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Students Walk Out, Protest

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After a long and confusing adventure in the search for the site of the antiwar protest rally walkout, I stomped my way through the puddles of the bizarre world of the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus. I had arrived in the midst of students flooding from buildings surrounding the Northrop Auditorium. To my left fifty yards and to my right fifty yards were antiwar protesters marching



onward to the steps of the intimidating structure of Northrop Auditorium, resembling, in my mind, a court house or bank found in the likes of Mayberry.

Initially, protest signs were considerably scarce, as were the crowds. I looked to the

steps once again, to see a sign with a portrait of President George W. Bush captioned, "Lunatic." Within minutes, music blared from speakers. The music was at first, a KRS One song, a sort of "techno rap," if you will. Then incorporated into the festivities was quite a variety of music, including Bob Marley's "Stand Up for Your Rights," and other fitting songs like,

"War (What is it Good For?)" as well as the Beastie Boys' new release "In a World Gone Mad."

In the days leading up to this event, Open School students gathered in Leo's

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room for smaller-scale antiwar rallies, organized by Jessica Gardner and Liz Hoover, who brought in a speaker, Sam Sharma, to answer student's questions pertaining to the war, and the history of war in the middle-east. Sharma explained how he didn't see why the United States couldn't come up with an alternative resolution, rather a "non-apocalyptic" approach to liberating Iraq. He stated that his definition of non-apocalyptic was, "Nothing more than a sole assassin."

So by bus and by car, students piled out of Open School. The time was 10:30. It was March 21 and the bombing had began.

A small group of no more than five or six people formed a makeshift circle to play hacky sack. Soon, other signs began to pop

up, calling for the money invested in war against Iraq to go to local concerns, such as housing, children, and schools. There were a majority of Caucasians gathering before the steps, and fewer African-Americans in smaller isolated groups who wished to re-



and our own problems."

Within this short time span, protesters now flowed fluently to the steps of the auditorium, along with them were brought more signs:

"Whack=Iraq!", "Regime Change In Washington!", "F*** War, Coalition of the

main anonymous had this to say, "I think that the reason there's not a lot of black people here today is because we are faced with our own oppression

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UNwilling!", "Throw A Wrench In The War Machine!", "BUSHes Don't Belong In The Desert!", and "Fighting For Peace Is Like F***** For Virginity!" among others. Protesters also carried wooden silhouettes of doves on sticks.

The walkout consisted mainly of high school students. However, there was even said to be a teacher from the university joining in.

Morgan Shultz, a University of Minnesota journalist sporting a button that read, "Code Pink", had this to say, "Code Pink is derived from the terror alert scale, pink being a peaceful color, and is a women's coalition against war."

This demonstration held very dear to many Open Schoolers including Ananda Wold, Caitlin Holmstrom, and Clara Iwaszek.

"The show up isn't as well as we planned. Most college students are on spring break. The high school attendance is remarkable, but there are still few from Augsburg, Hamline, and some from the U who organized the event," said Wold. "I wanted to show the community and school where we stood on the issue of war," she added.

"I am just making sure our opinion is noticed," said Holmstrom.

Iwaszek stated, "I'm here just to show that I don't support what's going on."

There were medics and university police stationed on both sides of Northrop, anticipating a bloody uproar and prepared for nothing less.

Further back, down below the antiwar crowd, were the pro-war demonstrators. Open School's very own Antonio Rosario and Brady Taipale, a senior, were in attendance of the group, which also consisted of former Open Schoolers Gunner Bakke and Matt Cloutier.

Cloutier told me, "We are here to stand up for the very same rights that these people (protesters) have. We've already been hassled by one guy. I guess he was a veteran."

Another fellow that found the small group's message offensive approached them as I walked away. KARE 11 cameramen

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were also quick to take advantage of me leaving, then interviewed the group as they proudly held flags with cobra snakes on them reading, "Don't tread on me."

On my way out, was an older man asking Taipale,

"Are you guys for the war or against it?"

I told him that they were for the war and asked him if he too was for the war.

"Yes. I think we should kill the (expletive) dictator. I am a resident of Minneapolis for 27 years. Let's kill him." the man responded, creating a vibe of awkwardness.

Aaron Holland, also a senior here at Open School, is directly affected by the war, with loved ones fighting for the prosperity of our

country.

"I don't even want to talk about it. I'm through with this. I'm done with politics. I don't care what anybody else has to say. I'm tired of people's opinions. I only want facts," said Holland.

By now, the weather had proven hazardous to my sexy fragile skin. In fear of gangrene and pneumonia, and the reoccurrence of tuberculosis, I headed for shelter while the persevering protesters and contestants alike stood their grounds exposed to the elements, as are our brave troops exposed to the elements of the naked desert terrain.◊

