



Code Pink Protesters Try Witchcraft at Anti-Marine Rallies

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Code Pink is now resorting to witchcraft to beef up the number of its supporters protesting a controversial Marine Corps Recruiting Center in Berkeley, Calif.

The women's anti-war group has told ralliers to come equipped with spells and pointy hats Friday for "witches, crones and sirens" day, the last of the group's weeklong homage to Mother's Day. "Women are coming to cast spells and do rituals and to impart wisdom to figure out how we're going to end war," Zanne Sam Joi of Bay Area Code Pink told FOXNews.com.

The group's week of themed protests, which included days to galvanize grannies and bring-your-daughter-to-protest, appears to have done little to boost its flagging numbers.



A FOX News camera, which has a 24/7 live shot of the recruiting center's front door, recorded little action, and the gatherings have, until this point, been ill attended.

•[Click here to watch the FOXNews's Berkeley protest cam.](#)

In February, the Marine Corps Recruiting Center was the site of fierce pro- and anti-war protests. It made national headlines when Berkeley's city council voted to send a letter to the recruiting station advising the Marines they were not welcome. Council members later moderated their position, saying they oppose the war in Iraq but support the troops.

Code Pink — which was given parking and noise permits by the city council and is allowed to protest during the recruiting center's business hours — has been protesting daily since September.

The group frequently announces bizarre theme weeks in front of the office, but their numbers have been dwindling and the events get little media attention.

Now, after three months of continual protest, their actions barely capture the attention of even the Marines at the recruiting center.

Capt. John Paul Wheatcroft said he's unfazed by Code Pink's antics.

"They're always in pink and wear funny things, half-shaved heads, one side with hair and the other one bald, yeah, I'm pretty much used to anything," he told FOXNews.com.

Code Pink said that grandmothers did show up for Monday's protest — some over 90 years old, some in wheelchairs — and began knocking on the door of the recruiting center.

- [Click here to see pictures of past protests.](#)

"The grandmothers were here and tried to get recruited," Joi said. "They tried to have conversations with the Marines, but the Marines were too scared to talk."

Wheatcroft, who was the Marine on the other side of the door, said that he was not afraid of the grannies. He just didn't open the door.

"Most of the time they are just practicing their right to protest and their freedom of speech or whatever, so it's not usually a problem for us," Wheatcroft told FOXNews.com. "But sometimes it crosses the line, and that happened [Monday] when the grannies were here blocking the entrance and banging on the door."

On Tuesday, Code Pink's theme was "fierce mothers raging against war," Joi said, to talk about all the mothers killed and raped in war. Wednesday's theme was "bring your daughter to the protest," where daughters explained why they don't want their parents fighting the war. Thursday is "sisters don't allow sisters to live in war zones" day, and the week wraps up Friday with "witches, crones and sirens" day.

Code Pink isn't the only group rallying around the Marine recruiting center that has seen its numbers drop.

Kimberly Wagner, Berkeley College Republicans activism chair, who is dating a Marine, said her group has been trying to keep up a presence outside the center since Feb. 13, when Code Pink's parking permit went into effect.

The college Republicans are fighting to acquire the same parking permits that Code Pink has. A resolution to grant the group an equal permit will be entered and voted upon in the May 20 city council meeting.

Wagner said showing up to rally is especially hard now due to final exams, which begin on Monday, but she said she will be there — this week and every week — "as a reminder to Code Pink that not everybody agrees with them."

When asked if she was planning any special events to counter Code Pink's theme week, Wagner said: "We try not to do anything embarrassing." She added, "We're just going to stick with our regular thing because we have lives and they don't."

But if events this week are an attempt by anti-war protesters to remarket their cause, the Marine recruiters in Berkeley tell FOXNews.com that Code Pink's presence outside their office has helped — not hindered — their mission.

"Ironically, it's actually helped us by putting our name out. We're now well known. And people know who we are, and where we are, and they come in to talk to us about enlisting. They've gotten us the publicity that we could've never afforded to pay for ourselves," Wheatcroft told FOXNews.com.

"Just in the last three weeks, 10 people came in looking to apply, looking to become Marine officers, and that's much higher than normal," he said.

Wheatcroft could not give exact figures on recruiting numbers, and officials at the Marine Corps' national headquarters did not respond to repeated requests for information.

As for what's brewing outside his recruiting center this week, Wheatcroft responded, "I think witches won't shock me, but it'll be a change of pace, so that's nice.
"Do you think they'll bring their cauldron?"

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,354400,00.html>