

Homeless Activist Faces Years in Prison for Coming to Defense of Mother and Child in Anti-War Protest

“He had the woman’s hand twisted so badly her fingers were touching her forearm and her hand was completely purple. She was crying out in pain as her child kept screaming, ‘Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!’”

— Steve Argue, homeless activist

by Becky Johnson

On June 14, scores of community activists gave impassioned testimony to the Citizens’ Police Review Board in Santa Cruz, denouncing what they called excessive and brutal police force used against participants in an anti-war demonstration on May 22.

At that protest, homeless activist Steven Argue forcibly intervened and tried to prevent Santa Cruz Police Officer David LaFaver from assaulting a young mother with a small child. According to Argue, Officer LaFaver used a violent painhold on the young woman as she held her crying five-year-old child.

“He had the woman’s hand twisted so badly her fingers were touching her forearm and her hand was completely purple,” said Argue. “She was crying out in pain as her child kept screaming, ‘Mommy! Mommy! Mommy!’ I and other protesters repeatedly told LaFaver to stop, which he refused to do. I acted as any person with any sense of dignity and humanity would to stop this torture and terror being carried



Santa Cruz police break up a peaceful anti-war protest. Office David LaFaver, left, brutalized a young woman and her small child before homeless activist Steve Argue intervened.

Ray Acosta photo

out by Officer LaFaver.”

At the Citizen’s Police Review Board hearing, many speakers demanded an investigation of excessive police force at a

peaceful demonstration, and decried the use of pepper spray, which was sprayed by police directly into Argue’s face.

On May 22, the Santa Cruz Coalition

to Stop the Bombing in Yugoslavia had staged a demonstration outside the McPherson Center. Inside, a Democratic

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