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Tanks and Tear Gas: Police Crack Down on Press, Protesters in Missouri

By Jason Ditz

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Public protests against the police killing an unarmed teenager in Ferguson, Missouri have been met with increasingly hostile police response, as military-grade equipment given to the Ferguson Police Department are being brought to bear against demonstrators, civilian bystanders, and media trying to cover the crackdown alike.

Police are attacking everything that moves with tear gas, even locals standing in their own back yards, and violently captured multiple journalists, including a reporter from the Washington Post, who they told they were charging with “trespassing” at a McDonald’s, even though the fast food restaurant was open at the time.



Washington Post reporter Wesley Lowery, the detainee in question, detailed being roughed up by the militarized police force and tossed in a holding cell with a Huffington Post reporter. He was

later released, and told there would be no arrest report and they could not have the names of any of the police who captured them, saying they were “doing them a favor.”

Of course, it’s not a crackdown anywhere in the world if you’re not attacking al-Jazeera, and there were witnesses reporting an al-Jazeera America camera crew having tear gas and flash grenades lobbed directly at it, as the police increasingly seem to be focusing on media before all others, trying to “manage” the coverage of the crackdown by crushing the reporters first.

The mayor of Ferguson has warned no protests will be allowed except during daytime, and police continue to insist they are behaving appropriately in their crackdown on the “unrest.”

The Washington Post issued a statement saying they were “appalled by the conduct of police officers involved.” The indication, however, is that in the militarized police era of America, this is the new normal, and reporters are simply another target for any crackdown.

The FAA announced a “no-fly zone” over Ferguson, and police are effectively blocking roads into the town to ensure that no more unfriendly media enter the crackdown zone.