

Seattle Protest Report

By Jonah Lehto

(Seattle, July 13) Over the weekend, King County Superior Court judge approved a petition for an election to recall mayor Jenny Durkan. Of the seven claims stated, only the claim regarding improper use of tear gas on protesters was approved. A recall election will be held quickly if and when the petition gains enough signatures.

Seattle mayor Jenny Durkan has asked police chief Carmen Best to prepare proposed budgets featuring 20%, 30% and 50% cuts to the SPD budget.

As a comment, this seems sure to ignite public debate as the police budgets will attempt to make 50% look as draconian as possible. For example, deputy Mayor Mike Fong has already stated that the diversity hiring goals of police could be reversed, as union rules may require the younger and more diverse officers to be laid off.

An unnamed woman who appears to have filmed the aftermath of last week's fatal shooting in the Capitol Hill Organized Protest area, possibly including capturing people talking about removing evidence, was arrested Thursday but then released without charges by Friday. As a side note, this appears to be an expansion of Police tactics to go after media outtakes and is now applied to citizens who may be journalists.

British journalist Andrew Buncombe, who writes for the Independent, was arrested by SPD for failure to disperse during the sweep of CHOP. Buncombe, while allegedly standing alone and informing an officer multiple times that he was with the media, was pinned and arrested by a group of armed officers.

The Seattle Times covers the story of how Buncombe has been detained by police in Cuba, Pakistan and the United States but Buncombe says his experience in the United States was by far the worst. He calls the jail system essentially an unthinking and uncaring automaton.

Buncombe provides considerable more detail in his own articles appearing in the British press. In the British publication the Independent, Buncombe observed how prison guards, jail officials, and officers treated the arrested, noting a somewhat smug aura from an accused jail official who gladly gave over her name and badge number on a post-it note with a smiley face, seemingly confident that no complaint would ever succeed.

On a personal note, people may wish to read and compare the Seattle Times account followed by the British account, and note the important details left out in the Seattle Times version such as his assault while in the Seattle jail. Links are included in the show file.

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/when-reporters-get-arrested-in-seattle-and-get-a-view-from-inside-the-criminal-justice-machine/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/journalist-arrest-seattle-chaz-protest-police-prison-black-lives-matter-a9606846.html>