



[About](#)

[Contact](#)

[Subscribe](#)

[Calendar](#)

[Publish](#)

[Print](#)

[Donate](#)

Regions

- [north coast](#)
- [central valley](#)
- [north bay](#)
- [east bay](#)
- [south bay](#)
- [san francisco](#)
- [peninsula](#)
- [santa cruz](#)
- [california](#)
- [us](#)
- [international](#)

Topics

- [animal lib](#)
- [anti-war](#)
- [arts + action](#)
- [drug war](#)
- [education](#)
- [en español](#)
- [environment](#)
- [global justice](#)
- [government](#)
- [health/housing](#)
- [immigrant](#)
- [media](#)
- [labor](#)
- [lgbt / queer](#)
- [police state](#)
- [racial justice](#)
- [womyn](#)

International

- [americas](#)
- [haiti](#)
- [iraq](#)
- [palestine](#)
- [afghanistan](#)

More

- [make media](#)
- [get involved](#)
- [calendar](#)
- [gallery](#)
- [archives](#)
- [chat](#)
- [links](#)

Search

Donate

Help support grassroots independent media.

[Donate](#)

\$0.00 donated in past month

IMC Network

[printable version](#) - [fixed-width version](#)

[Santa Cruz Indymedia](#) | [Anti-War](#) | [Indymedia](#) | [Police State and Prisons](#)

Indybay Journalist Assaulted by Leon Panetta's Security at Bookshop Santa Cruz Event

by Alex Darocy ([alex \[at\] alexdarocy.com](mailto:alex[at]alexdarocy.com))
Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

I was physically assaulted by a security agent who was working for former Secretary of Defense and CIA Director Leon Panetta at a speaking and book-signing engagement in Santa Cruz on November 10. The agent intentionally and deliberately grabbed my camera and hit me with it in the face when I was attempting to take a photo of Panetta leaving the event. I was approximately one foot away from him when he struck me. Top photo: The agent who assaulted me. (Photos of the protest will be published soon)





[800_panetta-security-agen...](#)
[original image \(1482x1884\)](#)

The event was hosted by Bookshop Santa Cruz and held at Peace United Church in their main sanctuary/chapel. The purchase of Panetta's book "Worthy Fights: A Memoir of Leadership in War and Peace" was required for admission. I was there to photograph and report on a small protest that was organized to oppose Panetta's deadly war record, as well as his involvement in expanding the scope of drone warfare.

Panetta's security group was comprised of four agents as far as I could tell, but there may have been more waiting in the vehicles in which he arrived. When asked what agency they were with, one agent indicated he would not disclose that information.

Early in the evening, before Panetta arrived, one of the agents recognized me from photographing a protest outside of a prior event. Panetta spoke at UC Santa Cruz on April 25, and on that day the guard had tried to avoid me photographing her.

When she first saw me at Peace United Church, I heard her sarcastically say to Brooke Graff, the parish administrator, "there's my favorite Photographer," as if the two had previously discussed the possibility of me being in attendance.

I was able to photograph Panetta as he entered the event, and at the conclusion I had hoped to get a photo of him leaving.

When I spotted his group exiting, Panetta was attempting to sit down in the back seat of an SUV. The guard who hit me was holding the door for him when I neared the vehicle. I positioned myself about a foot away from him, snapped one photo, and immediately he grabbed the lens of my camera.

It was fairly dark outside near the car and there were no witnesses in the immediate vicinity of the vehicle.

The impact of the camera against my face seemed to unfold in slow motion.

The guard hit me with some lateral motion, but what I felt was a "pushing back" of my head. On one level it felt like I had been hit by a club from the side, even though the force of the impact made my head snap directly backwards.

After he hit me, I shouted to Leon Panetta that his security guard had assaulted me. The guard slammed the door shut and hopped into the front seat. As the car proceeded to leave, I pounded once loudly on a window, continuing to communicate to Panetta that I had just been assaulted.

The contact point of the strike was on the right side of my chin.

A minor, red-colored abrasion, of about one centimeter long, is visible on my chin.

The shock of the evening has subsided, but nine hours later, as I publish this account, I can still feel slight pain and there still is minor swelling. My head is aching and the area of the impact is still slightly tender to the touch.

My neck also hurts and feels stiff.

The only other security present during the evening at Peace United was the Deputy Chief of the Santa Cruz Police Department, Rick Martinez. I overheard an individual ask him why it was he who had arrived, and he said it was because he "was in the area."

Bookshop Santa Cruz delegated some security duties to its regular employees, in addition to one former employee who said she was "volunteering." Other security duties were assumed by Peace United's staff, which included administrator Graff and Reverend Dave Dodson.

Martinez left the protest before I was struck, but as he was leaving he told me to, "be careful."

I have photographed him at a number of protests, and he is aware that documenting police and security activity is something I do regularly.

When I attempted to explain the details of the assault to Reverend Dodson, who also served as a doorman for the event for much of the evening, he shut the chapel doors in my face while stating plainly that I should file a police report. He would not listen to me or offer compassion. The Reverend is also on the board of directors of Conflict Resolution Center of Santa Cruz County.

Additionally, I was treated very poorly by Casey Coonerty Protti, the daughter of the owner of Book Shop Santa Cruz, and Julia Sinn, their events coordinator. They allowed mainstream media to enter the event, but Protti completely blacklisted me in a manner that was both dishonest and disrespectful. I informed them I will no longer patronize their establishment. I have been a regular customer at Bookshop Santa Cruz since before the Coonerty family bought it in 1973, and I had been planning to buy family members books for holiday gifts this year, as I do every year at the store, which is located in downtown Santa Cruz. I plan to write an open letter to the Bookshop explaining why I believe they behaved so badly.

I do not know if the security agents working for Panetta have sworn to protect and uphold the United States Constitution, as most police agents and public officials are required, but I do know there is no justification for this use of force against me by the agent who hit me.

Note: All of the photos that I took during Panetta's arrival are embedded with a time stamp of 6:42 pm, which indicates they were all created within the time span of one minute. Deputy Chief Martinez was walking behind both me and the security group escorting Panetta inside. The photo shows he found the situation humorous. I have photographed Martinez a number of times at various political events. As mentioned earlier in this article, there was no other police presence at Panetta's book signing.

Alex Darocy

<http://alexdarocy.blogspot.com/>

Panetta's arrival

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

S

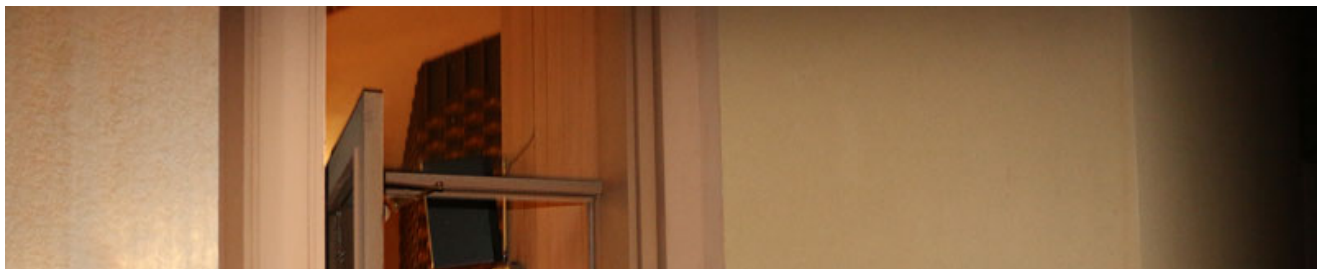


leon-panetta-santa-cruz-2...

Time stamp: 6:42 pm

The agent who assaulted me
by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

S





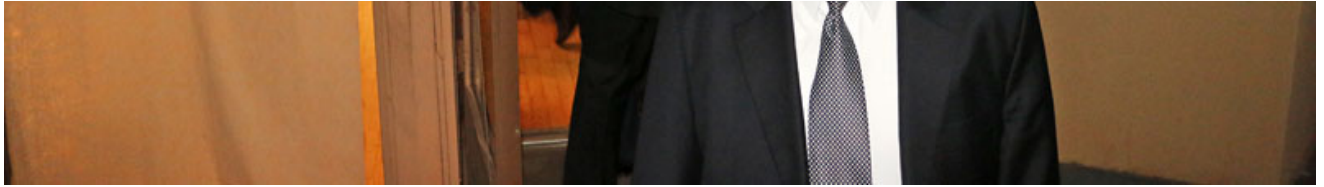
leon-panetta-santa-cruz-3...

Time stamp: 6:42 pm

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

S





leon-panetta-santa-cruz-4...

Time stamp: 6:42 pm

Rick Martinez, Deputy Chief of Police
by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

§



leon-panetta-santa-cruz-5...

Time stamp: 6:42 pm

Photo taken right before the agent hit me during Panetta's departure
by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

§

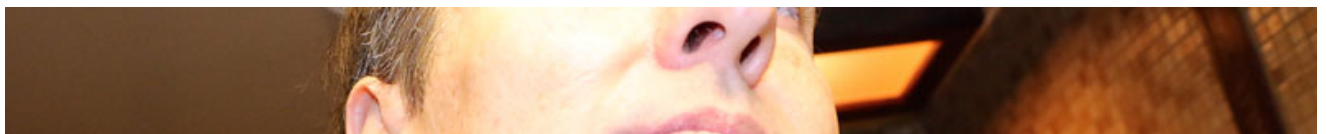


panetta-security-agent-6...

Abrasion

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

S





abrasion.jpg

Abrasion

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

S



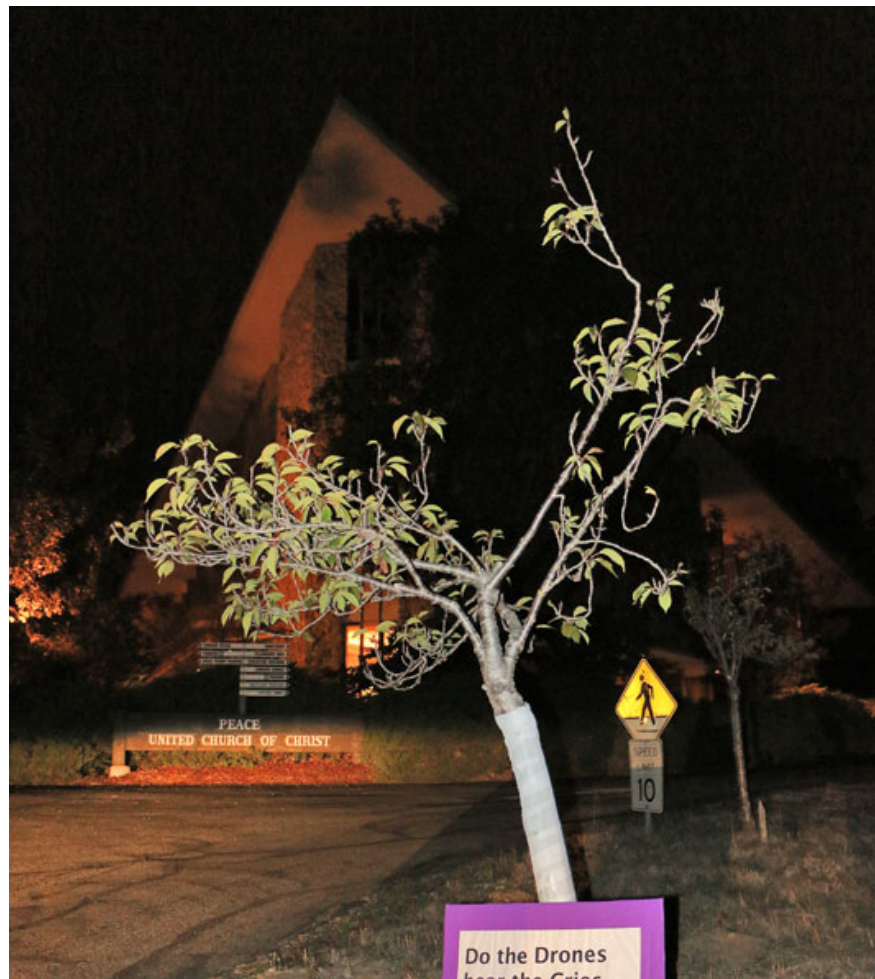


abrasion-2.jpg

Peace United Church during the protest on November 10

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

5





peace-united-church-santa...

Demonstrators placed signs around the church property.

Panetta's security guard who said I was her "favorite photographer"

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

§



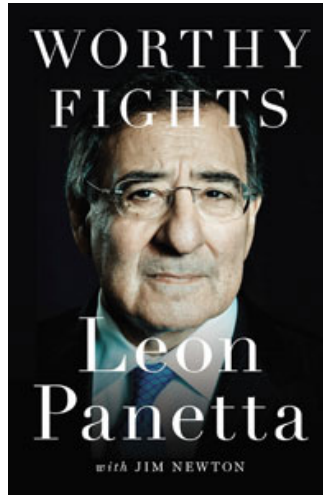
leon-panetta-security-uc-...

For more photos from the April 25 protest of Panetta's speaking engagement at UC Santa Cruz, see:
<http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2014/04/26/18754884.php>

Worthy Fights

by Alex Darocy Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 AM

§



worthy_fights_leon_panett...

[Add Your Comments](#)

LATEST COMMENTS ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Listed below are the latest comments posted about this article. These comments are anonymously submitted by website visitors.

TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE
Here in DC I've had to meet force with force Usual Sentinel Blackout and Whitewash	DC Indymedia video specialist	Wednesday Nov 12th, 2014 10:38 AM
panetta vendetta	Robert Norse	Wednesday Nov 12th, 2014 9:07 AM
Report the Thug to the Police for Documentation	fuck the pigs	Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 6:29 PM
alex is a hero	Pat Colby	Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 3:50 PM
Boycott and Pickett Book Shop Santa Cruz	spook busters	Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 3:04 PM
Panetta is 'made', don't mess with his gang.	A	Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 12:56 PM
	G	Tuesday Nov 11th, 2014 9:14 AM

© 2000–2014 San Francisco Bay Area Independent Media Center. Unless otherwise stated by the author, all content is free for non-commercial reuse, reprint, and rebroadcast, on the net and elsewhere. Opinions are those of the contributors and are not necessarily endorsed by the SF Bay Area IMC. [Disclaimer](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Contact](#)