

After being exposed, undercover cop draws gun on protesters in California

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12 December 2014

On Wednesday night, a plainclothes police officer dressed as a protester had his identity revealed before drawing his baton and pistol on a crowd of protesters and reporters in Oakland, California. The officer and his partner have been accused of trying to incite the crowd towards violence before they were exposed as provocateurs.

The two police officers had been wearing bandanas over their faces throughout the march. KTVU news reports that at one point during the march a protester who suspected the two of being officers pulled down one of the officer's bandanas. The news station reported that, "the two policemen started to walk away, but the protesters persisted, screaming at the two undercover cops."

Then one officer, "pushed the protester aside. The man responded by pushing back and then the officer tackled him to the ground, handcuffing him. The crowd, incensed, began to gather around them."

The officer who had pushed back the protester took out his baton and began beating the demonstrator after the scuffle started. When a crowd began to surround the officers, the one using his baton drew his pistol and aimed it at the heads of those around him.

Photographs show that the people the policeman was aiming at were all reporters and photographers. Reuters photographer Noah Berger, freelance journalist Courtney Harrop, and San Francisco Chronicle photographer Michael Short were all threatened with the officer's pistol, ostensibly for taking photographs of the scene.

The two officers soon arrested the man who had been beaten with the help of riot police who had been tailing and monitoring the protest march. The two plainclothes police have subsequently been identified as California Highway Patrol officers.

According to the DailyDot, protesters claim that the two undercover officers attempted to "disrupt the peaceful protest and provoke violence." These witnesses say that the officers banged on windows and encouraged protesters to loot businesses.

Despite widespread coverage of the Monday night freeway occupation, the Wednesday night uncovering of police provocateurs has gone unreported in most major news outlets. As of this writing, the only major newspapers to have covered the story are the *New York Daily News* and the local *San Francisco Chronicle*.

The Wednesday evening protest was one of several nightly demonstrations against the police killings of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Oakland and neighboring Berkeley have seen protests every night since Saturday.

The march on Wednesday night came on the fifth straight night of protests against police brutality centered in Berkeley, which grew to their peak on Monday night, when over 1,500 marched through Berkeley and 200 protesters blocked traffic on Interstate-80, the busiest freeway in the East Bay Area. The protests have gradually dwindled on following nights.

During the weekend protests, two men were also accused of working for the Oakland Police Department. A video was posted online comparing the two accused undercover cops with images of two police officers with the OPD.

Acting Oakland Police Chief Howard Johnson made a remarkable statement about placing undercover police agents in protest organizations in 2003, stating, "You don't need to have some sort of skill to be able to infiltrate these groups. If you put the people in there from the beginning, I think we'll be able to gather the information. And maybe direct them to do something

we want them to do.”

Oakland police made a total of 170 arrests during the week in November following the exoneration of Darren Wilson (the Ferguson, Missouri police officer who killed Michael Brown), while in San Francisco more than 80 people were arrested during protests on Black Friday alone.

Injuries to protesters over the course of the past five days include broken legs, at least two induced seizures, several head wounds and concussions from baton blows to the head, and deep welts from rubber bullets. Stephen Lam, a photographer and journalist working for Reuters, was pepper sprayed.

On Tuesday night, a crowd of over 500 assembled in downtown Berkeley, which gradually dwindled during a march to Oakland, where the roughly 200 remaining protesters led another freeway occupation on Highway 24. They blocked traffic for half an hour, at which point the California Highway Patrol (CHP), Berkeley Police Department (BPD) and Oakland Police Department (OPD) used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse the protesters.

Later, when protesters had been herded under the freeway, two officers fired 4 rubber bullet rounds from above, while still on the freeway, reportedly hitting one protester on the ear, one on the ankle and another on the head. The person shot in the ear was sent to the hospital for treatment.



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