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## Florida Tasers Away Student Rights

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I suspect many of you have seen this by now, but take a look at this University of Florida student who was manhandled and tasered by university police for taking too much time asking a question at a John Kerry speech. (Warning: The clip can be pretty disturbing.)

I only found out about it moments ago through a call from a reporter asking if this was a violation of the student's free speech rights. In the strictest, most technical, and most lawyerly sense (read: nerdy and detached), the answer is "not exactly." Campus police and administrators can remove audience members who refuse to abide by reasonable rules, like time limitations on questions. But the problem here is obvious: the university police's response was totally out of proportion and brutal. And, of course, common sense (which too often differs from legal sense) will tell you that the threat of being tasered if you talk too much could certainly have a chilling affect on speech! Good lord. Half the people I knew in college would have been tasered routinely if this was response was considered acceptable back then.

It's good that students were able to get this on tape. Such unreasonable and excessive force might be hard for some to believe unless they saw it with their own eyes. The university needs to investigate the university police's handling of this case, and the student needs to talk to a lawyer ASAP. FIRE would be happy to help find him one.

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