

United We Stand

17 October 2020



<https://youtu.be/x-fDp5RR4gk>

Whilst the 'Liverpool gyms against the Lockdown' protest had the usual demographics, ranging from those who were simply unhappy with their lot in life and just wanted to rage against 'authority' without any thought as to what change they actually wanted, to those who genuinely wanted positive change and had well thought out opinions, it had the best overall vibe from the small number of protests I've been to.

Those that have heard the stories from my previous protesting adventures know that before this one I was 3 for 3 for being misidentified as an “*agent provocateur*” Possibly misidentified because I'm there alone, have a functional attire including a military surplus backpack and the apparent 'menacing' resting face. Anyone who knows my history will find this hilarious, as would I, If it wasn't a nod to how quickly madness can spread through a crowd. A hairy incident in London a few years ago, where a 20+ strong group, of what would now be called Antifa, labelled me 'agent provocateur' lead to me quickly fading into the nearest side street making my escape before I was completely surrounded by an angry mob.

After the speeches and singing, a small body of the Liverpool protest slowly moved through the city from St Georges place to the Law Courts. Here there was more dancing and sining, again an overall good vibe. I milled around taking in the atmosphere, happy to be part of it. Once again, the moment came where I could feel eyes from a small group of lads looking my way, and the inevitable 'he's a copper' rumour went round. These lads looked like they had nothing better to do than drink cider mid afternoon whilst taunting the Police. I wasn't overly concerned as it was a small group of 4 lads and 1 female, and with it being Saturday afternoon in Liverpool centre, there was plenty of escape routes with crowds I could blend into, if needed. Escape routes I had observed earlier. I skirted the outside and moved to the other side of the larger crowd, out of sight of the cider drinking lads, not wanting to ruin an otherwise positive gathering. Small groups of quick to judge, confirmation biased, non critical thinkers seem commonplace at protests.

A few minutes passed when a lad, I had earlier seen holding a placard in support of the Liverpool gyms, came over to me.

In a heavy Liverpudlian accent he asked, "Mate are you with Merseyside Police?"

I responded "No mate, I'm a gym owner, I've travelled 4 hours to be here in support"

He continued to eye me suspiciously as his mates came over to join him.

My accent, the reason I stated I was there, nor the distance or time I had travelled quelled his suspicion.

Becoming annoyed I pulled my hood down, pointed to the side of my head and said "Mate look at my ears!"

He cast his eyes to both sides of my head and nodded "I'll not have that mate" he said, "Theres some snides in the crowd, I'll not have you singled out"

and with that him and his mates surrounded me and faced the rest of the group.

After bout five minutes the protesting group started to disperse, the coppers who had until now stood on the other side of the road made their way across it, I took this as my cue to leave and headed in the opposite direction to the police and the majority of the crowd as I didn't want to accidentally find myself in an unknown location bumping into the accusing mob. It took me 15 mins to carefully pick my way through the streets back to Lime Street Station.

Only in Liverpool was I asked if I was a copper, the last time I was indirectly accused there was no questioning, only an ever strengthening belief that the rumours were true.

Whilst I wasn't concerned about being physically attacked by the Liverpool mob, it was good to experience the true Liverpudlian hospitality offered by the shielding lads, including the offer of what smelt like, really good weed, which I politely declined.

I have nothing but love for the movement in Liverpool and if needed, will gladly make the trek over again.

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