

Protesters Break Barriers, Take Fifth Ave. During May Day March

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101

Hundreds of protesters marched 23 blocks down Fifth Ave. on the afternoon of May 1, making their way from Bryant Park to join the mass “solidarity rally” in Union Square at 4 p.m.. Some had originally been a part of the “Guitar Army” march promoted by Rage Against the Machine guitarist Tom Morello.



The NYPD had prepared for the unpermitted march by setting up barriers through most of Fifth Ave. and dozens of police scooters and small vehicles escorted the protesters. At 33rd St., a large group of demonstrators managed to break through the NYPD barricades on the sidewalk and poured onto the street in front of the Empire State Building. The sudden breach took the police by surprise; in a matter of seconds, hundreds of protesters were swarming down Fifth Ave.

Once the protesters broke free from the sidewalk, the police couldn't stop the momentum. Even as they attempted to force people off the street and placed scooters across intersections to block the path, the marchers continued around the blockades. Protesters chanted in unison, declaring the street as theirs, and the

NYPD gave up on much of their resistance by the time the march made it to Madison Square Park at 26th St.

The march grew in numbers as it passed Madison Square Park, which was filled with professors and students from various universities partaking in the afternoon's "Free University" event. As the marchers passed by, many called for the Madison Square Park crowd to join them. At one point, hundreds staged a sit-in at 21st St. to allow the protesters at Madison Square Park to catch up with them — leaving Fifth Ave. completely obstructed for at least 10 minutes. As numbers swelled with new arrivals, the march moved on to join the May Day event already underway at Union Square.