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Monica Majewski

11/08/2007

It seems to happen all too often that the person who typically has the most to say is at a loss for words at the times when they're most crucial. With all the hours of scrutiny and conversation-- which gave way to endless introspective cogitation-- on the topic of my recent arrest, I imagined my thoughts would readily coalesce when it came down to translating them into this paper. In truth, I even had a sense of zeal for the opportunity to recount my experience near Fenway Park two Sundays ago. Here I sit though, countless hours and pints of caffeine later, with barely a paragraph typed out.

In feeble defense, I have been considerably out of practice with assigned writing for a good while now, and certainly (along with the fellow individuals assigned this paper) am addressing a new and rather intimidating audience. With the onset of the fall semester, my life became unremittingly consumed with making art and exploring creative processes at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Studying and creating art at a higher level of education has unmistakably proved to be the most inspiring and challenging, often grueling, undertaking in my life; my passion has ripened to be my priority.

I held that same incentive and reverence for my work on Sunday, October 21st when I was arrested on Park Dr. after a Red Sox baseball game. Ironically, my exposure to the sport exceed a one-season long bout when I joined the team in grade school. Never having been a sports fan and in need of a decent night's rest, I unassumingly retired early to bed the night of the Red Sox ACLS game rather than watch my first baseball game on television. Around 12:30 a.m., I was awoken by my exuberant roommates and accepted the invitation to join them for a short walk to the Fenway.

As I observed the late night spectacle from the sidewalk, I stood both in shock at the egregious revelry

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and bewildered by the daunting and ostensibly over-exhausted police presence. I contemplated the power dichotomy I saw between the police and the policed, mildly entertained by the whole spree but unsure why I had sacrificed sleep for sports fanatics' brouhaha.

Slightly past 1:00 a.m. the amusement had expired, the police opened the roads and the mass relocated to the green adjacent landmark center. Anticipating leaving momentarily after being at the site for under a half hour, I stood solitary on the sidewalk, removed from any larger or rowdy groups. In keeping with the unusualness of the evening, I was finishing the tail end of a friend's cigarette despite not being a smoker (for which I'll be delivering a grave apology to my parents) when I moved to the outer corner of the sidewalk to allow for a relatively small group of on-foot riot police, the exact number I can't recall, to pass. A

fter approximately three officers passed by me, I was alarmed when a male officer in the line shouted hostility at me to get out of the way. Being stuck between the roadway (which, as I mentioned, had been re-opened for automobiles) and the police officers who had already passed me and happened to be standing on the grass edge of the sidewalk preventing me from passing, I was unable to relocate myself and became distressedly confused when I simultaneously heard the same officer shout "That's enough, arrest her," while the remaining officers crowded around me. A wave of anxiety and disorientation overcame me and I had a strong sense of being both violated and handled in an unnecessarily hostile manner. Two officers, as I recall, both white males of substantial size, continued to force me face down to the sidewalk and zip-tied my wrists with excessive force which resulted in bruising of my right hip bone and a rib. While this was happening, I asked the officers in a considerably calm manner, "Why am I being arrested?" to which I don't recall a specific or respectful response other than various exasperated and antagonistic retorts marked with a sarcastic tone. In reaction to feeling as though I had been subjected to manhandling and an invalid arrest, especially given the size of the officers in relation to me, stated, "Please stop, you're using too much force" which had no effect on the way the officers handled me. One of the officers, Gavin: #11689, marked his name and badge number on my forearm with red ink. It seems the majority of those arrested on the same night had the same arresting officer.

The entire ordeal of my arrest must have taken less than 3 minutes from the time I stopped to the edge of the sidewalk until I was escorted into the police van with another woman approximately my age. I felt it incomprehensible that I was en route to the police station about to spend my night in a jail cell. For some time I was stunned and had difficulty feeling anything but bitterness as I felt my arrest was unjust. As the repercussions of misdemeanor charges began to materialize in my head, I considered how I should

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have presupposed the possibility of a dangerous situation, especially with the fatal violence following the 2004 Red Sox game.

I lived the rest of the night reduced to a fraction of myself. The police station I arrived at seemed the most inhospitable environment one could enter. Considering the mortifying conditions, regrettable choices, and stifled existences endured by prisoners across the country, I have to abashedly describe my own experience. After being exposed to this piece of the justice system though, despite its lesser astringency in comparison with larger prisons, crimes, and criminals, I feel as though I can begin to understand the acute horror it is to actually serve time imprisoned. The paperwork proceedings, fingerprinting, and photographs leading up to being escorted to my cell made me feel completely numb inside and detached from society outside the confines of the cement walls. Upon entering my cell, what remaining dignity I had was stripped clean when I was asked to show my chest to the guard in case I was concealing; as I pressed my ear into the cell's telephone receiver and tried desperately to contact anyone, each attempt ending in a lost call; as I laid my body down against the freezing, hard cement bench and tried irrationally to forget where I was; as I urinated in the horribly ugly steel toilet, demeaned as the sounds echoed throughout the dead walls.

I felt a gloom heavier than any load I've carried on my back or in my heart that has already worked to effect me. I finally got in touch with my older sister, Meryn, when the bail commissioner arrived and placed a phone call on his own cell phone. I felt a new low as I slumped outside to meet her; it was around 4:30 a.m. and she had a test in only a few hours and here I was, feeling selfish and overcome with guilt for her disappointment in me.

As I came to, I managed to objectively describe the situation to my sister and parents, while the media took the liberty of disclosing the information to a handful of other family and friends before I was able to. Since my recognizance, I have been struggling with the decision of my plea, and have resolved to plead guilty to my charges of disorderly conduct although I view this instance as an extraneous exercise of power on the part of the police. I am living, studying, and working in Boston to for the purpose of focusing all my energies on artistic endeavors and excelling in school, and have concluded that I lack appropriate resources and time to devote to a continued trial in my favor. Through choosing to plead guilty, I am also constructing an agreement with myself to have reverence for police and power entities, but raise a voice if the use of power becomes unjust.