

**WITNESS STATEMENTS FROM SUNDAY 22 SEPTEMBER POLICE ACTIONS  
DRAFT TRANSCRIPTS 01-04 & 10-21  
PREPARED BY VICKY & BETH**

01

I was right in the meeting when the police arrived, I noticed these squad cars coming up the street, of Abbott and two squad cars blocking off Abbott at Hastings and then two more pulling up at Abbott and Cordova blocking fucking Abbot street, and these squad cars pulled up and these cops fucking jumped out , walked over towards us and said, they cited the (byland?)fraction we were committing, that we were obstructing the sidewalk and that we had to leave immediatly or get arrested.

So some of us refused, like \*\*\*\* and \*\*\*\* and some other people and the cops fucking tackled them and then some people started gathering up their fucking belongings, and some cop pounce on them, and grabbed them and started put the handcuffs on them and drag them off to the paddy wagons. So me and \*\*\*\* started backing off cause I couldn't risk being arrested as I still have family across the border. Anyways, we went across Abbott street towards Hastings and we were asking the police like, why are they doing this?, why are they picking on the homeless and the poor? why are they throwing all their belongings into garbage cans, don't they have a heart? and the police was verbally shouting at them.

02

Saw everybody's stuff including mattersses, clothing, food, the whole kitchen, basically everything that was there...tents, whole fuckin tents thrown into the back of a garbage truck and, and smushed. Apparently everybody was arrested. Apparently everybody was beaten.

They gave us no warning. It was just everybody move right now. There, and , and they threw everything into the garbage.

Q. The police said something directly to you? and to the group?

A. Pretty much everyone individually. Yeah, they went threw...everybody was having a meeting. And they came in and everybody... I assume everybody linked arms. I heard lots of yelling and chanting and everything like that.

We, we walked around the block cause we were told to move and I didn't feel like getting arrested again right away.

And when we came to the other side of the block, everybody was in paddywagons. And they were throwing everything into the back of garbage trucks and smashing it.

Q. So it was over in how? how quickly?

A. Well what? It's been half an hour. Everything's cleaned up. Everything's been cleaned up for 10 minutes. They did it very quick.

They, they organized, fuckin, it was... O.K. I recognized alot of the cops from the other bus. It was alot of the same cops if not all of the same cops.

Somehow they, they got the garbage trucks to come down there. There... I saw 2 garbage trucks. There might have been more to haul everything away. And they were all down there right away. No problem. um.. they were obviously on stand waiting.

03

Q. The cops arrived?

A. Yeah. they said um.. I'm giving anybody and everybody the opportunity to leave. Who wants to leave to leave now. Grab your personal belongings and leave. And you will not be arrested. And then they said the people, anybody that was staying will be arrested under the, some municipal bylaw. I think for blocking the sidewalk.

Q. And then how long after that did it take for them to start arresting people?

A. Almost immediately.

Q. And uh, how did they go about? Did they grab people? Did they?

A. Violently. They were, uh, they were uh, grabbed and handcuffed. Uh, I've been in .... Who's that? Antoine, and another guy, the other guy. the third guy that they arrested. And that woman, what's her name? Anna, Anna something... yeah they were throwing everybody down and uh...

Q. so they took them and they put them in the paddy wagons right away?

A. Yeah

Q. And then they took off?

A. No, they were, they were continuing to arrest and we, I, myself, decided to leave the scene. So, I wasn't into being arrested violently.

04

We were all sitting around in a group meeting and were just discussing how we were going to go about living, right, and we saw squad cars and paddy wagons and everything coming up. And we all joined in, like, in a group. and the RCM..., or the Vancouver police came up to us. And they said get your stuff and leave as they were pulling down tents.

It started with 10, 8, 10, 15 cars and 3 or 4 paddy wagons and everything. And they told us to leave right now. There's about 48 of us gone.

We went and got our stuff and we moved back to a circle area. And a bunch of us sat down. And then, we were still screaming and yelling and like "no peace, no justice" like we did inside.

And they started picking us off again; one by one. We couldn't get out of our beds fast enough. Like we could not get up. Those that were still in bed would get arrested. Those that couldn't move out of their beds would get arrested. They were kicked. They were punched. They were slapped.

Benerice (sp?) myself and a bunch of us were standing across the street. Benerice had my cell and she was making phone calls. And she was talking to a cop. And she said to the cop, she goes " Where is your heart?" the cop grabbed her and threw her against the floor. and three of them just kept throwing her against the ground. She, her head bounced off the ground.

And they are just standing there. They're looking at us. And we're going " Where are we going to sleep tonight?" And they go "That's your problem." And they laughed and snickered.

And like, I mean, they were mean. Again, they were brutal. They were cold and they didn't give us a chance. They didn't even give us a chance to move.

Anton and Ivan went again. we know that Berenice went. they arrested our lawyer for crossing the street. He crossed the street to see if everybody was o.k. And they arrested him, put him in cuffs, and threw him in the back of the paddy wagon.

What are they doing? like...they ask why and they say because, because we were blocking the sidewalk. You saw. there was no way we were blocking the sidewalks. None. thats (?) it.

Q. So how? then they left?

A. No, they, they got the garbage trucks. And the garbage trucks picked up all the mats and anything that was left behind they threw it in the garbage truck. Anything, everything, personal property that didn't get, like, anything that was not picked up and moved they threw into the garbage trucks. Like city garbage trucks.

They didn't even, they didn't even give us a chance to... Some of us didn't even get a chance to get our stuff.

It's just not worth it. Like this is just pathetic. What did we do?

Q. What are your plans now?

A. We have a community picnic tomorrow at Victory Square at 10 a.m. We want everybody there. Anybody and everybody. We need support right now. We need people to say...be there for us because right now we have no other place to go.

I'm pregnant. I'm two months pregnant. Crystal, the other pregnant girl, she got off. Stress caused her to go in alot of pain. we don't know what's going on with her. But she's o.k. But still, we don't need this shit.

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I was sleeping and the cop cars went in at either end of the street. They blocked off the street. I saw two officers grab Sid who ws taking pictures, throw him to the ground. And four more cops jumped on top. And they were trying to put him in handcuffs.

Three cops came up to me, surrounded me and said if I didn't leave I was going to be arrested. So I got on my bike and I, and I rode to the end of the street where I was told to move again by another cop.

By this time cops were just indiscriminately grabbing people and arresting them for nothing, for just standing there. It's a very sad, sad day when you just get arrested for standing there. It was cop brutality and it was just (????) . There were at least 100 cops there and maybe 30 of us.

And I don't really know what else to say right now.

Q. Did you see anymore specific, like people, specific things that happened to people?

A. Yeah, I saw them throw Ben Reese to the ground. This little girl...they threw her like face first on to the ground. Three cops ...and she wasn't doing nothing. She was just kinda talking to them.

Alot of police brutality, alot of sticks. It was really scary so I was just kinda..

**Q. What were they doing with the sticks?**

**A. I saw them hitting one guy who was like trying to get away from them. So they had him by the arm and he was, he was trying like to pull away and they were hitting him with the billy club. That's all I got to say right now.**

**11**

**When the police arrived I noticed that they were telling everybody "move on, move on". I sat there for awhile and then I started moving on.**

**But I was taking pictures. And I took one picture and I backed up and moved a couple of steps. And I took another picture, backed up and took another step. And by the time I took the third picture, I was jumped. I mean literally jumped.**

**And I was on the ground. And my camera went flying from me. And thankfully the police gave me the camera back. I think the film ws o.k. So I have those shots.**

**And then when I was in the vehicle, I was handcuffed. And I was put in the vehicle. And I just sat there for I don't know how long - 5- 10 minutes.**

**Then they opened the door and they asked, they said "Here's the deal. We'll let you out if you promise to leave the sight." And I said "Well, I'd like to know why I'm in the wagon." And they didn't answer and they closed the door.**

**And they came back again. This is when Anton and I started singing. They opened the door again. And they, they said "Here's the deal. We'll let you go if you promise to leave. And I said " I waqnt to know why I am in this wagon." And they said " Because you were breaching the peace." I said " well, that's impossible because I was walking away from the scene when it was going. I admit I was taking pictures, but I didn't think that was unlawful. And by the time I got my third picture taken I was jumped. And from then on I was in the paddy wagon."**

**So they came the third time. They opened the door and they said "Here's the deal. We're gonna let you go if you promise to leave the site." And I said "But why am I in the wagon?" He said " You're in the wagon for breach of peace." And I said " Well, thank you Officer 1956. You will be hearing from my lawyer tomorrow." That was the end of it.**

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**Q: When the police arrived, can you just describe what happened?**

**They first started tearing down all the posters and stuff they were hanging, and pushing people around. They were screaming, and they started picking on guys, they weren't resisting or nothing, and just slamming them around. And then they formed the one line and kind of stormed it to get the people out to the sidewalks. And then the dump trucks came in, trash trucks, and people started spreading out and about, and the single males that were alone, I saw two cops grab one, one male that was just yelling at them and they were forcing him and pushing him. He just wanted to get his stuff, his blankets and stuff, and they started slamming him around. And then the other one, he got further away from one officer and then another one grabbed him and body slammed him and pushed him over the edge. And then some more unmarked cars come up, with another paddy wagon, and they were. One guy at the pizza place complained that he was shot with rubber bullets. I heard him saying something like that. And he had a**

you know, being, you know, strapped with my hands behind my back, being, you know, lifted up and thrown face down on the pavement. That was quite interesting experience.

Well, then they took us to jail, put us, you know, in those three feet by six feet little bunkers and kept us until about seven o'clock, and then they released us, for, well, stating access, I guess they didn't, they only charged, they stated, they said it was a breach of peace, breach of peace, and right now we're being released, and...

**Q: What time were you released?**

About 7:00am. Yah, so...

**Q: At what point did the police tell you what you were being charged with?**

Just when, before they released. They just opened the door, said I am being charged with breach of peace, and now I am being released. And...

**Q: At any time did they read you your rights?**

No, no.

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You know what they would say. They were saying, the cops said first of all, that's what got them going is, 'murder the peasant,. And them somebody called them 'donut lover'. That's it, that's all.

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Well, we were all sitting around having a meeting and, you know, we were talking about some stuff, thinking that maybe there were cops listening to what we were doing. And after we pretty much said that, the cops started moving in. It was kind of creepy. Yah.

**Q: And what did they say when they first came in?**

Anybody who doesn't want to get arrested, get out of here. And if you didn't fucking jump when they said jump, then they fucking grabbed you.

**Q: How long did it take, approximately, when they started arresting people?**

It was pretty much instant. Once XXXX sat down and said it's our right to be here, they were on him like fucking flies on shit.

**Q: So, did you see anyone getting pushed around by the police, and that sort of thing?**

Well, they were just pretty rough with the guys they were trying to take down, three guys on one fucking little skinny guy, just fucking twisting him up pretzel like. They were just way too ?? - way too many of them. If they had fucking all the surveillance that a big city like this should have, they'd know fucking exactly what was going on every second. And I'm sure they did. You know what I'm saying.

**Q: So you saw them all loaded into the paddy wagon? How did you avoid getting arrested?**

Well, I would have gone with them but I got my girl there, and she's all pregnant and she didn't want to go to jail again. It was pretty, it was just a shock, a bit of a shock that they all moved in like that.

broken arm in a cast, and in a sling. And they still shot him. And that's about all, oh then I came and I was next to you.

Also, like I went to an officer and said that I had to get my, I've got a brand new sleeping bag and stuff, my stuff was set up down there, and, I set it up this morning. And they wouldn't let me go. They started pushing me away. And, I don't have nothing to keep warm or anything.

Q: So they took all your stuff?

Yah, through it in the trash trucks. And I asked them, I said it is only like five feet, right, let me get my stuff.... ?? ... she was really nice, she gave me blankets. She said help yourself to what is left here, cause they are going to throw it away. They cleared it up. And, so I got at least a box full of blankets, right? The one officer lady was cool. But I saw some really nasty ones, I saw some males grabbing chairs and throwing them and smashing them and ripping the posters, and pushing the guys down, and everything. It was uncalled for.

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I was sleeping in the tent, not doing nothing, and they dragged me out, and they said they woke me up five times, which, I don't think so. And they grabbed me, they threw me down, that's why my pants is all dirty, they handcuffed me, my elbow's kind of bruised, I got this from them, for throwing me down and that, they just...

Q: And your finger, is there something wrong, they did something to your finger?

Yah, just a little cut. My elbow is just totally sore now. Yah, it's kind of big, from throwing me down. So they put you in the handcuffs, then what did they do. Then they dug inside my pockets, took out everything. And I had a leather jacket inside the tent still. And I went back, thought the tent would have been there, but everything is gone. So, that's it...

Q: So you just took off after that?

Yah, they released me, said not to come back again. But I went around, then after that all those bed things, the tents, everything is gone.

Q: Did you see the police doing anything to anybody else?

Yah, they were throwing people in the paddy wagons, and, let's see, arresting people. They arrested, I don't know how much they arrested, but, that's the only thing I saw.

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Q: What was happening when the police arrived?

Well, we just had the meeting, you know, the organizing meeting, what we going do next, and suddenly, you know, the cops appeared from nowhere, like, lots of them surrounded us. And well, the rest, it's the history that we're making. Well, it was interesting. They just came and told us to leave or we may be arrested. We started to, you know, hold on together, and chant, and shout, 'Social housing now, social housing now. We have the right to be here'. And, well, they just came and pick up one by one, you know, strapped us, and throw us, you know, into those vans to go to jail, with lots of brutality. Like I was really probably moved ? by about five/six officers. They just took me up in the air, throw me to the ground, jumped on my with their knees and almost broke all my bones. And then picked me up again, throw me,

Yeah we were having a meeting and all of a sudden lights light the whole street , was just police cars and paddy wagons and the cops just started, they just walked up on the sidewalk and started yelling. Get your stuff. Get out or you're going to jail.

And I saw them grab Ivan first. they were really, really rough with him and I was scared. Like I was terrified cause they were so aggressive. They were so angry you could feel it in the air. It was like, it was, it was thick like smog. Just the aggression and I was terrified right away.

I was so scared. I just grabbed my blanket and cooler and tried to make my way out of the crowd. Like I was so scared.

They were so violent with Ivan. The three I saw them take down, it was like 3 on 1, 4 on 1. chokeholds and neckgrabs and they were just really really violent and uh, really aggressive. And it was really, really scary.

And I went and I stood across the street and the next thing I saw they've got their big, huge garbage trucks throwing away our beds and our bedding and our belongings. And they threw all our houses in the garbage.

Q. What sort of possessions did you have?

A. I didn't have very much. I had a couple of blankets. I managed to get one blanket and a jacket and a pair of jeans that got taken, taken away. I managed to grab my, uh, my cooler bag. that was a good score. I found it in the alley. My cooler bag and my blanket and the clothers, I mean, clothes I had on. um, I don' think Travis lost anything off our bed. But I know a woman two beds down; all her clothes, her brand new running shoes somebody had given her, her socks, her clean shirts. Everything went cause they wouldn't even let her grab that.

She managed to get up and they were shoving her like, out, get out, get out. So, um, tents, tents went missing. I know that for sur. And they just threw everything out.

Q. So what's your situation now?

A. I have a friend that I can stay with if I need to but.. We're gonna get more beds and more blankets and I'm bunking up against my building. So I'm staying here. So long as they don't come and get angry with me I'm fine. So (I'm?) pregnant. It's scary but yeah, I'm staying here. I'm staying here you know as soon as we get more mattresses. Like more beds, more bedding and that sort of thing. Yeah, I'm staying here. This is a good place to be.

I was the first one to see them come. I was on the corner of the street here so I realize there was no more traffic. So I looked down both ways, like towards Connor, and I didn't see no movement and I see cops blocking the street. So I just advised, I say they are coming for us, and as soon as I say it they just move right in. And like I just got time to grab my luggage and stop and cross the street. They come to us and said 'You guys are immediately going to move or we are going to arrest you guys'. So we decided to move on because I didn't feel like to get arrested. So we just decided to move on. But I watched the whole thing and like a good 45 minutes when they were doing their operation. And what I see they were

like arresting people, and threw them on the ground and all that stuff eh. So we didn't want to get involved to that so we just decided to move on. So that's what I see.

Q: So how many people did you see being thrown around?

Oh at least a good 20 people for sure. Yah. Like they also let some go, like they threw them down and they just let them go after but they brutalized like lots of people.

Q: And then they brought the garbage trucks in?

Yes, the garbage truck was also here, and they put everything, like mattresses, people's belongings, tents, everything they were putting in the garbage. And like the people were not here, they lose everything they own. Like the little bit they had left, they lost it.

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So what was happening was we were sitting. We were all sitting in a peaceful area, on this corner, waving our signs, waving to people that were honking at us, and, some of us walked down to the half block here. We were just talking. We were surrounded. We looked up, two minutes later, we were surrounded. The street, Hastings Street was completely blocked off, with police, with police and their paddy wagons and sanitation trucks. Cordova, blocked right off. Same thing, police on motorcycles. They came up to us, and they shined their flashlights in our faces. 'You have five minutes to leave. If you do not leave in five minutes, your arrested.' Direct quote. I will, I will, and I have a very good memory for what police do to me. They said we had five minutes to gather what we can and leave. Otherwise we're arrested. This place was packed with food, with people's homes, their sleeping bags, their tents, their clothing, their... They were intimidated, they were bullied. And they just left. And the people that didn't leave, they were thrown into the car, into the paddy wagons.

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We were having a meeting just after 10:30 and there was like, I don't know, more than 35 people there. And we just started to talk about what we were going to do for the next action and discussing that, when after 10 minutes there were, we were surrounded by cop cars. They blocked off Hastings, and on Cordova, and the alley way. And they came in with a few paddy wagons, police cruisers, and then they blocked off the road to the war monument on Cambie. And over to Carroll they had the road blocked off. And then, so, they didn't say anything. They just came in and started to surround everybody there. And then, so people were gathering together and linking arms. And some people were trying to get their things together to go. And then they announced that the people that wanted to go and not be arrested could go. And so a bunch of people did. Then they started to arrest people and put them in the paddy wagons, and they were violent with some of the people, like they knocked down a woman and dragged her. And then they were, you could tell that they were using unnecessary force. And then they told us to leave on Hastings Street, they brought in more paddy wagons and cruisers right behind us. So the people that were standing over here at the, near that 'Jesus is Lord' building, but on the other side. We all had to go, they were yelling at us, telling us we had to go. So we left because they brought in more cops. And then we went to the Anti-Poverty office. And then we returned here and they were still arresting people. When we got here they were almost done.

Then they started to take the people who were on Hastings Street who had, who were sleeping there and they told them to go to. And that was one of their last things they did. And then they took all the belongings and they tossed them in big trucks and they, they scooped everything. And, a lot of people left everything they had there, like their belongings, they had there, you know, all there like things that they needed for every day life. And they were like, they liked it. They thought, it was like fun for them, you could tell, like, some of them were laughing, you know talking. While they were brutalizing the people. It's evil. This is, this is military occupation. It's a military state, we are under military colonial law, it's the queen herself that they are doing this for. So I think that the queen should be here and saying, you know, if these people are doing this, why don't they just say who they are really doing it for. It is the queen and the Prime Minister. And I'm sure they'll like to live in Woodward's, you know, it's there for them now. So,



we're just waiting for them to get here. 'Here's your new place, and maybe the cops will treat you the same way as we did [us] if they forget who you are. And remember that they're the power trippers with the guns'.

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One of the police last night that was arresting the protesters outside Woodwards, I walked up to him and I said, I said, 'You guys are nothing but bullies, high school bullies that have turned professional. I'm not afraid of you. I've been beaten up by people like you my entire life'. And the cop looked me straight in the eye and he said 'Well, I'm going to see that it keeps happening'. And I said, 'Yah, you sure have'. I just remembered that this morning. Like the guy was, like he was into it. He was fucking into it, what he was doing. He wanted to fucking haul off and belt me. But there were too many people there, and he couldn't. Like, it made him visibly upset I think.