

Witness: Lynne Owens
Statement No: 1
Exhibits Referred to: LO/1, LO/2, LO/3, LO/4, LO/5, LO/6,
LO/7, LO/8, LO/9, LO/10
Date Statement Made: 26 January 2012

The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press

This is the exhibit marked 'LO/5' referred to in the statement of Lynne Owens,
dated this 26th day of January 2012.

- AC Lynne Owens did interviews with *Times*, *Telegraph*, *ITN*, *BBC News* and *BBC Newsnight* on 28 March 2011:

IF ASKED: Newsnight:

Q - Large groups of 'black block' anarchists were allowed to roam around the West End. The police present were not able to contain them. Are you satisfied with that?

AC Owens - What we saw on Saturday was between a quarter of a million and half a million people who came to London to peacefully protest. Regrettably there were big groups of between 500 and 1,000 people who came into London intent on causing damage and criminal behaviour including violence. What we did see is them at different times using different tactics. Sometimes they were in big groups like that and at other times there were 20 or 30 of them. They changed their appearance at various times during the day. On some occasions they were wearing black but we have CCTV footage of them changing their clothes and sometimes they were in different colours. So the way we policed the event was to have a policing presence outside the vulnerable premises so that we could act speedily and robustly when incidents happened and that is what occurred and that is why we made over 200 arrests. 149 have already been charged.

Q - I saw people at Oxford Circus confront a group of officers who were riot trained. They were riot equipped but they were able to do little more but simply retreat. Where were the numbers compared to other public order situations we've had in this city?

AC Owens - We had 4,500 officers in London on Saturday including officers from other forces. Just look at our footprint. We cover from Embankment to Parliament Square to Trafalgar Square and from Oxford Street to Regent Street and we also had about a quarter of a million people here. We had to protect the streets of London. We had enough resources here and you saw my officers respond robustly. We'll do those officers a real disservice if we don't say what a great job they did because 31 of them got injured while trying to deal with these very dangerous people.

Q - I think some of the protesters were surprised at how non-aggressive the policing was. Was it a policy not to contain the protesters?

AC Owens - There is a difference between aggression and robustness. We would never want our police officers to be aggressive but they did behave robustly and they did make arrests and we have got people appearing in court on the basis of the offences committed.

Q - What some of the businesses are worried about is that the policy of 'take their photo and deal with them later' is being adopted while damage is being done to their property.

AC Owens - That is absolutely not the policy. On Saturday there were more arrests than there has been for at least five years. We gave officers a very clear instruction - if you see something, do something - and the fact that 31 of them were injured shows that they do and I pay huge credit to them.

Q - Normally it takes quite a serious offence to constitute a 'white jumpsuit treatment' Why did so many of those arrested have their clothes taken away while they were in the custody?

AC Owens - We think there were some very serious acts of violence at the weekend. Some of those will have forensic implications - you saw paint thrown and other things - so we seized clothing to see whether people had been involved in that. Businesses in London would expect us to take that robust action and present the best evidence in court.