

'Irvine 11' Found Guilty

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The 'Irvine 11', a group of Muslim students who caused a ruckus at a speech given by Israeli ambassador Michael Oren last year were recently convicted to three years of probation. Their case has become the latest example of a debate surrounding First Amendment rights and has garnered international attention.

While Oren was speaking to an audience at UC Davis, members of the group stood up one by one to interrupt his speech and shout over him. A jury of six men and six women deliberated over a verdict for two days **before finding the defendants guilty**.

Yes, we all have First Amendment rights, which is part of what makes America so great. But just because you have the right to express yourself doesn't mean you also have the right to shut down the rights of others.

Kenneth Marcus raises the point that much of the rhetoric and legal argument of campus anti-Semitism **utilizes First Amendment opportunism**. This opportunism consists of efforts to shift attention from the topic of harassment at hand to First Amendment rights. So, incidents of harassment are overlooked because the harassers and their defense are quick to cite their First Amendment rights.

While I admittedly stand firm with Israel, it's not what the 'Irvine 11' said that irks me. It's how they said it. They couldn't have waited thirty minutes until Oren was done his speech to raise their points in a civil manner at a Q&A over cookies and punch? How can you protest a speech if you can't even hear what the speaker's saying?

Feel free to disagree. Without these sorts of diverging viewpoints I would have nothing to blog about. But come on, we learned these sorts of rules in kindergarten. Listen first, and speak in turn.