

We Are?

November 9, 2011 at 11:53pm

Penn State students,

As I sit down to write this, I am distracted by faint sounds of chaos from blocks away. A riot has taken place in downtown State College. A riot fueled by passion and emotion; understandably so. You riot for Joe Paterno. You riot because you feel that you have been betrayed by your university. You riot because... because you don't know any better.

Many of you will say that you took to the streets of State College in defense of the wrong doing towards Joe Paterno this evening. But I ask you this; would Joe really want you rioting in the streets? Rioting in the streets of the town that he built? The town that he raised a family in? The same student body who rallied at a house on McKee street just last night, and had a legend tell you to say a prayer for the victims of all of this; do you really think he wants you to riot?

I too, am a Penn State student. I was glued to my television as I heard of Joe Paterno's retirement this morning. It was inevitable. It was coming. It was about time. But it was still shocking. The news broke around the globe, and emotions ran wild. But this was Joe's decision. Many felt this was the right decision; many, but not all.

As I watched tonight, as the news broke that Joe Paterno was to be fired as head coach of Penn State; I wept. Joseph Vincent Paterno was just fired over the telephone. Over the telephone. I was angry. I was devastated. My Penn State pride was being questioned. I did what I had to do; I walked to campus. It was as if I had no choice. My feet directed me to Dear Old State, and I walked to Old Main. As I approached campus, I could tell I was not alone. I joined 2000+ of my fellow students and alumni on the steps of Old Main and joined in chanting "WE ARE" and "WE WANT JOE!" This felt right.

But this sense of unity and solidarity would not last. As the prideful chants dwindled, small pockets of students began to turn away from the masses, and head toward town. Chants of "Back to Beaver" erupted from the steps of Old Main, and students listened. I made my way to the top of the steps and pleaded for people to stay. Some stopped to listen; but most followed the mob.

About 50 people stayed at Old Main. Most of whom joined hands and sang our Alma Mater; twice. We heard the screams from Beaver. We saw the fireworks being lit. We heard the sirens. Some of us cried.

I ask you, Penn State; why did you riot tonight. Why did you turn your raw emotion into anger, and then turn that onto your own town? Why did you take the sense of unity that we all felt on the steps of Old Main, and turn that into aggression and turmoil?

I will never be ashamed to call myself a Penn Stater.

But tonight, to those of you who chose to riot, I am ashamed to call my peers.

May no act of OURS bring shame.

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Meghan Zugibe very, very well said and I couldn't agree more. thank you for writing this. November 9, 2011 at 11:56pm

Matt Shaffer they just flipped a media van November 10, 2011 at 12:06am

Meghan Zugibe holy shit! November 10, 2011 at 12:07am

Sean Rice
Front of House at SAK Comedy Lab

All Notes

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