

Less brutal than that one time

By [Steve Thorngate](#)

May 23, 2012

Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel [says](#) that the Chicago Police Department "did a tremendous job" keeping the peace during the NATO summit this week. President Obama [agrees](#).

Chicago Indymedia [offers another perspective](#), posting videos of protestors surrounded by police and brutally beaten. A lively comment-field debate follows, complete with the predictable name-calling but also with [this more levelheaded comment](#) by a purported eyewitness:

The announcer on the stage told people that as they dispersed they should do so to the west and most people did, or at least tried to. There were a select few who chose to push in to the police and unfortunately they were many others in between the two groups who got caught in the middle and had no where else to go. There were hundreds and hundreds of police completely surrounding for blocks. You couldn't walk in the street and had to exit on the sidewalks. So while all this chaos is going on try filtering thousands of people down two 3-4 foot wide sidewalks. . . . Once the violence started, there was no differentiation on the part of the police between those causing the problems and those just with reach. There were people with their backs turned getting hit with clubs, and then when they were down on the ground you would see an officer from 3 or 4 feet away take a shot just because they could. Were the police 100% unprovoked, no; however the reaction was very very very extreme.

[Reuters offers](#) an odd headline ("Chicago police erase 1968 stain at last with NATO summit") and lede ("The NATO summit ended without major violence between police and protesters"). Here's the article's description of the non-major violence that took place Sunday:

As the police line advanced, batons swinging, protesters at the edge of the crowd suffered head wounds and others lost teeth and absorbed body blows, but no one was killed.

I'm grateful no one was killed. But this is how the CPD "erases the 1968 stain"--by leaving a smaller number of people with mere head wounds and missing teeth? That seems like setting the bar pretty low.