

The Daily Cardinal

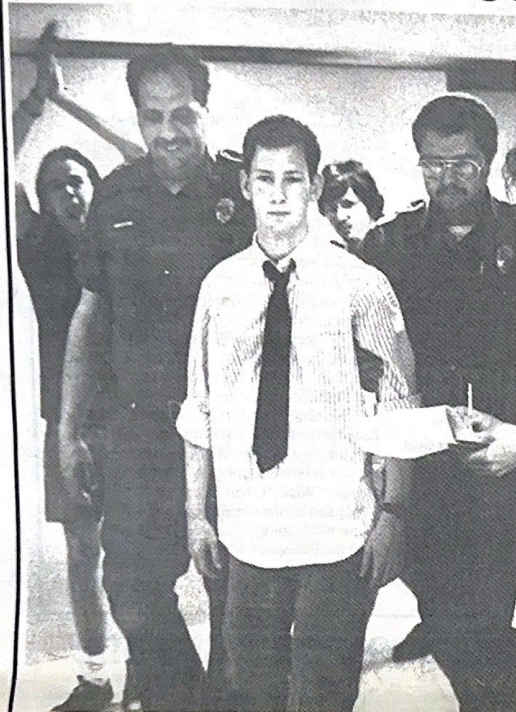
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The University of Wisconsin-Madison

Police use force to end ROTC sit-in

By Jean Christensen
OF THE CARDINAL STAFF



A 10-hour sit-in protesting the presence of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps on campus ended late Monday night when University Police and Security and Wisconsin Capitol Police forcibly removed and injured several students occupying the UW Board of Regents room on the 18th floor of Van Hise Hall.

Following a five-day sit-in outside Chancellor Donna E. Shalala's office in Bascom Hall, as many as 52 students peacefully took over the room Monday afternoon in an attempt to pressure UW System President Kenneth Shaw to sign a disclaimer noting the contradiction between ROTC policy barring gays and lesbians from the program and UW System policy against such discrimination.

Both Shaw and Shalala have indicated they do not plan to sign the disclaimer, which would be placed on University materials mentioning ROTC.

When around 11:15 p.m. approximately 40 of the students refused to leave after several warnings from P&S Chief Ralph Hanson, they were escorted or dragged by police from elevators to doorways in the building. Beginning with the first arrest, of organizer Jordan Marsh, the protest quickly spread to the bottom four floors of the building, resulting in several scuffles between police and protesters.

P&S officers arrested and then released all of the roughly 40 students who remained after 10 students left the board room of their own volition. Students occupying the board room complained of unbearable heat and stench and one student was reported to have fainted. Air conditioning in the room was not scheduled to be turned on until today, according to Dean of Students Mary Rouse.

A crowd of 300 cheered and chanted, "In the dairy state, you cannot discriminate," and "Kenneth Shaw, get off your fence, head of the school or head of defense," as protesters were escorted from the building.

Scores of students set up human barricades at the various entrances in an attempt to block police from dragging students outside. On the third and fourth floors, sit-in participants were dragged from the building's three elevators and through the human chains. Several students suffered cuts, bruises and swollen wrists when the human chains were broken up by police officers and protesters were dragged or shoved outside.

Students who left or were dragged from the building were not allowed back inside. Some students were dragged across concrete and through construction barricades outside the building as others were heaped upon piles of students still attempting to block the doors.

Many students complained of an excessive use of force by P&S and Capitol police. An ambulance was called in for University sophomore Neil Willenson, who suffered convulsions after being shoved repeatedly against the third floor lobby wall by P&S officers.

Ten Percent Society President Dave Wilcox showed a bruise on his face where he said he was punched by an officer. A reporter witnessed University junior Linda Wong being tossed upside down as she was removed from the building and several other students displayed swollen wrists and bleeding cuts.

"It's terrifying," said Madison Ald. Andy Heidt, Dist. 9, who arrived in time to witness the break-up. "It's reprehensible that the University would be so entrenched in their discriminatory policies and that their henchmen would lash out with such violence."

Police officers wore rubber or leather gloves when handling the protesters. When accused by one student of being afraid to handle gay protesters for fear of contracting AIDS, one officer replied, "People are dirty, that's all." Another officer said the gloves were being worn "because there are people bleeding."

Rouse said she would not comment on undocumented students.

PETER BARRERIAS / Daily Cardinal
University Affairs Director and Bascom Coalition organizer Jordan Marsh was the first of 45 to be ushered from Van Hise Hall late Monday night.

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Sit-in

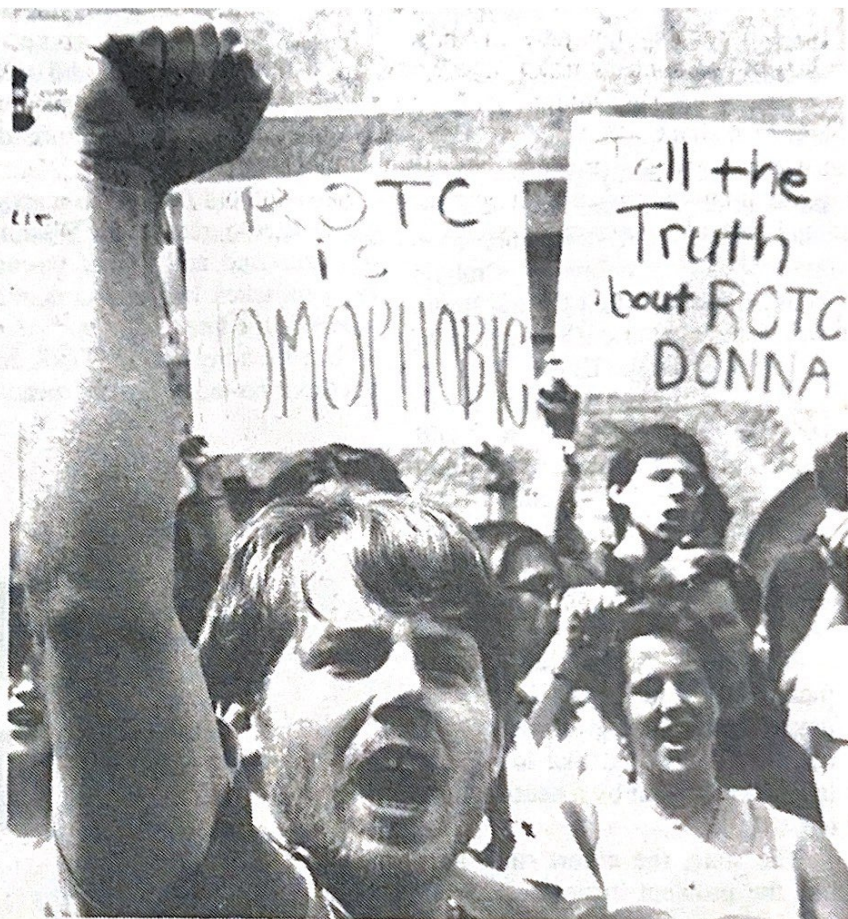
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mented incidents of violence against the protesters. "I wouldn't reach any conclusions until I have more information," she said, adding that students who were injured could file complaints with P&S. She said she was there only as a volunteer and at the request of the students and that only Chief Hanson gave the orders on how to remove the protesters.

Associate Dean of Students Roger Howard said, "The police have a responsibility and I believe they did make an effort to get people out as safely as possible."

Sociology Professor Joseph Elder, who wrote the University faculty's resolution last December calling for removal of ROTC from campus barring a change in the discriminatory policy, said he was impressed by the students' efforts.

"I'm impressed with the turnout and I'm proud that the students have kept it as well organized and focused as it has been," Elder said. "It's a process of keeping it an issue until the truth wins."



TRICIA DEERING / Daily Cardinal

Friday's ROTC sit-in on Bascom hill had around 250 people chanting for Chancellor Shalala to come out and sign a disclaimer addressing ROTC's anti-gay and lesbian policy.

Action!