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Police Break Up Hospital Sit-In

By ED KOHN

Club-swinging Palo Alto police and Santa Clara County Sheriff's Deputies cleared about 60 demonstrators from an administrative corridor at Stanford Hospital during a near-riot early Friday evening, ending a 30-hour sit-in.

Twenty-three persons, including the chairman of the Black Students' Union (BSU) and a candidate for the Palo Alto City Council, were arrested on a variety of charges that include assault with a deadly weapon, conspiracy, assault on a police officer, all felonies; malicious mischief, unlawful assembly, obstructing a police officer, failure to disperse and refusal to leave a public building after being ordered to do so (misdemeanors).

About two dozen demonstrators, not all of whom were arrested, and 13 police officers were reported injured. Most of the demonstrators suffered head and hand injuries after being clubbed by the police, while most of the police and sheriff's deputies were injured by flying glass, ashtrays, staplers, telephone books, table legs and other missiles.

The administrative offices where the demonstrators barricaded themselves were in shambles. Broken electric typewriters were strewn across floors; broken glass and water was under foot everywhere; furniture was damaged beyond recognition. Deputy hospital director Frank Vitale estimated damage at about \$100,000.

Alarms Set

Campus police reported 11 false fire alarms, five bomb threats—including two at the hospital and two trash fires following the arrests. Three fire bombs were thrown at a PG&E substation near the Women's Gym early Saturday morning, but no damage was reported.

Palo Alto Police Chief James Zurcher said that 65 Palo Alto police were deployed. They were supplemented by 110 sheriff's deputies under a mutual aid agreement.

All of the adults arrested were released on bail or bond late Saturday night. The three minors arrested will remain in custody until Monday.

The adults will be arraigned at 10 a.m., April 21 at the North County Courthouse.

The near-riot—by far the most violent situation on campus since last spring—erupted over the firing of a black hospital custodian, Sam Bridges. [See accompanying story.] The demonstrators barricaded themselves in the offices of hospital director Dr. Thomas Gonda in an attempt to obtain Bridges' reinstatement.

The Black United Front (BUF), a coalition that includes the BSU, began the tense sit-in Thursday afternoon after an apparent misunderstanding with Gonda about the form his response to its demands—including the immediate reinstatement of Bridges—was to take. Gonda later agreed to comply with all BUF demands except the reinstatement of Bridges.

Barricades Established

However, the BUF administration negotiations broke down and shortly before 5 p.m. Friday, 60 of the demonstrators decided to remain in Gonda's office. Hearing that at least one busload of police was on the way, they began to build barricades at both ends of the corridor. The demonstrators used desks, chairs, filing



CHARGE—Police charge into the demonstrators' south side corridor barricade.

cabinets, table tops and other pieces of furniture to effectively barricade both sets of reinforced plate glass doors.

At about 5:45 p.m., police units moved in, blocking off exits at both ends of the corridor. Vitale demanded that the group immediately vacate the premises, saying that it was interfering with the orderly functioning of the hospital. Assistant Palo Alto Police Chief Anderson repeated the order to leave the premises, and gave the group five minutes to do so without facing arrest.

At 5:59 p.m., Anderson called in to BSU chairman Willie Newberry: "Then you're not going to leave?"

The reply shouted back at Anderson was a loud "Right on!"

Battering Ram

Police then produced a six-foot battering ram, which they apparently obtained from the hospital's maintenance plant, and unsuccessfully began to attack one of the reinforced glass doors.

After several efforts, one pane of glass was smashed. Police attempted to spray a Mace-like substance at the demonstrators, but the protestors used a fire hose to repel both the charging police and their irritant. One policeman was hit by a flying stapler, and he collapsed in a pool of water.

The effects of the blown-back irritant then were felt by police, reporters, faculty observers and onlookers, and the situation remained static for about 10 minutes. The crowd, which was being held back by a double line of riot-equipped policemen, continued to shout encouragement to those sitting in and obscenities at the police.

Onlookers Declared Illegal

"It takes a lot of nerve to hold those clubs against unarmed people," one woman yelled.

"Power to the people," the crowd chanted.

The onlookers and most of the press were then declared an unlawful assembly by Anderson, and the officers began to push them back in earnest. They

stopped after the crowd had been moved back some 30 yards and contained behind a pair of locked glass doors. A hospital employee among the demonstrators produced a key, and unlocked the doors. An angry sergeant relented them amidst a barrage of angry curses.

Police then repeatedly assaulted the barricaded doors, but were repelled three times by the use of the fire hose and assorted missiles, including telephones.

In desperation, police loosened one door with what appeared to be a crowbar and a pair of bolt-cutters, and, at 6:30 p.m., using a rope, succeeded in pulling the twisted door out of the way.

'Let's Get 'Em'

As the door was pulled back with a rope, a police officer hollered "Let's get 'em," and the police eagerly vaulted over the barricade. At the same time, demonstrators opened a door at the other end of the corridor, where only ten policemen were stationed.

The officers were temporarily overwhelmed by the escaping protestors, and several policemen were beaten to the ground by demonstrators armed with clubs. One officer suffered an apparent broken shoulder as a result of a beating.

Other demonstrators left the officers through the windows—several of which were smashed—and slung to the ground on another fire hose. No one who escaped by this method was arrested.

At least one who was injured during the melee was later arrested as she was obtaining medical assistance at the Palo Alto Clinic.

One photographer on the scene estimated that it took police no more than 10 seconds to secure the entire occupied corridor. Several of the demonstrators were penned in and beaten by police. Injured police and demonstrators were treated on the scene and in the emergency room by hospital personnel who were standing by.

As the corridor was being secured, the escaping demonstrators and others throw rocks at police vehicles. No one was reported injured in these incidents.

This is a special issue of the Daily. Because of Easter, no Monday issue will be printed. The Daily will resume its regular printing schedule Tuesday.