

WHO ARE YOU STREAMING FOR?

three criticisms of livestreaming

In 2014 seven people were sought in connection with the alleged assault of 2 police officers based on livestream footage the police reviewed.

In response to the police murder of Eric Garner, rage and sadness exploded nationwide resulting in widespread demonstrations against police brutality. During a planned Millions March in New York City, where Garner was murdered, two police officers were allegedly assaulted when trying to make an arrest. Days later, police issued photos seeking to identify seven people from using a livestreamer's footage. The police chief issued this statement.

"Thankfully, there are so many characters out there looking to post their exploits on YouTube," said Bratton. "We're greatly assisted by YouTube and social media, so in that regard I want to thank them for providing us with the evidence that will ultimately help us to arrest them and hopefully successfully prosecute them."

On June 13th of 2020, a Wendy's where Rayshard Brooks was murdered by police was burned to the ground. By June 20th police began circulating photos of an alleged suspect who they (along with a million twitter users) had identified through using footage taken by livestreamers. Their target was the long term loving girlfriend of Rayshard Brooks.

The footage from both of these incidents, used in identifying suspects and issuing warrants for their arrests, came from livestreams. It caught theses peoples lives up within the states justice system and subjected them to right wing harrassment and threat.

These are just two examples out of an incalculable amount, of the potential impacts live unedited footage can have on individual's lives.

On October 11th of 2020 Portland, Oregon saw some of the most inspiring direct attacks on monuments to colonialism and white supremacy during Indigenous People's Day of Rage.

Hundreds participated and over the course of a few hours, marched, sang, performed ceremony, toppled two statues, and smashed the windows of both a historical society and a cop shop. They were met with no police resistance till well after the action officially ended. This is only a day after police has brutally rounded up and arrested a group of protesters.

The Indigenous People's Day of Rage had a key distinct feature in how it was shared on social media.

No Livestreamers.

The march was able to finish and realize many of its aims without experiencing repression from swarms of violent unhinged police.

The Day of Rage ensured that at the end of the action, the hours of footage police could have crawled through to identify and prosecute window smashers and statue topplers, simply didn't exist.

There is an ongoing struggle between an understanding of livestreaming as a form of mass surveillance which results in prosecutions and police intervention and the view of it as a form of transparency on the actions of police or other state actors.

Footage HAS helped us. It is true. Cops lie. And sometimes footage is able to get defendants off of bullshit charges and to counteract right wing spins.

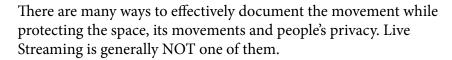
Footage of federal agents kidnapping residents into unmarked vans helped to mobilize many thousands into the streets on Portland .

Footage has endlessly documented the utter depravity and violence of the police and military leading to massive resistance. The attached aren't necessarily critiques of photographers, videographers, and people documenting movements as a whole.

The critiques below are of how footage is taken and released. Of the motivations that people can have in obtaining that footage. And of the insistence to livestream events where people will be committing actions that police will seek to prosecute them for.



WHY LIVESTREAMERS MAKE GREAT INFORMANTS



A common issue with Streamers is their display of entitlement, often citing the value of bringing the movement to the people. But Streamers have a hard time admitting that the police find their work more valuable then demonstrators.

In a world of voyeurism and exhibitionists, Streamers often get carried away, interpreting their role as being a narrator for the movement. They often film people without their consent, placing more value in presenting to their viewership, then protecting the group that is already taking risks by just getting out into the street to protest.

One of the biggest problems with streaming is that it gives real time information to the police as far as what people are present, the group's intentions, as well as its location and routes. Embedded Streamers give police a tactical advantage when trying to conduct mass arrests.

An even more tragic contract Streamers impose on demonstrators is the raw, unedited, archived video that is often made public and available online for law enforcement to use later to help identify and target people.



Before we move to "Streamer Solutions" lets review some "Streamer tactics" that are favorable to law enforcement, and almost always at the expense of the people.

Very Poor Streamer "Etiquette"

Calling People out by Name on Streams.

People don't go to protests for other people to call them out on streams that are put up permanently online for law enforcement to review.

Filming Peoples' Identities on Streams

Law enforcement use streams to target and identify people for repression and arrest

Narrating your Interpretation of what Kind of Action is Taking Place

Streamers often divulge personal opinions rather than facts when narrating about actions. Are you prepared to be a witness for law enforcement in the future?

Filming Direct Actions

Everything you film, can and will be used against protesters if law enforcement has anything to do with it.

Narrating Logistics and Tactics

At the height of Occupy Oakland, Undercovers were being called into certain FTP protests because of the "no Live Streaming" / "no Twittering" tactic.

FTP marches are ongoing Fuck the Police marches that take place in Oakland and across the Bay.
Narrating Group Routes

Police have a much easier time arresting people in the streets when they have Streamers narrating the group's routes. You don't need Undercovers and helicopters when you have a front-row seat. If you want to be helpful to the movement, be honest about your intentions.

Is your viewership more important than the people you are standing with?

Do you want to be doing something that benefits the police over the people?

Every action, every mass mobilization, has a story that can be told. But folks need to either start holding "non-streaming" actions again, or streamers should stop operating as informants for the police.

If any of these issues are concerning to you, maybe consider NOT "Live Streaming" your next protest. Pick up a still camera, conduct some audio interviews, heck shoot some video. There's no reason why you can't go home after a protest and produce some content that is useful and not harmful. But in case it's not in your blood to consider other people on that level, here are some good Live Stream tactics.

"Good" Livestream Tactics

- •Stand hundreds of feet away from the group so the low quality recording doesn't pick up conversations or peoples' identity.
- •Don't film peoples' identity without their consent.
- •Don't narrate intentions, tactics, locations, or destinations.
- •Wear a bright shirt that says "Live Streamer" or "Informant."

More "Real Good" Livestream Tactics

- •Live Stream an event, panel, or discussion where all parties consent.
- •Live Stream a demo or action where all parties involved consent.
- •Live Stream your interactions when being stopped, questioned, or harassed by law enforcement. (maybe put your channel on private!) Be safe out there, and make it safer for the masses by considering them when you point a camera at them.



.@bassem_masri sees his livestream in a Clayton patrol car at police support rally. #Ferguson



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IN DEFENSE OF SMASHING STREAMER'S CAMERAS



When you're at a protest you should only be filming the police and police actions.

This is not meant to be a word for word copy, but more of an adaptation for the ever-changing media, ways of producing and creating content and most specifically, those who seek to profit off of social movements.

We are vulnerable to attack. More so than ever. There are not only cameras everywhere, but now there are people with agendas with cameras, who are seeking to capture content to line their own pockets by filming others and their trauma and experiences.

Stop profiting off of BIPOC, LGBTQ+ && other groups in moments of trauma, their stories and their personal experiences. While you broadcast them for people to hear and see, it is incredibly disheartening that your PayPal, Venmo, Cash App and other payment methods are given, suggesting you (the filmer) need compensation for providing access to their story.

I'm not suggesting that these people do not deserve tips. Tip them. Appreciate good and proper journalism. Not grifters who want you to spam the hearts, smash that like button and get them money so they can fly all over to record protests. How is that benefitting the people that they are profiting off of? But don't forget that their media is based on the experiences of those who have actually lived

them. They are not conflict journalists when they're begging you for your money every 10 minutes. These photographers and streamers are war profiteers. They abuse their position for their audience for financial gain, they feed their own ego through toxic social media and they discredit any movement by their disrespect for proper channels. They are grifters. Be humble.

Photographers and Live-Streamers/Media Personalities now often outnumber protesters. This has happened on multiple occasions in 2020. This is something we need to be against. Phones are dangerous. Cameras are even more dangerous. Whether it is us or the enemy that wields them, we not only participate, but now encourage the panopticon. Further, people are being supported financially in their role as providing surveillance for their own good, bad actors on the opposite side, or for the benefit of the state/state actors. "Groups and individuals who have an interest in publicity and photo opportunities need to recognise the fact that they can make everyone else vulnerable to repression and less effective. One group's photo op is unwanted Twitter publicity for the 100 people surrounding them." And furthermore, these streams, photos and screen grabs can not only be harmful for any action taken by any one at any time, it shows the harm and risk for doxing, chud/police identification or encouraging harmful rhetoric in chats without proper monitoring. More so, certain livestreamers are police collaborators, risking the safety of everyone around them.

Taking any photos or video at a protest now puts everyone at risk. It puts everyone around you, the people you're with, strangers around you, and the people you're profiting off of at risk through your camera lens. This not only subjects others to your desire for publicity, marketing your brand, music, or personality for your actions (or whatever actions you're filming), "but can also lead to people who are ready to do something interesting feeling hesitant." Your presence prevents the movement from moving forward. Fear of exposure from you filming specific pieces, people and places is real and recorded. The camera no longer clicks, it's just another one doing a cop's job for them- state surveillance.

Publicity is the issue. Being labeled as "PRESS" is another. It's funny, because I'm going to perpetuate the narrative that there is a fake press out there, which by all means, there are. They're not press, they're media personalities, reporting their experience rather than what is happening.

If we are on the streets we are in public; we are surveilled. We can't escape this. What we can control is intelligible visibility. The reason we mask up is to become opaque, to elude intelligibility. Being photographed against our will is a direct attack against our attempts of obfuscation and ought to be treated as such. Cameras are tools of the surveillance state and dominant forms of control that our very presence on the streets seeks to dismantle- or in this case, seek to do nothing about except receive monetary compensation for transportation (cross-country), food, shelter and other benefits from their grift.

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Photographs and real time video of actions weaken actions and the ability to take them, act on them and plan any further actions by giving access to the watchers (including police and other actors) more information than they need. "This is not paranoia; it is a fact. For every police photograph, there are ten more incriminating ones on twitter. For every official observation, every surveillance camera pointed our direction, we are doing ourselves the injustice of allowing ourselves to be recorded, disseminated and documented by our peers, in the name of free speech or journalistic impartiality, entitlement, whatever you want to call it. And it has to stop."

We anonymize ourselves as harm reduction so that we can act regardless. To be known, named, doxxed, is to be captured. In the cybernetic swamp, the mask generates the possibility of action and evasion

Clout posting has its own place. Those people come and go. They get their photo and leave. Live Streamers who don't act appropriately put people in real danger. They capture moments that will lead to arrests, jail time and harsh penalties and expose individuals (intentional or not) for actions they may not want captured on film. Hiding behind the "it's a public protest I can film what I want" is not only a bad look (especially when you're profiting off of your filming), it indicates that your motives are not in line with actual journalistic integrity, but are looking for clicks. In this case, they are saying that (in this movement) their place as streamers are larger than the abolition of the police and Black Liberation. These streamers are taking over where the Cops camera crew left off. Riot porn. Clickbait. They engage their audience with hot takes and critiques (instead of accurate reporting), which places their status as a "press" member into direct contradiction to their action. They are media personalities looking to cash in. They are not Press. There are streamers who purposely film faces, capture actions and turn

footage over to the police. "These people are scum and should not be protected simply because we believe that journalists have some kind of impartiality, some right that is above our desires to protect ourselves."

But don't they have a right to be there, even if they are expressing different opinions or have different perspectives of what is going on? Sure, it's a public place. Unfortunately, this goes far beyond that. It doesn't matter why they're there, the problem is with what they're doing while they're there. The questions we need to pose to journalists, members of the press and live-streaming media personalities are: "where do you stand when it comes to social struggle? How do you act to further revolt? Simply put, journalists do not have any political right to a 'spectacle." The medium is the massage. Their perspective, recording and commitment to not address concerns of those in the movement and rather (some) commenting that they'd rather bear arms and protect themselves, certify that they prioritize their potential fame, finances and commitment to their message, rather than the message of the movement overall. They aren't here to document properly, they are here to exploit your comrades and those at risk.

People who take photographs and post them online, without blurring faces or cropping out identities, put us at risk and we should not be complacent.

If journalistic ethics are being adhered to, they have no right to create a spectacle around themselves and focus on the incidents/ actions they are covering. The spectacle becomes their version of what is happening, as opposed to what is actually happening. Their political right to a spectacle is given up with their participation or lack thereof in an action. They are not covering it, they are recording it, there is a difference. "They have the ability to participate in a moment of revolt and they forgo that capacity by consigning the

event to a digital memory rather than a future possibility." Covering a protest, action or demonstration is important for the necessary documentation of speeches (with permission), important art/messages and police violence. When streamers are prioritizing their opinions, request for donations/increased metrics, or indifference on actions or what they are filming, they are not to be trusted.

Spectators do not act (there is one specific example of a streamer taking action after an incident in Kenosha, WI after a white domestic-terrorist shot protesters, which is the exception).

"Time and again, photographers actually inhibit the unfurling of events by standing right in front of an action, rushing forward, blocking your way to support your friends and documenting your attempts to do so. Eyes without bodies do not move, but they may propel enemies. When you take a photograph at a demo before anything actually happens, if something does happen, the police can use that photograph to construct a narrative and build identities. You could spotlight someone involved in something that hasn't even happened yet, highlight that crucial piece of evidence the police will use to solidify their case against us. To inhibit possibility and limit potential is not something we should simply accept."

We must fight back against those who are putting our BIPOC community members, allies, frontliners, friends, comrades, mutual aid and medics in danger.

"People who take photographs and post them online, without blurring faces or cropping out identities, put us at risk and we should not be complacent."

There seems to be a real stigma against smashing cameras/phones here. We must seek to change this. Their phones and cameras are tools of oppression and uphold the objectives of the state and police- capture footage (often directly to their riot wall), identify those who are captured on camera and make violent targeted arrests. Why do we permit this? Why is there a stigma against driving these

filmers out? What advantage do we gain from permitting them to put our community members in danger? We must stop this. We must smash their cameras and phones. Throw them in the river.

"That said, we are not luddites. To the contrary, we love a good photo and we cannot dismiss the seductive qualities of images in the age of spectacles. There's a reason we call it riot porn. We've even printed and framed the memories we love best. We recognise the importance of documenting certain struggles, to spread the message, to share with our friends abroad, to help ignite the fire of rebellion."

Photos and video move our enemies and their pension for state violence and riot porn. They also motivate us to strive even harder for the abolition of police and ultimately, Black Liberation. This is not meant to be a critique of all streamers and journalists, just specific ones. The footage they capture can be considered a weapon used to not only harm protesters, but allows them to profit financially off of it.

There are people who record and photograph properly. Those people are to be trusted. "We consider them part of our struggles and think of them as partisans and accomplices in social war." If you align yourself with the movement and are committed to filming/streaming/covering/photographing, here are some updated guidelines:

1. Contrary to what many protest-photography tips tell you, don't get up close. This includes streaming from the front line without permission.

2.If there are faces in your shot, blur them. A simple swirl in Photoshop won't do. We're talking about scrambling them so that the police cannot reverse the process. If you are streaming, do not film if you are not able to protect identities so faces, outfits. Do not film at a direct action early, when some of your comrades are not properly dressed or are dressing.

3.If there is distinctive or identifying clothing in your shot, blur them. Or don't film them at all, film the ground.

4.If certain identities stick out (the few Black bodies in a white protest, the few visibly disabled in a seemingly able-bodied demonstration, etc. etc.), delete the photo/video unless you have permission from the individuals to use/capture their actions. There are protesters who want to be filmed or are indifferent, please check in with them to make sure it is okay.

5.If you choose to participate as a spectator, then realise your participation is secondary to those actively engaged in the moment of revolt. This means you should step aside, even if it means losing that 'wining' shot. Your role as a reporter is different than your role as a "media/social personality."

6.If possible—and it usually is—ask for consent or indicate that you are taking a photo so that we have an option to turn away or decline. Yes, we get it. We are in a public place and you don't have to ask, but realise that failure to ask makes us suspicious of your motivations and provides us with added reason to assert our capacity for opacity.

7. Your camera is a weapon. Friendly fire is not acceptable. Nor will it be tolerated.

8. You are a partisan in social war. Become involved in the struggles you choose to document. Should they be documented? If so, how should they be documented to spread their capacities? Become a comrade and earn the trust of those around you. Except for professional activists, for the vast majority of us, this is not a career. Seeking to capitalize on that social war makes you a war profiteer, grifter is a lite term for what you are really doing. You are exploiting those who are fighting for change and seem to be happy doing so.

9.Photograph the police. And only the police. One exception can be seen as activists who want their speeches/demonstrations recorded.

This should be something you ask about before filming.

10.Infer more guidelines from the analysis above.

Recently, a live-streamer was outed in a personal conversation about being "ACAB" but also turning over their footage to the police willingly. How does this make sense? There is no care, respect, or proper reporting being done to ensure the safety of those in our community. This is why we must smash their cameras and stop them from profiteering on this and any following movements or actions.

The conversation is always evolving. Live streaming protests, photographing and video recording don't have "set" guidelines... however... if streamers and photographers are willing to put their egos above the movement...

This is a call for people to smash their cameras and phones. Smash them, paint them, put umbrellas in their way, use make and distribute privacy shields, throw their phones/cameras in the fucking river.

"Time and time again we see our friends being taken away because someone chose their five moments of fame, the titillation of seeing his photo of our fucking faces making it onto the pages of Vice, the Evening Standard, the Guardian. They choose that above standing next to their friends and accomplices and fighting against the surveillance state that controls us all. Maybe the hack is on our side; maybe they think they are spreading the word, spreading the revolt. It doesn't matter. For right now, all they are doing is contributing to a climate of inaction, of fear of action, spreading information that those who seek to bring us down will use against us. Next time you see someone thrusting their lens in someone's face, getting a little too close and personal, blocking your path to assist your friends so they can get a winning angle, we ask you not to stand idly by."

Fight back. Protect your friends. Protect your community. Black Lives Matter. Black Communities Matter. Record police brutality, not people fighting in the war to end it.



Updated from the original 2016 In Defense of Smashing Cameras and posted by an anonymous author to the anarchistlibrary,org

SMASHED WINDOWS, SOCIAL MEDIA AND STATE SURVEILLANCE



On September 21st, 2016 the people of Charlotte, North Carolina took the streets in response to the police murder of Keith Lamont Scott, a 30 year old black man fatally shot by two undercover officers serving someone else a warrant. Resistance to the murder of Keith Lamont Scott took many shapes, ranging from prayer vigils to marches and property destruction. Forty-one people were arrested by Charlotte police (CPD) that night, and an additional twelve would be arrested over the following days for activity that allegedly occurred on the 21st. Through social media, police have made clear they are seeking to arrest more individuals for the events of the 21st, many of them for property destruction. At least 95 warrants have been signed in relation to the Charlotte protest.

Using closed circuit cameras, social media, and other surveillance footage, CPD has identified, charged and arrested at least 22 people after the fact. Police have used twitter to circulate the names and images of people they're actively searching for, and some of the images being used to confirm identities appear to come from the targeted protesters' own social media content. The circulation of their images serve two purposes: the first is actually crowd-sourcing information, and the second is a reminding demonstrators that they are being watched.

None of this is new. State surveillance and the political persecution of people fighting for social justice is well known and documented; it has been ongoing for decades. What is new, however, is that many people are now documenting acts of resistance in real time and publicly sharing their footage. This documentation is being viewed and cataloged by police for general intel purposes and also as evidence used to charge specific demonstrators.

Documenting resistance and sharing that documentation is essential for inspiring others and creating a culture of resistance. The idea that people will stop documenting—whether it's protesters, bystanders or police—is a luddite's fantasy. The question for those documenting resistance in solidarity with the movement is how we can continue our work without assisting law enforcement and thus facilitating the criminalization of our fellow demonstrators. The following is not an answer, but merely a series of suggestions informed by my experience documenting resistance in Chicago; they are meant to provoke a larger conversation around how those with cameras can love and protect our fellow protesters.

In the immediate aftermath of radical resistance, demonstrators are often quick to upload potentially incriminating footage of their comrades. Retweets, shares, new followers, and "up votes" are not worth accidentally assisting law enforcement. If you are acting in solidarity with the movement, you have a responsibility to review your content before sharing it on social media. This can mean waiting to upload content or dropping to the back or side to review it before posting. If you capture police brutality on film but are worried that taken out context, it may be incriminating, share that

footage with a movement lawyer before publicizing it.

For live streamers, it is doubly important to be aware of your surroundings and how action is developing. Live streams provide no opportunity to remove footage from circulation, as most platforms are backing up the video as you stream. To protect the people you're documenting, it may mean having to go down during portions of the protest. If you don't want to go down, another alternative is to turn the live stream onto you and narrate the action you're seeing or frame the shot to only include what you want viewers to see. Your lens could also be trained on police during times when you need to avoid filming demonstrators. In any of these scenarios, being aware of how the action is changing is essential for ensuring you're not accidentally broadcasting evidence that may be misused by law enforcement.

The question for those documenting resistance in solidarity with the movement is how we can continue our work without assisting law enforcement and thus facilitating the criminalization of our fellow demonstrators.

Photos taken by demonstrators, movement media and journalists can also be used for data collection and supporting or creating charges. With photography, it's important to remember how images can be taken out of context. The frozen-in-time sight of a hand on an officer while reaching for balance becomes felony assault, an arm extended proves a punch thrown, real or imagined. This is why I will shoot from a distance, intentionally blur an image, increase the brightness to blow out light sources/lens flares and filter my images before posting to social media. While there are numerous live streamers and live tweeters like @Rebelutionary_Z, @UnicornRiot, and myself that place priority on raising the voices of the move-

ment, many people will sellout you and your comrades in a hot second if offered \$50 bucks from Russia Today or Telesur, a transaction which ultimately ensures footage will be available to law enforcement. In the past year, Chicago Police have used images from the Chicago Tribune twice to back up or create fabricated charges against protesters. Many news agencies want to be in good standing with police in order to get information when breaking news is happening, and keeping that good relationship means cooperating with authorities.

In the past year, there has been a dramatic increase in the infiltration of street actions by right-wing media . Some of these so-called journalists are employed by right-wing media outlets like Breitbart, while others are just overzealous racists and misogynists trying to discredit the movement. In some instances, these people will actively provoke demonstrators and police in hopes of getting their "gotcha" journalism moment. Others will silently try to blend into demonstrations, hoping to catch incriminating footage to hand over to law enforcement. It should be noted that many of them have lawyers tailing them, and these right-wing pundits often try to sue people for assault after having been removed from a demonstration. It's important that activists identify who these individuals are and let others on the ground know. The best way to deal with these "journalists" is to have someone following them, or distracting them from interacting with demonstrators.

With journalists descending on protests looking for their next hot lead and everyone including their mother carrying audio and video equipment in their pockets, it's important for demonstrators to take steps to protect themselves. For many people, this means masking up.

Although the culture surrounding masking up is often extremely problematic, including heavy doses of toxic masculinity, there are many reasons why someone might want to mask up. For example, in 2012, I was fired from my job for simply appearing in one too many Occupy related press photos. This experience is not unusu-

al; many people are harassed by employers, friends, neighbors, or family members for participating in political activity.

In addition to protecting a person's identity, uniform appearance and action can create a sense of solidarity among a group of people acting as a unit. Avoiding harassment or identification doesn't need to require masking up, either; it may be as simple as bringing a disguise or a change of clothes.

It is important to remember that on top of unfriendly or irresponsible live streamers, the press, and closed circuit cameras, many police departments are now filming protests themselves. Police footage is used for documenting activity, identifying individuals, and understanding protest tactics. With the proliferation of body cameras, many officers have become walking surveillance units. Although touted as a way to hold police accountable, body cams are just another tool in the officers' belts. The lens of the body cam is not documenting police activity; it's documenting your activity. If it hasn't happened already happened, police will certainly use body cam footage to charge demonstrators.

Surveillance can go both ways, of course. Rather than training our cameras on each other, we could be focusing on filming the police. By documenting police activity, we can counter charges and discredit the state's narratives. Copwatching also has many practical applications outside of a protest environment. In the past two years, the importance of documenting police encounters has been made abundantly clear, from Ramsey Orta filming the execution of Eric Garner by NYPD to the countless instances of police brutality captured by live streamers at protests across the country. It's important to remember that even when filming police, you may accidentally capture images or video that can be used against demonstrators. Even if you feel the footage shows the police misbehaving or being violent, it is best to run footage that features any demonstrators by a movement lawyer before releasing it to the public.

Surveillance is not a reason to avoid protests, but it is a reason to be

smart. If we truly want to love and protect each other, it is essential that we ensure our documentation is helping and not harming the causes we are so passionate about. We must be careful with each other so that we can be dangerous together.

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