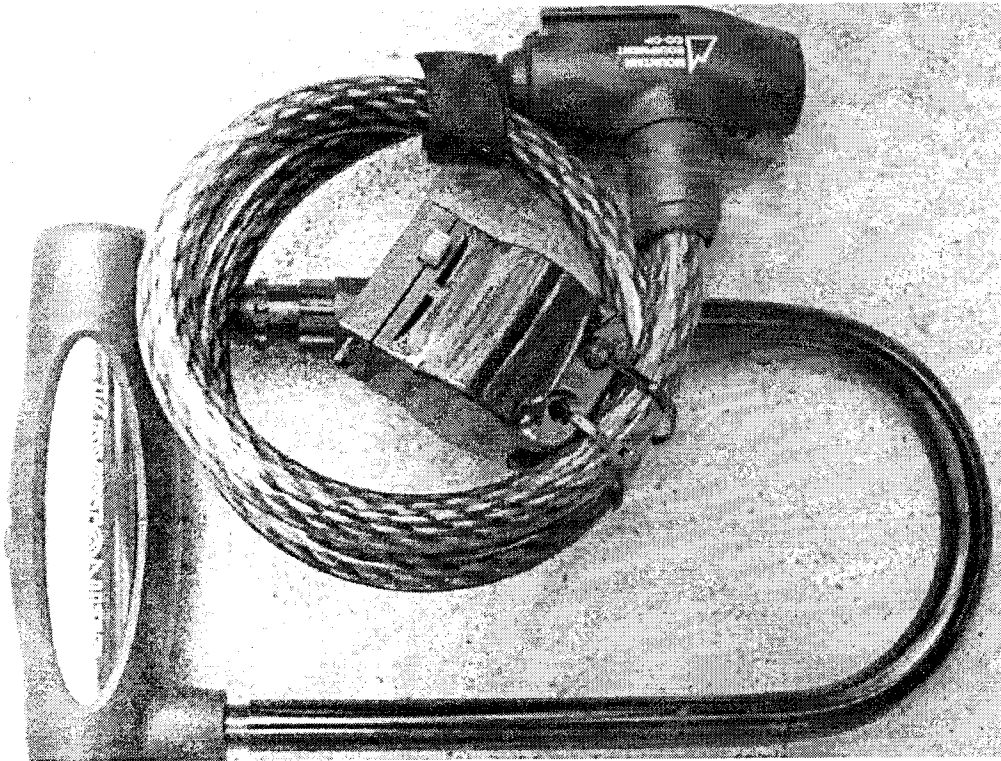


National Post

Latest tool in war on free speech: bike locks



By the time Ms. Blatchford arrived — “mortified,” she said, at her lateness — campus police had realized the protesters could not be safely removed, given the bike locks around their necks, and so cancelled the speech “due to safety concerns.” On Monday, the school apologized and promised to reschedule in the near future.

Joseph Brean, National Post Monday, Nov. 15, 2010

Chained by his neck to two female protesters, University of Waterloo doctoral student Dan Kellar was nevertheless in control of the situation at a campus lecture hall last week, as he sat on stage and chanted slogans to prevent journalist and author Christie Blatchford from speaking about her new book on the native protests at Caledonia, Ont.

Ms. Blatchford, the Governor-General’s literary award-winning writer of *Fifteen Days*, was slightly delayed by traffic on Friday, and as university spokesman Michael Strickland announced this to the small audience, he was shouted down with calls of “racist, racist, racist.”

By the time Ms. Blatchford arrived — “mortified,” she said, at her lateness — campus police had realized the protesters could not be safely removed, given the bike locks around their necks, and so cancelled the speech “due to safety concerns.” On Monday, the school apologized and promised to reschedule in the near future.

With recent cancellations of lectures by Ann Coulter and George Galloway, among others, Canada has been struggling with ever more prominent scandals of free speech, in which left-wingers are routinely accused of anti-Semitism and terrorism, and right-wingers of racism and warmongering. But Ms. Blatchford’s experience at Waterloo marks a new phenomenon, because unlike Ms. Coulter, who was shut down by an unruly mob, and Mr. Galloway, who was shut down by the government, Ms. Blatchford was shut down by three people and a couple of bike locks.

“I was expecting hecklers or something,” said Ms. Blatchford, a *Globe and Mail* columnist, whose book tour for *Helpless* has exposed her to many tough questions — even angry rants — but always from people who let her speak first. She said this protest happened so fast that she has been second guessing her agreement to cancel.

"I think they're right to be gleeful," she said of the protesters, from Kitchener Waterloo Anti-Racist Action. "They did win. If their whole goal is to shut down free speech, then absolutely, they were successful. And that's why I'm kind of tortured about what I should have done. It seemed to me it happened very quickly and I didn't have a chance to think it through. Yet I don't know what else I could have done. It wasn't my call. I was an invited guest."

As she waited backstage, discussing what to do with the book publicist and police officer, several audience members heckled back at the protesters, chanting "Rent your own stage." The protesters replied "No racists in KW."

The irony is that there are plenty of racists in Kitchener-Waterloo, at least enough that Ms. Blatchford seems a minor trophy for the famously combative ARA. From the defunct Tri-City Skins and the Canadian Ethnic Cleansing Team, the area has given rise to many of the best known organized racist groups in Ontario, and several of its best known hate speech prosecutions, including Alex Kulbashian and James Scott Richardson.

But for Mr. Kellar, a PhD student in geography who teaches courses in climate change and environmental assessment, Ms. Blatchford was a worthy target for silencing in the name of racial tolerance.

"She won't come to terms with being a settler, and the responsibilities we have to the agreements we made that allowed us to create a state on this land," he said. "By ignoring settler responsibility to this land, to live up to the agreements we made on a nation to nation basis, she is creating a misunderstanding of history."

He said older members of ARA recall her "glorifying" the neo-Nazi Ernst Zundel, and he compared her to Julius Streicher, the Nazi propagandist.

"He was hung for presenting information which led to misunderstanding and hatred," Mr. Kellar said. "Those were the principles that were then set in Nuremberg, saying that is irresponsible conduct. So when we see the same sort of conduct, writing that ignores history and leads to misrepresentation and misunderstanding, which lead to hatred and racism, it's our responsibility to stop those things, as was found in the Nuremberg principles."

"It's no longer a free speech issue," he said. "When people are lying about the situation, it's just not appropriate to have them speak."

He said some of his ARA members wanted to hear her speak, and "were concerned with blocking her voice. But people have read her book. We have electronic versions of it which are freely available on the Internet. So people have read what she has to say.... There's no need to give her more of a voice. There's no reason to give her more of a space to spread what will lead to oppression of people."

Ms. Blatchford does not claim to have written a "360-degree view" of Caledonia, but rather an account of one narrow slice of it — the failure of the rule of law.

"I care about the rule of law, I believe in it. To me it's natural that is what I would have concentrated on," she said.

She compared it to *Fifteen Days*, in that it was "not about Afghanistan, not about the plight of the Afghan people, not about the Taliban, but about the Canadian soldier."

"I'm a f---ing newspaper reporter. I think in 1000 word pieces," she said. "I'm just unnerved to be in the company of people who are more genuinely controversial than me, but I long ago gave up any hope that universities were the defenders of free expression."

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WELLDONESON

Score: 1

Report Abuse

By ignoring settler responsibility to this land, to live up to the agreements we made on a nation to nation basis, she is creating a misunderstanding of history."

She's NOT a "settler". Dan Kellar, you imbecile, she was born here. That is YOUR misunderstanding of history.

The settlers passed away generations ago. There were NO "nations" here when Europeans arrived, just a lot of rather modestly progressed subsistence farmers. We are NOT "settlers" - we created Canada. The very concept that we "owe" natives anything is preposterous. This guy is a lunatic - as we can see by his words and deed. Chaining himself by the neck to two women? What a maroon!

Reply

STURMGESHUTZ

Score: 24

Report Abuse

Racist? Christie Blatchford racist? That is the most outrageous thing I have heard today. I have never known anyone, especially amongst her printed peers, as genuine, honest and insightful as Christie. However, I do see how she can be a threat to the mindless indoctrinated droves, she comes across as meek, humble and defenceless, lending to the notion that she shouldn't be targetted, well except at Waterloo U. Keep fighting the good fight Christie. Canada depends on you.

Reply

SENDERGREEN

Score: 13

Report Abuse

We need a Federal addition to the criminal code in the section that deals with Breaches of the Peace, that consequences deliberate action done to prevent, interrupt lawful public speeches. Freedom means nothing if we are not prepared to defend it from barbarians.

Second, we should remove funding from publicly funded educational institutions who fail to internally consequence their own students who act like nazi stormtroopers. Why are we taxpayers still paying 90% of PhD student Dan Kellar's education costs this morning. He committed a crime against higher education.

Reply

STEVENP

Score: 21

Report Abuse

A FREE COUNTRY? You really have to get your mind around the idea we are a SEMI-FREE country, and our emphasis on security and safety means we are losing more of our "freedom" every day.

CLIMATE REALIST

Score: 27

Report Abuse

"But for Mr. Kellar, a PhD student in geography who teaches courses in climate change and environmental assessment"

Says it all, dunnt?

Reply

SPIONKOP1

Score: 21

the guy who sits next to me at work says that society is falling apart. I fear he may be right. However hopefully the tactics of these lunatics is causing the pendulum to swing the other way and people are becoming aware. Stay strong Christie, it wouldn't matter if you were a good writer or not but you do happen to be a good 'un. we need you!

ms...10/16/10

2 replies

NBARTON

Score: 1

10/16/2010

God bless the academic elites. They make for a scary future for this country.

1 reply

DON_88

Score: 2

10/16/2010

The 'enlightened' minds of some of our university students and faculty are completely darkened and they are simply not aware of it. If they do not agree with Ms Blatchford, should not those supposed enlightened minds want to dispute with her in an open fashion? On another note, maybe we should leave the locks on them. Those locks speak volumes about their locked minds.

FREEDOMWRITER

Score: 23

10/16/2010

Dear Dan,

You're so darn right in your perception of the whole Indian...err...I mean native Canadian situation. So here's a way for you to really stand for what you believe in: First, find some native Canadians. Second, sign the deed to your house over to them. Perhaps you can live in a shack out in back or in the basement. Really, it's truly their land so it's up to them. I know you'll love your new living situation because it rights a wrong we made in regards to a bunch of dead people. Once the entire nation lives by your topsy-turvy black is white and white is black and everyone is a victim in waiting, and fear is your only real friend, your work will be complete...enjoy!

1 reply

POETIC NEMESIS

Score: 1

10/16/2010

I don't even know what this article is about...

And Canada does not have free speech. Never has. Never will.

1 reply

BRENDA79

Score: 24

10/16/2010

If Mr. Kellar is an example of a PHD student at Waterloo then I think taxpayers need to start asking themselves why in the hell any of our money goes to fund these pathetic excuses for places of learning. As for those who are appalled at Ms. Blatchford being called racist, it was only a matter of time before something like this happened. How many people ignored the violations of free speech against people like Rev. Boisson in Alberta because you didn't really agree with what he said so it didn't matter? Or Mark Steyn? Or Ezra Levant? Or Ann Coulter? It is a slippery slope, as cliché as that expression might be, and what happened at Waterloo is just a natural progression. Start picking and choosing what is acceptable to say and all of a sudden you may find you can't say anything at all.

1 reply

TORREST

Score: 12

10/16/2010

Twitts are shutting down our public spaces...things are sure different there in Waterlooooo.

Where are the smart departments in that University anyway?

1 reply

BLUE82

Score: 17

10/16/2010

Is this(Kellar) the caliber of person that one of Ontario's finest universities produces? An absolute farce.

1 reply

Score: 11

FINECROWD

I cant stand Blatchford's opinions but for GOD's sake let the woman speak- Imagine a doctoral student with no education- No different from a goon in a brown shirt-

1OLDBUZZARD

As a student Environmentalist and Geographer Mr. Kellar should have been the first to realize that unlike Christie Blatchford, who works hard to research and deliver decent, balanced commentaries & opinions, anything we've heard from Dan Kellar is just hot air. The worst of it is realization thisbuffoon's student fees and expenses are likely funded by University / Provincial bursaries supported at least in part by our taxes. Funny, most Doctoral students that I have known are fairly busy people - this guy obviously has too much time on his hands.

Next

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