

Witness: Lynne Owens  
Statement No: 1  
Exhibits Referred to: LO/1, LO/2, LO/3, LO/4, LO/5, LO/6,  
LO/7, LO/8, LO/9, LO/10  
Date Statement Made: 26 January 2012

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**The Leveson Inquiry into the Culture Practices and Ethics of the Press**

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This is the exhibit marked 'LO/4' referred to in the statement of Lynne Owens,  
dated this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January 2012.

On **Wednesday 2 March 2011** the AC gave an interview to the **Today Programme** re: changes in dealing with protestors:

Presenter: The Metropolitan Police are going to try and be more polite to demonstrators, they will warn them by twitter when they are about to kettle them and when they do kettle protestors in one area and not allow them to leave they will provide water and portable loos.

Assistant Commissioner Lynne Owens is in charge of policing protests for the Met, she is also ACPO lead on it she told MP's about the changes yesterday about it. We will also be joined by Shami Chakrabarti Director of Liberty, they have been suing the Met over Kettling, but first if I speak to you Assistant Commissioner Owens. Is that the best way to characterise these changes that basically you are going to be more polite.

AC Lynne Owens: No, I am not sure that is the best way to characterise the changes and what we say is that we have an ambition that the 26th March, which is the TUC march will be a safe and peaceful event, and as part of our preparation for that event, what we have been listening to is the feedback from the student marches where we were given some clear indications that people did not know how they should be preparing in advance of the march, they did not know what the route of the march was and when they came to the route, they did not know where they should go where there was violence and where they should be safe. We have had strong indications from young people that the communications that we engaged with loud halers was not the best way to communicate and that they found twitter and other social media networks to be the best route.

Presenter: Because presumably you are going on a route, on a demonstration you cannot know where violence is going to flare up, you could be caught up in it.

AC Lynne Owens: Absolutely, and we want to say to peaceful protestors if violence does occur, which we hope it doesn't, we want protestors to have the opportunity to leave and to know safe routes that they can take. What we will be doing is putting things in our twitter account so that they will know where violence is happening and use the opportunities to go to safe areas.

Presenter: It is not a tall order to expect someone to be monitoring their phones and the internet while they are also demonstrating.

AC Lynne Owens: But of course it won't be the only method of communication and we are expecting our brave officers will be engaging and speaking to them as well.

Presenter: And if you do kettle you will be providing water and loos.

AC Lynne Owens: Yes, as I say we are planning for a peaceful event but of course we would be naive not to think there maybe people that turn up and wanting to cause violence, so if that has to happen if we do have to use containment which is a tactic we use as a last resort, then we will be providing toilets, we will appointing somebody called a containment manager who will be effecting a very fast release of the people involved in the containment, particularly those not involved in the violence

Presenter: Well stay there as I say we have Shami Chakrabarti of Liberty who are suing the Met over Kettling, and what you are hearing Shami Chakrabarti is this enough to make you stop the legal action.

Shami Chakrabarti: Not at all we have a difference of opinion with the police with that particular tactic. But what I will say and say optimistically is that we are delighted that on this occasion the 26th March both the Metropolitan Police and the TUC whose demonstration it is have invited us as Liberty to be independent legal observers of this demonstration. We have a long tradition that goes back over seventy years over being concerned about the right of peaceful protests and of course public order and attempting to run observations of these demonstrations ourselves, but what the current leadership of the police, the new Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner we have just heard from, what they have decided

to do is to allow us and not just to observe from the street but to observe from the control room as well, which I think is quite big of them, it is also great to have the TUC are working with the police to plan the event, and make any trouble much, much less likely. We are hoping our presence there as neutral observers will be a positive constructive development.

Presenter: And if they require they see the need to kettle people and giving warnings and allowing this the more softly, softly approach that it could be more acceptable.

Shami Chakrabarti; We have concerns over that particular tactic an we maintain those concerns

Presenter: Those concerns being

Shami Chakrabarti: The concerns being about sweeping up the innocent with the guilty if there is a trouble situation.

Presenter: And the warning via twitter will not be enough

Shami Chakrabarti: On this occasion what we are hoping to do is to observe and to call it like we see it at this demonstration. I sincerely hope that all the good work that the police and the TUC are doing together to plan this, expected to be the largest demonstration we have seen in central London for many, many years to plan this together so that there won't be the kind of extreme circumstances that the Assistant Commissioner none the less has to plan for. We don't like containment however we are going to be independent observers not litigators not demonstrators and we are going to try and help.

Presenter: Shami Chakrabarti thank you very much, well listening to that is Assistant Commissioner Lynne Owens who is still with me. Is this an admission that you did get things wrong, that there were people who were kettled in the past who shouldn't have been and who were unfairly treated as the result.

AC Lynne Owens: We must be very clear in what we saw in the end of last year was people who came to London with the intent of using and causing violence and we saw some very brave officers standing up and challenging that violence.

Presenter: Possibly but we also saw people who did not intend to be involved in the violence get caught up in it.

AC Lynne Owens: Absolutely and what we are trying to do on this occasion is to say if you intend to come on the protest, please check our website in advance know the route you are meant to be sticking to, stay to that route and if you see violence, please leave the area and we will be giving you indications via twitter about the safe place for you to go. Our main plea is ourselves and the TUC are working very closely together with students to make this a very safe event, both those who are attending the events and other Londoners that maybe in the area so our plea is for people who come into London to act peacefully.

Presenter: Was it your decision to allow Liberty into your control rooms and behind the scenes

AC Lynne Owens: Yes it was we are working jointly with the TUC and Liberty and we look forward to hearing their feedback at the end of the protest.

Presenter: Lynne Owens than you very much