



Riot Forces Cancellation Of Yiannopoulos Talk At UC Berkeley

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BERKELEY, Calif. (CBS SF/AP) — Protesters armed with bricks and fireworks mounted an assault on the building hosting a speech by polarizing Breitbart News editor Milo Yiannopoulos Wednesday night, forcing the event's cancellation.

Several injuries have been reported and at least four banks have been vandalized after demonstrators marched away from the scene of a violent protest at the canceled speaking event by controversial far-right writer and speaker Yiannopoulos on the University of California at Berkeley campus.

UC Berkeley officials said the protest was infiltrated by vandals.

Yiannopoulos was making the last stop of a tour aimed at defying what he calls an epidemic of political correctness on college campuses.

With masked activists joining the already large group of protesters gathered in the area between Sather Gate and the north end of Telegraph Avenue as night fell, campus police were holding their positions near the entrance of the Martin Luther King Jr. Student Union building hosting the event.

As the gathered crowd got more agitated, masked "black bloc" activists began hurling projectiles including bricks, lit fireworks and rocks at the building and police.

Some used police barriers as battering rams to attack the doors of the venue, breaching at least one of the doors and entering the venue on the first floor.

In addition to fireworks being thrown up onto the second-floor balcony, fires were lit outside the venue, including one that engulfed a gas-powered portable floodlight.

The area on Upper Sproul Plaza grew thick with smoke, and later tear gas, as the protest intensified.

At about 6:20 p.m., UC campus police announced that the event had been cancelled. Officers ordered the crowd to disperse, calling it an unlawful assembly.

.@UCBerkeley Milo event cancelled. Shelter in place if on campus. All campus buildings on lockdown. #miloatcal

— UC Police, Berkeley (@UCPD_Cal) [February 2, 2017](#)

Police then announced that they would lock down the entire campus, though authorities initially remained stationed near the student union building and did not move to force the protesters to disperse.

But police did fire flash bangs at the crowd.



Police at UC Berkeley student union during Milo Yiannopoulos protest (CBS)

Shortly before 6:30 p.m., Yiannopoulos posted on his Facebook page that he was safe.

“I have been evacuated from the UC Berkeley campus after violent left-wing protestors tore down barricades, lit fires, threw rocks and Roman candles at the windows and breached the ground floor of the building,” the post read. “My team and I are safe. But the event has been cancelled.”

Hundreds of protesters were observed at Wednesday evening’s event. Over 2,100 people responded to a Facebook post that they would be attending.

UC Berkeley spokesman Dan Mogulof said earlier Wednesday that the university Police Department called in officers from other UC campuses in the area, including Davis, and could ask for help from Oakland police and the Alameda County Sheriff’s Office if necessary.

He said that they have studied how the protests have escalated at other campuses and planned accordingly.

“The concerted effort was to really take a close look at lessons learned at other events,” Mogulof said.

Several student groups had called for protests and pledged to shut down the evening event. A number of Yiannopoulos’ talks at other campuses have been canceled due to protests or security reasons.

The 32-year-old right-wing provocateur is a vocal supporter of President Donald Trump and a self-proclaimed internet troll. He was banned from Twitter after leading a harassment campaign against “Ghostbusters” actress Leslie Jones.

His visit to Berkeley was sponsored by the campus Republican club. The university has stressed it did not invite Yiannopoulos and does not endorse his ideas but is committed to free speech and rejected calls to cancel the event.

Earlier Wednesday, the university sent a notice to all students that warned of crowds near the student union, where the 500-seat, sold-out event was scheduled.

“We anticipate there will be major protest/demonstration activity leading up to and surrounding this event,” the letter from school officials said. It did not discourage protests but advised those who didn’t wish to participate to avoid the area.

Pieter Sittler, a spokesman for the Berkeley College Republicans, said the club doesn’t support everything Yiannopoulos says but “he gives a voice to repressed conservative thought on American college campuses.” He uses “levity and humor” that should not be taken literally, Sittler said.

Yiannopoulos’ talks have sparked protests, shouting matches and occasional violence at stops around the country. A man was shot and wounded at a protest outside his Jan. 21 talk at the University of Washington.

Rowdy protests at UC Davis on Jan. 13 prompted campus Republicans to cancel his appearance at the last minute. His last stop was supposed to be UCLA on Thursday but the invitation was rescinded, making Berkeley his grand finale.

By 8 p.m., a large crowd of people had moved off the campus and onto Telegraph Avenue. They smashed ATMs at a Bank of America branch and set several trash fires on Telegraph Avenue.

After marching west on Durant Avenue, the group moved north on Shattuck Avenue, smashing windows and vandalizing a Mechanics Bank branch near the corner of Bancroft Way.

Chase and Wells Fargo branches were also vandalized. A Starbucks location near campus was vandalized and looted.

Police also received reports that banks were set on fire in the area of Center Street and Shattuck Avenue.

At 9:23 p.m., BART officials announced that trains were not stopping at the Downtown Berkeley station due to a civil disturbance in the area.

Shortly after that, UC Berkeley police reported that protesters were heading back toward campus on Center Street.

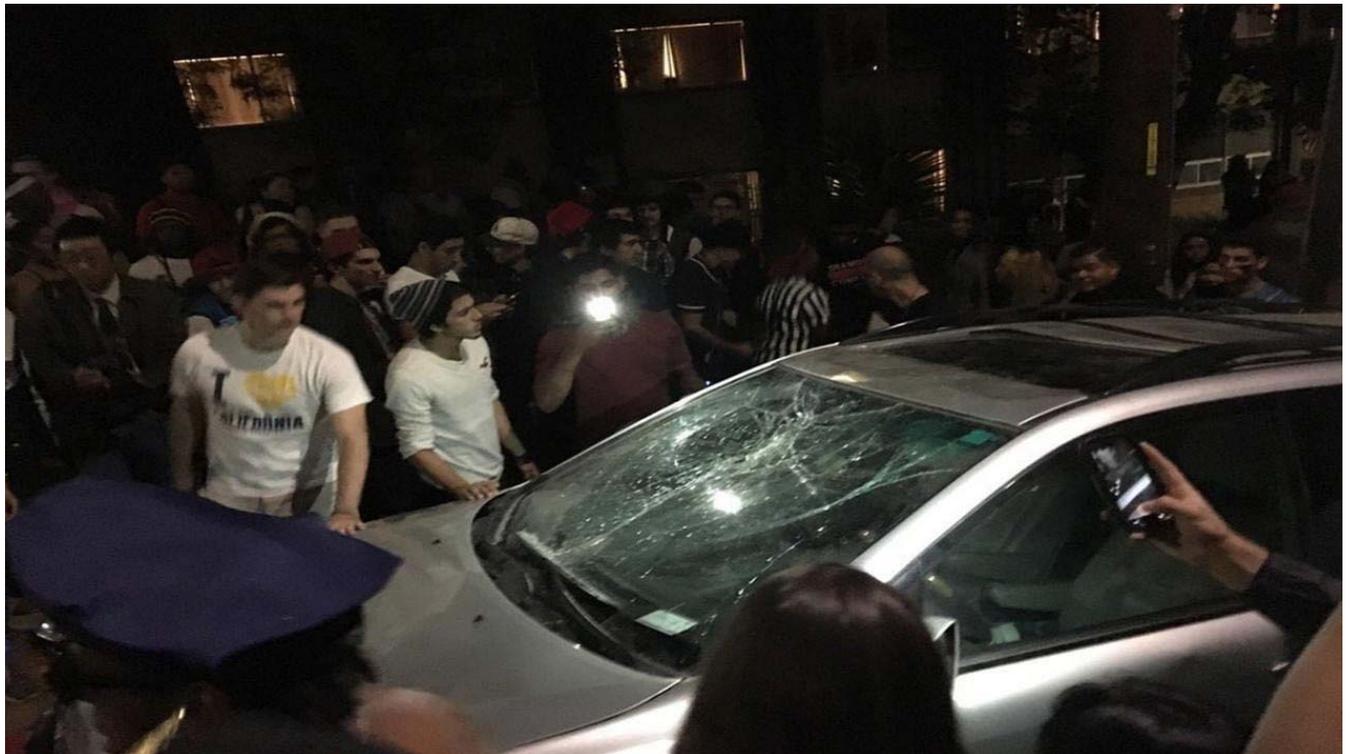
By 10:15 p.m. the crowd had largely dispersed and BART officials had re-opened the Downtown Berkeley station.

Berkeley police said that three or four injuries were reported as a result of fighting at the protest, and they are investigating reports of a possible hit-and-run crash in which a driver may have struck a person with a vehicle.

A video posted on social media showed at least one protester on top of a moving vehicle.

<http://sanfrancisco.cbslocal.com/2017/02/01/berkeley-braces-for-protests-at-yiannopoulos-talk/>

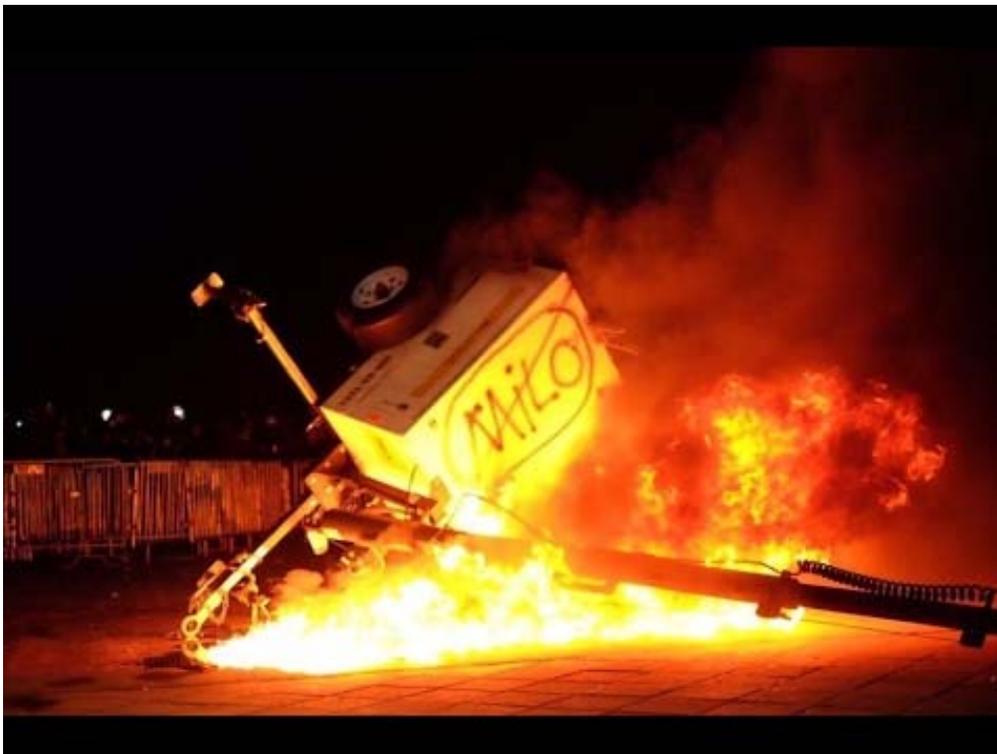
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