



Whose Streets? Portland Police Try New Tactics, 24 Arrested

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Police in Portland have had lots of time to work out new strategies to deal with protests/riots. Last month they often seemed to remain out-of-sight during marches, at least until something was set on fire and a riot was declared. That didn't seem to work to de-escalate things. On the contrary, it just gave the rioters a free hand up to the point of arson. Last night, police apparently tried the opposite tactic, i.e. breaking up a march before it even started. For a brief moment, it seemed to work.

The armored officers swept through the park, confiscating homemade shields and other articles. A scuffle broke out when officers tried to confiscate a picket sign that read "vote," multiple videos from the scene showed, and at least one person was detained. Police also deployed pepper spray.

Officers also filtered through the crowd, shining flashlights at people's faces. A journalist for The Oregonian/OregonLive heard one officer say they were looking for a particular person.

The new tactic clearly caught the protesters off guard, temporarily splintering the crowd and delaying — at least for a time — the planned march to a nearby police union office.

The early disruption and arrests really pissed off the Antifa/BLM folks who compared them to the Klan and called them "a tool of the rich."

Also around this time a person driving a "medic" vehicle was stopped and found to have a loaded gun in the car. The driver had no insurance and was arrested.

The new tactics seemed to throw the mob at first but soon enough they reformed and made their way to the Portland Police Association building which has been set on fire and vandalized many times at this point. At the PPA, police once again tried out some new tactics. Instead of giving the group control of the streets, police warned that the sidewalk in front of the building was off limits. They also told the group that they would be arrested if they blocked the road. Some protesters decided to test this new approach and wandered into the road.

With the sidewalk and the road off limits, the would-be rioters much space to operate.

Some of the crowd made their way to the parking lot of a 7-11 nearby. Police continued to make arrests and Antifa tried to "de-arrest" several people, meaning they tried to wrestle with police to prevent the arrests. These efforts mostly failed which only made the group more angry.

At some point in the night a police officer had a baseball bat thrown at him by a fleeing suspect and a police sergeant was punched in the face and had to be taken to the hospital. One of the Antifa goons also fired bear mace at police:

In all, at least 24 people were arrested, most for disorderly conduct and interfering with an officer. While the new tactics seem to have worked pretty well last night, i.e. no fires were set at the PPA building, that's not the end of it. Progressive DA Mike Schmidt will drop charges against all of these people and they will be back on the street tonight as if nothing happened.

Finally, there was one interesting exchange last night between a homeowner who clearly was on the side of the protesters/rioters and a couple of officers. Asked what could be done so that police didn't have to be out in the streets every night, one cop replied, "If they were not out here, we wouldn't be out here." He added, "If people like our Trump government a lot more, we probably wouldn't have this issue in the first place. There's a lot of contention with the federal government."

He's being descriptive not prescriptive. In other words, he's saying people are angry about Trump and that's a big reason this is happening.

A second officer added to that, "We know it's going to run all the way, at least to the election. This could run all the way to inauguration."

"Well it could run all the way until cops stop killing black people," the homeowner said. It's a snappy answer but I think the cops are probably right in this case.

If you're old enough to remember the last year of the Bush administration, you've seen this before. In 2007 the anti-war movement was huge. There were protests with tens of thousands of people in multiple cities. And then Obama won the election and the anti-war movement just vanished overnight.

"It's a far cry from the Bush years, when hundreds of thousands or millions marched against the war," David Boaz, executive vice president of the libertarian Cato Institute, writes on the Britannica website. He asks the same question: Whatever happened to the anti-war movement?

In the post, he points out that American protests against wars seemed to stop the moment Barack Obama was elected president in 2008. "Maybe anti-war organizers assumed that they had elected the man who would stop the war," he observes...

He concludes that the anti-war activity in the United States — and around the world — a few years ago "was driven as much by antipathy to George W. Bush as by actual opposition to war and intervention."

Portland may be a special case but I think protests/riots in most places will tone down significantly if Biden wins the election and, conversely, protests will likely ramp up and become more violent if Trump wins because what's driving this is national politics. The top clip here is just a longer version of the bottom one.