

In November 2003, the Army chose to arrest people identified as protesters on their way to the demonstration site who accidentally entered onto the base. (This is very easy to do since I-185 runs right into the open base.) Several of those arrested said that they were repeatedly mocked and threatened by soldiers and U.S. marshals, who said that they would be faced with felony charges, that they would go immediately to jail for at least six months where they would be raped?. With the exception of one underage passenger, everyone was held for at least one, some for two nights at Muscogee County jail before being arraigned in court on federal criminal trespass charges. The drivers had to post \$1000 bail in order to get released. Last week however, the US attorney finally had to admit that there's no case and filed motions to dismiss all charges against the drivers and passengers.

Harsh treatment of SOA Watch activists is nothing new. That these outrageous arrests occurred in the first place has to be seen in the light of increased attempts to intimidate and discourage people from attending the rally to close the SOA at the gates of Fort Benning. Columbus police used metal detectors to search every person attending the demonstration. Military police blared patriotic music from the base as massacre survivors spoke from the stage on Saturday, and Kathy Kelly, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and founder of Voices in the Wilderness, was severely brutalized by military police after crossing onto the base. Kelly describes being violently hog-tied in this Democracy Now! Interview: <http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=03/11/28/1633254>