. came in and looked at my shirt and said, "2245, huh? I just got back from there."

I told him that my son died there. That's when the enormity of my loss hit me. I have lost my son. I have lost my First Amendment rights. I have lost the country that I love. Where did America go? I started crying in pain.

What did Casey die for? What did the 2244 other brave young Americans die for? What are tens of

thousands of them over there in harm's way for still? For this? I can't even wear a shirt that has the number of troops on it that George Bush and his arrogant and ignorant policies are responsible for killing.

I wore the shirt to make a statement. The press knew I was going to be there, and I thought every once in awhile they would show me, and I would have the shirt on. I did not wear it to be disruptive, or I would have unzipped my jacket during George's speech. If I had any idea what happens to people who wear shirts that make the neocons uncomfortable, that I would be arrested ... maybe I would have, but I didn't.

There have already been many wild stories out there.

I have some lawyers looking into filing a First Amendment lawsuit against the government for what happened tonight. I will file it. It is time to take our freedoms and our country back.

I don't want to live in a country that prohibits any person, whether or not he/she has paid the ultimate price for that country, from wearing, saying, writing, or telephoning any negative statements about the government. That's why I am going to take my freedoms and liberties back. That's why I am not going to let BushCo take anything else away from me ... or you.

I am so appreciative of the couple of hundred of protesters who came to the jail while I was locked up to show their support. We have so much potential for good. There is so much good in so many people.

Four hours and 2 jails after I was arrested, I was let out. Again, I am so upset and sore it is hard to think straight.

Keep up the struggle ... I promise you, I will too.

[Go to Original](#)

Sheehan Arrested before Speech
By Clarence Williams and Allan Lengel
The Washington Post

Wednesday 01 February 2006

Activist Cindy Sheehan was arrested last night after demonstrating in the spectators gallery of the House of Representatives as part of a larger war protest that was held outside the Capitol.

Sheehan, who was apparently given a gallery ticket by a member of Congress, began to attract notice about 30 minutes to an hour before President Bush's State of the Union speech.

Sheehan, whose son was killed in Iraq, opened her jacket to reveal a T-shirt that, according to a supporter, gave the number of U.S. war dead and asked, "How many more?"

She was also vocal, said U.S. Capitol Police Chief Terrance W. Gainer, and after she ignored instructions to close her jacket and quiet down, she was led out and arrested. Demonstrating in the House gallery is prohibited.

Sheehan's sister Dede Miller told a reporter that Rep. Lynn C. Woolsey (D-Calif.) had invited Sheehan as her guest. Woolsey could not be reached immediately for comment.

Late last night, about 50 protesters marched to the Capitol Police station to demand Sheehan's release. One of them was arrested. Miller said Sheehan was being processed early this morning.

Earlier last night, a band of banner-waving antiwar demonstrators clustered outside the Capitol and took the start of Bush's speech as a cue to let loose with an ear-splitting outburst of noise.

The group gathered at the statue of Ulysses S. Grant on the west side of the Capitol grounds for the protest, which was organized under the slogan of "The World Can't Wait - Drive Out the Bush Regime."

At the moment when a nearby TV set showed Bush beginning his address in the House chamber, the protesters responded with bongo drums, maracas and whistles.

The protesters' Web site urged participants to "Bring the Noise and Drown out Bush's lies."

As the president concluded, the noise reached a peak as protesters banged pots and pans, shouting "Bush step down, people rise up."

At one point, demonstrators sang peace anthems of an earlier day, including "Give Peace a Chance" and "All You Need Is Love."

One of the speakers at the rally before the outbreak of tumult identified himself as Bill Mitchell and said his son, Army Sgt. Mike Mitchell, was killed in Baghdad in April 2004.

"We knew this war was wrong from the beginning," he said, "and we are not going to stop speaking" until the troops are brought home.

"We are going to demand that our government bring them home. We need to bring an end to this insanity," he said as the temperature fell and the wind gusted.

A speaker identified as Ann Wright, who had served in the State Department and as an Army officer, called on the protesters to organize for this year's congressional elections as a means of stopping the war. "We've got to put some spine into people who serve us right here," she said, pointing toward the Capitol.

Staff writer Martin Weil contributed to this report.

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