

A good-natured protest drummer

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

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The other day I left the office around lunchtime and walked over to the Occupy Chicago gathering outside the Board of Trade. At the corner waiting for the light to change, I stood next to a protest drummer who fit the stereotype well: unshorn, unkempt and not much over 20.

While he drummed away, a man in his 60s joined us at the corner. This man was dressed crisply and professionally. It's possible he works at a small nonprofit—here at the *Century*, we all have reason to put on our fancy clothes once or twice a year—but I suspect his game is finance. I suspect this both because of the location and because of the unpleasantness he displayed toward the drummer.

"You know, you really suck at that." The possible banker looked down at the drum and then back up to catch the guy's eye, wearing a smirk that was equal parts "Burn!" and "Aren't you impressed with my command of the youthful vernacular?"

The drummer laughed gently. "You're right," he said, "I'm horrible. This is like the only drum line I know!" The well-dressed man didn't have a comeback for that; the signal changed and he silently crossed the street. "Have a great day, man!" the kid called after him, without sarcasm.

Now, I know this is just one anecdote. It's possible that had the older man aimed his bon mot at a different drummer, *that* kid would have responded by calling over some [black bloc](#) comrades to find the guy's company car and light it on fire. Or that he would have been provoked to take the (open) mic and [call for bloody revolution](#), somehow [revealing to Ed Morrissey](#) that this "captures the true intent of this movement."

I won't draw any grand conclusions about the Occupy movement based on the exchange I witnessed. Still, I enjoyed the moment of grace.