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Charges dropped in protest case  
Prosecutors say man's choice to clean paint from sidewalk helped

by Phil Trexler  
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Prosecutors on Friday dismissed criminal charges against an anti-war protester accused of writing on a sidewalk outside a downtown Akron military recruiting office.

Karl Liske, 69, of Kent, was supposed to go on trial in September in Akron Municipal Court. He was issued a misdemeanor summons May 20 after using a water-soluble paint to write the word "Truth" on a sidewalk outside the Armed Forces Recruiting Center on Summit Street.

Liske was taking part in a nationwide anti-recruitment vigil. He was with about 12 people organized by the American Friends Service Committee, who had briefly gathered outside the Akron recruiting office.

After being cited, Liske cleaned up the sidewalk and left with his colleagues. His clean-up efforts cleared the way for the dismissal of the misdemeanor charges, prosecutors said Friday.

"Mr. Liske was required by police to clean up the paint on the sidewalk and did so," said Akron city prosecutor Doug Powley. "Based on the totality of the situation, we felt no need to pursue a criminal conviction."

Liske could not be reached for comment. His attorney, Warner Mendenhall, commended prosecutors for researching the case and finding that the paint Liske used was "innocuous" and easily removed.

He said Liske was simply making his views known about the war in Iraq.

"He was merely expressing his opposition to the war." Mendenhall said. "And like many people in the area, he's appalled at what's happening in Iraq, the reason we went to war, the reasons we stay at war."

Powley said the war was not the motivation behind the charges. Like was facing a possible 90-day jail sentence and a \$750 fine.

"I was concerned with his conduct, not his motive," Powley said. "People have a right to protest as long as they don't leave a mess for others to clean up."

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