

Senior Manager
Topshop
36-38 Great Castle Street
Oxford Circus
LONDON
W1W 8LG

19 March 2012

Dear Sir,

Re: Jess Hurd - Incident 17 December 2011

I write on behalf of our above member who complains of an incident when she was covering the UK Uncut protest at your shop in her capacity as a professional photographer.

You will see from her account below the sequence of events.

"I am a freelance photographer and Chair of the London Photographers' Branch of the National Union of Journalists. Whilst I was covering a UK Uncut Protest in your store on the 17th December I was assaulted by one of your security guards and would like to make a complaint.

This is my account of events:

Whilst attempting to photograph arrests of peaceful Uk Uncut protesters today in Topshop, Oxford Circus, I was asked by a person I thought to be a security guard to leave.

I said "ok".

As I was leaving I took a couple of pictures of an arrest. The man then said "right I'm arresting you for aggravated trespass". He was not wearing a uniform and had not identified himself as a police officer.

He began manhandling me, I said, "I'm a member of the press, I don't understand why you are arresting me, I'm trying to leave".

He continued to use force to move me towards the back of the store and pulled my clothing up, exposing my upper body. I was sure that he didn't have arrest powers and challenged again, he then said he was detaining me for "resisting arrest".

He was using quite a lot of force and I was shouting "you're assaulting me, get your hands off me"

I continued trying to take photos whilst being dragged off. I was photographing a male protester who was been escorted by two security guards (he witnessed my "arrest")

At no point did the man who apprehended me say not to use my camera.

The security guard took me through a door and I was handed over to a female and male police officer. I immediately identified myself as press. I showed my press card and told the officer about the assault and indecent exposure I had experienced from the actions of the security guard. They didn't seem interested in my complaint even though I was visibly shaking.

Protesters in handcuffs were in the room where I was held.

The security guard who 'arrested' me said that I couldn't photograph and to keep my camera pointed down. The police officers held me by each wrist.

I asked them if I was really arrested and they said yes. I asked them under what law I was arrested as I was there working as a member of the press. They quoted s68 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

I asked if I could get my phone out because I wanted to record their details and the law they were using. They refused saying that I could make a call down at the police station.

They continued to hold me and asked to take my camera which I declined.

An inspector came into the room (white epaulettes). I asked him why I was being held and that I was a member of the press. The male officer asked him if they were "continuing the original plan", or words to that effect. The inspector said "hang on" and sent the woman officer to get the security guard. They all came back and said I would be released but that I was "banned from Topshop", I asked "why?" and he said it was because I "trespassed".

I clarified, "so I'm not arrested then?" and the inspector said, "not if you acknowledge that you have been banned from the store".

They held me 5-10 mins. I left through a door onto the street, I walked a few yards and met a colleague who was very concerned as I was visibly shaken. I then rejoined my colleagues at the front of the building on Oxford St, being careful to photograph from the pavement, not on Topshop property.

This is not the type of behaviour I expect to witness in a flag-ship store on Oxford Street. It appears that Topshop have no respect for press freedom and the right to document protest."

I should be grateful if you would investigate this and respond in full to the following questions:

1. Are your security officers directly employed by your company, if not, by whom, with full name and address of the employer?
2. What qualifications or credentials do your security officers have?
3. What qualifications did this particular security officer have?
4. What training do your security personnel receive in dealing with the media or in cases of disturbances?
5. What training did this individual security officer have in either dealing with the media or with disturbances?
6. What authority did the security guard have to take the camera off Ms Hurd?
7. What authority did he have to physically manhandle her in the way he did?
8. What authority did the security officer have to act as he did?
9. What instructions were issued to your security personnel in relation to this incident and also generally?

I look forward to hearing from you with the result of your investigation, your apology and removal of the ban on Ms Hurd entering your shop.

I also would wish for your reassurance as to what training measures for security personnel will be in place to prevent a repetition.

Yours sincerely,



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c.c. Chief Executive