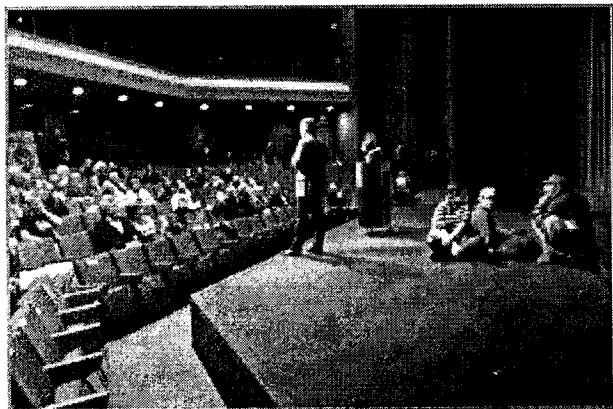


Shouting 'racist' in a crowded university

By [Robyn Urback](#) | November 14th, 2010 | 11:27 pm

Protest shuts down Blatchford speech at UWaterloo



Christie Blatchford's scheduled speech at the University of Waterloo was cancelled Friday after three students occupied the stage and refused to leave.

The *Globe and Mail* columnist was to talk about her new book, *Helpless: Caledonia's Nightmare of Fear and Anarchy, and How the Law Failed All of Us*, when five students decided to play "activist;" three planted themselves onstage, one acted as "negotiator" and another as "media relations." It's just like how grown-ups do it, huh?

Related: [Blatchford wanted to speak amidst protest](#)

"We don't want people who are really, really racist teaching [the people we love]," negotiator Tallula Marigold [told the student press](#). "And we don't want that person to have a public forum because it makes it dangerous for others in the public forum."

Marigold was clearly alluding to the widely known, yet rarely remarked upon "public forum plague," during which individuals present are subject to mental and physical peril (and possibly a nasty rash) when a meanie takes the podium. Dangerous, indeed.

"Our goal was to not let her speak, we accomplished that."

Kudos, Marigold and crew, for finding a method of protest almost as dignified as holding one's breath. And for such a worthy cause, too! Take that, free expression!

Blatchford's new book examines the role of government during the 2006 occupation of the Douglas Creek Estates in Caledonia, Ontario, by members of the nearby Six Nations reserve. Blatchford argues that the occupation, now in its fifth year, was mishandled by a government that failed to treat all of its citizens equally. It's our good fortune that those scholars at UW were able to recognize the dribble for what it is: vile, illegal hate speech. Surely too dangerous to be granted a public forum!

This incident is a poor copycat performance of the demonstration that took place at the University of Ottawa last March when an actual crowd of protesters gathered in anticipation of a lecture by right-wing pundit Ann Coulter. Coulter, known for her controversial opinions and inflammatory remarks, lived up to her reputation when she told a Muslim student at the University of Western Ontario to "take a camel" a few days before she was scheduled to speak at the U of O. The Ottawa protest achieved what it sought, and prevented Coulter from taking the stage at the university.

On Friday, the University of Waterloo protesters had the same goal. "Unfortunately there is a small minority that felt that they would win if they'd just sit on the stage and yell 'racist, racist, racist,'" said UW assistant director of media relations Michael Strickland, obviously forgetting that they'd have to first pull their thumbs out of their mouths to do so. "We made a determination that since she wasn't going to get a word in, in any sort of respectful fashion, there would be no point in bringing her out and having her subjected to that," he said.

Now, what's more embarrassing: these students ostentatiously patting themselves on the back for using bully tactics to censor debate on an important issue, or the fact that UW couldn't handle a protest of three? (I mean, they *did* have a "negotiator," after all.) In any case, Blatchford's speech will be rescheduled and rumour has it protesters are already threatening to bang their heads against a wall and not eat their vegetables. Can't wait.

- Photo by Nick Lachance of The Cord

Tags: Christie Blatchford • University of Waterloo

There Are 23 Responses So Far. »

1. *BC Penny* says:
November 15, 2010 at 12:15 am

Today's youth, Tomorrow's leaders or convicts. God help us all.
Caledonia stay strong. The Provincial Government & OPP cannot cover this one up. Province to Province people are hearing you. Dalton should follow Gordons move.

2. *Jon* says:
November 15, 2010 at 12:26 am

Sometimes idiots just need to shut up and listen, then make judgement. Half of the morons in university are only there having fun on their parent's tab, most have no clue what really goes on outside their circle of pub friends and beer parties. Our laws are so lame pedophiles and murders get away with everything and we can't even handle a bunch of spoiled brats that never got weened off mommy's wallet. Our proud nation is becoming home of the losers and leaches...

3. *Bruce Haddad* says:

November 15, 2010 at 3:29 am

What an embarrassment, the students who participated in that disgusting show should be expelled.

4. *don* says:

November 15, 2010 at 7:31 am

This article is almost as bad as the protest it's trying to belittle. Sounds like Ms. Urback has some issues of her own before she claims to be a journalist forming any type of respect.

5. *Stephen* says:

November 15, 2010 at 10:21 am

Ugh Don, no this article is not almost as bad as the protest. This is a blog, not a newspaper, and bloggers are allowed to have opinions (as are opinion columnists in newspapers but I don't want to overload you on facts right now). Furthermore, "this embarrassing protest makes a ridiculous joke of the concept of free speech" is a perfectly reasonable opinion to hold.

6. *William (Bill) Ashley* says:

November 15, 2010 at 10:56 am

That is Julian right, wonder what gave him the novel idea of occupying a stage in protest to a protest of an occupation of an occupation of an occupation

Guess they're just gonna have ta read the book to know what she was talkin about.

7. *Therese* says:

November 15, 2010 at 11:27 am

The giggly faces of those protesters are most eloquent. Their protest was clearly an act of self-congratulation by excitable kids. Its effect was to say "Down with free speech". Presumably these are not history students.

8. *Bleh* says:

November 15, 2010 at 3:26 pm

Not so subtle mocking is more childish than journalistic. You really need to learn to write better before addressing issues like this.

9. *E Aboyeji* says:

November 15, 2010 at 3:33 pm

Like we cared.

Look at that hall. Its empty.

10. *Merulian* says:

November 15, 2010 at 3:50 pm

This is not the same as the protest at the University of Ottawa- first of all, that protest took place outside the venue. Secondly, it was due to poor planning and an unexpected amount of attendees (both protesters AND those wishing to hear Coulter speak) that fire safety regulations would be a problem. Many protesters there wished to hear what Coulter came to say and engage in debate- unfortunately, it never happened. Either way, this sad and embarrassing "protest" is exactly what many of us who oppose certain speakers' opinions are tired of- those few that feel the need to act like children and mark "activist" as a negative, ignorant term.

11. *Jacob* says:

November 15, 2010 at 4:00 pm

I feel embarrassed for Macleans. Are there no more editors left?

12. *Garnet* says:

November 15, 2010 at 4:07 pm

Quick prediction: these same three people will still be in university a decade from now.

13. *dollywood* says:

November 15, 2010 at 8:42 pm

Robyn, do you have any proof that those were actually students? As someone already mentioned, that's the infamous Julian Ichim, and I'm pretty sure the girl on the left is a woman whose arrest was publicized during the G20 protests. They are anti-poverty activists who have been causing stirs in this region for the last 5-10 years. Remember the pie in Dalton McGuinty's face? Same person.

In any case, I'm fairly certain these aren't students; unless you checked their student cards before writing this brazen attack. That's what we would call a strawman argument.

Don't get me wrong, I think that Ms. Blatchford had a right to give her speech. But I can't help but point out the classic "damn those liberal elitist" pigeon-holing that you're attempting. Next time you write an article, can you please keep the drawer of Conservative cliches closed. Canada isn't ready to descend into your low road, market-tested politics.

14. *Kriss* says:
[November 15, 2010 at 8:44 pm](#)

This sounds like a similar situation that may occur at York University this week with the appearance of George Galloway hosted by the YFS, with a planned protest as well.

for more information here are some of my thoughts:

<http://theyorklife.wordpress.com/2010/11/15/dividing-and-conquering/>

15. *Liam* says:
[November 15, 2010 at 9:49 pm](#)

So, just wanted to point out that not only is the author as biased as the protesters, they are also as childish.

LOOK at the crowd. Click on the picture and actually LOOK at the crowd. I saw 90% white hair. I saw next to no students and THAT is the power of free speech. (Most of those people are most likely either family or probably had to be there because it was work related, although why a University would sponsor a controversial/potentially Racists speaker is unknown to me). THAT is the power of freedom itself; to be able to say, OR IGNORE anyone. Someone who doesn't have a voice because no-one will listen to them has a billion X LESS chance of having their voice heard, as by some-one who has their voice taken away.

And since this a public forum and MY voice can be heard if people so choose to read, my opinion is that the author of this article should not be allowed to write again. It offended all of my limited intellect and the senses that it used to travel to my brain.

16. *Mark* says:
[November 15, 2010 at 11:36 pm](#)

What is wrong with you people? All of you who are defending these actions, shame on you. Free speech only when we agree with the content? That is not the principle we adhere to in this country.

Oldest trick in the book: if you can't attack the content, you attack the writer. Hey you on the high horse, people are allowed to disagree with you sometimes.

17. *Margaret* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 2:56 am](#)

It's DRIVEL!!! NOT DRIBBLE!!!

Jaysus.

Really – now that I know how many people cheat in University? Sorry I've got no respect for the lot of you. What a farce. I'm betting 1/3 of those in the audience cheat on essays. No wonder they don't want freedom of speech – it would mean they'd have to actually learn something – become literate, that sort of thing.

I don't like Blatchford, but this was just plain stupid.

18. *Margaret* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 2:58 am](#)

This attitude is caused by the stupid Human Rights Tribunals.


19. *Anonny Moose* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 8:19 am](#)

Left wing thuggery and opposition to free speech strikes again, only speech they agree with is acceptable doncha know.

Kudos to Christie Blatchford for having the guts to tell a factual story letting the world know how the law failed the people of Caledonia.

20. *ron* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 8:26 am](#)

Disgusting. An English friend once told me Canadian university students are sub-par compared to European students. I am starting to believe it. These baby Pol Pots need a wake-up call. A night in jail for trespassing should do it.

21.  *Nick Van der Graaf* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 9:34 am](#)

I'm typically a progressive on most issues, and rarely if ever agree with blatchford. But these students made a mistake. She does have the right to speak. They didn't just stop her – they stopped meaningful debate.

No thanks, kiddies. You messed up.

22. *steven katona* says:
[November 16, 2010 at 10:30 am](#)

what was the point of the protest? i support this woman's book. these protesters are idiots. come to nanaimo boys and girls i'll show ya a resister@! you wimps@! i'll eat ya for breakfast!

23. *jeff jefford* says:

November 16, 2010 at 3:48 pm

I'm (now) going out to buy Blatchford's book. Freedom of speech doesn't exist in our universities today. I've listened to Blatchford on radio over the years and she is NOT a racist. Kids, grow up!