

Thousands march to denounce police brutality against Occupy Oakland

Fred Williams
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Protests spread Wednesday night in Oakland, California and throughout the country, a day after police attacked unarmed demonstrators with tear gas and flash grenades, wounding several.

One marcher, Scott Olsen, 24, was critically wounded in the attack by Oakland police on Tuesday. A YouTube video shows the stricken Olsen lying on the ground near the police barricades. As fellow marchers circled around him to offer medical assistance, the police lobbed a flash grenade or a tear gas canister amidst the group, which hit him on the head. (Video is available [here](#) and [here](#))

Olsen, a member of Veterans Against War who had recently returned from Iraq, was rushed to the hospital. He suffered a serious skull fracture and, as of Wednesday evening, was still unconscious.

On Wednesday, thousands of people gathered for a general assembly at an amphitheater in Oscar Grant Park, adjacent to where the camp was. The assembly approved a proposal for a citywide general strike on November 2.

In New York, more than a thousand people took part in a march to City Hall in the evening called to express solidarity with Olsen. They were met by a very heavy police presence and many violent arrests.

Emergency demonstrations were also called in Boston, Denver, Atlanta and other cities.

The Democratic Mayor of Oakland, Jean Quan, defended the actions of police Tuesday, which began with the forceful demolition of the Occupy Oakland camp at Oscar Grant Park. The dismantling of the camp was accompanied with the use of tear gas and beanbag shotguns, which can be lethal.

Quan issued a statement Tuesday declaring, “I

commend Chief Jordan for a generally peaceful resolution to a situation that deteriorated and concerned our community.”

Later on Tuesday evening, police assaulted hundreds of peaceful marchers with tear gas, flash grenades, rubber bullets and so-called beanbag projectiles.

On Wednesday, police announced an investigation into the incident. Quan supported the police action, insisting that it was a necessary response to rocks and paint thrown by protesters.

Social media such as Facebook and Twitter have exploded with outraged responses to this police attack. On Quan’s Facebook page, over 7,000 posts responding to her initial statement overwhelmingly denounced the mayor. Meanwhile, an afternoon press conference was postponed from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. as the mayor huddled with her advisers.

The police have been issuing a string of lies throughout the day, claiming that they were acting in self-defense, that protestors threw bottles at them, that some paint tossed on two cops required a volley of tear gas and rubber bullets in response, etc. What actually occurred, however, was a carefully planned police provocation, involving 13 different police departments in the area.

Occupy San Francisco received warning that an attack on their assembly was expected Wednesday night.

President Obama swept into San Francisco on Tuesday to oversee a \$5,000 per plate luncheon, but did not comment on the attacks on peaceful demonstrators a few miles away. He then headed off to a fundraiser in Denver to scoop up more funds from his wealthy donors.



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