



The violent police assaults across the US are no coincidence. Occupy has touched the third rail of our political class's venality

The National Union of Journalists and the Committee to Protect Journalists issued a Freedom of Information Act request to investigate possible federal involvement with law enforcement practices that appeared to target journalists. The New York Times reported that "New York cops have arrested, punched, whacked, shoved to the ground and tossed a barrier at reporters and photographers" covering protests.

Reporters were asked by NYPD to raise their hands to prove they had credentials: when many dutifully did so, they were taken, upon threat of arrest, away from the story they were covering, and penned far from the site in which the news was unfolding. Other reporters wearing press passes were arrested and roughed up by cops, after being – falsely – informed by police that "It is illegal to take pictures on the sidewalk."

In New York, a state supreme court justice and a New York City council member were beaten up; in Berkeley, California, one of our greatest national poets, Robert Hass, was beaten with batons. The picture darkened still further when Wonkette and Washingtonsblog.com reported that the Mayor of Oakland acknowledged that the Department of Homeland Security had participated in an 18-city mayor conference call advising mayors on "how to suppress" Occupy protests.

To Europeans, the enormity of this breach may not be obvious at first. Our system of government prohibits the creation of a federalised police force, and forbids federal or militarised involvement in municipal peacekeeping.

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