

DPS, cameramen conflict

Department of Public Safety officers accused alternative media journalists of trespassing

By Ben Romano
Oregon Daily Emerald

Two Cascadia Alive! videographers were told to leave University property Saturday night while they were trying to film an investigation by Department of Public Safety officers. The cameramen said the incident was an example of how local law enforcement suppresses independent media.

Tim Lewis and Steven Heslin, who routinely film the activities of area law enforcement for the cable access programs Cascadia Alive! and Cop Watch, were threatened with arrest for trespassing when they failed to leave the University parking lot at 14th Avenue and Kincaid Street after DPS Sgt. Sean Strahon directed them to do so.

DPS Associate Director Tom Hicks said a DPS officer asked the Cascadia Alive! videographers to leave University property because they did not step away from the investigation when asked to do so. It had nothing to do with the fact that Lewis and Heslin represented independent media, Hicks said.

"It would be the same circumstance if any other media were interfering," he said.

A videotape of the incident that the Emerald obtained from Cascadia Alive! did not show DPS officers asking the videographers to back away. On the tape, DPS officers tell the videographers to leave University property because they are trespassing. There is no mention of interfering with an investigation, and though they asked repeatedly, the cameramen were not given an explanation of why they were being asked to leave.

While the incident was minor and

did not result in any citations being issued, Lewis and Heslin said it was indicative of the local law enforcement reaction to independent media.

"The cops don't like the way we cover news and they have authority to restrict access to a legitimate news event," Heslin said. "When independent media is trying to hit the streets themselves, we're like, getting booted. To me it's just blatant censorship."

Eugene Police Department spokeswoman Jan Power said that all media, whether they are independent or mainstream, are subject to the same laws. She said all types of media have given her cause for concern at one time or another because of their actions at crime scenes.

"We've been instructed by the city council to recognize anyone who represents themselves as media, and that's what we do," Power said.

Power noted, however, that some media do not adhere closely to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics, specifically in relation to unbiased reporting. She said there are some who blur the distinction between being the news and reporting the news, which can jeopardize police investigations.

Power said a number of actions can constitute interfering with an EPD investigation, including commenting verbally, harassing or getting too close to the officers involved in the investigation.

"Officers have reason to need a space, so to speak, to conduct an investigation," she said, adding that they have the ability to set a distance that will ensure the safety and integrity of an investigation.

DPS was in the parking lot Saturday because officers had observed several people there with open containers of alcohol and heard glass bottles being broken. Eventually, DPS requested assistance from the Eugene Police Department to deal with alcohol violations.

University Vice President for Ad-

ministration Dan Williams said the authority to kick trespassers off the campus rests with the University president, who has delegated it to the director of public safety and other administrators.

"It's not uncommon for the Department of Public Safety to exercise trespassing violations throughout the year," Williams said.

Power said anyone can videotape from a public property, but making audio recordings requires the permission of the recording subjects. She said EPD issues some citations for making audio recordings without permission.

Sgt. Strahon said on the tape that the two videographers are anarchists. Heslin said in an interview on Tuesday that he was an anarchist, but Lewis did not indicate whether he was or was not an anarchist.



When EPD arrived, a police officer told the videographers that they were subject to arrest if they didn't leave immediately.

Heslin also related an incident at a panel discussion on Measure 9, held Oct. 11 at the law school. He and fellow Cascadia Alive! videographer Erin Hauge were asked to leave the discussion by a DPS officer after Hauge raised her hand to answer a rhetorical question one of the panelists posed. Video tapes from the discussion show many others in the audience with hands raised in response to the question, but Hauge and Heslin were the only ones asked to leave.

"The attitude that [DPS] has is really originating from the Eugene Police Department," Heslin said. "They define who the media are."

The videographers said police officers routinely point high-powered flashlights at their cameras to prevent them from taping.

"I guess they don't want light shed on everything the cops are doing down there," Lewis said.

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Biking

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said. "You see the inexperienced riders with the skunk mark up their back from riding without fenders. Fenders are a cheap option."

Safety measures

Rain can greatly increase the riskiness of bicycle riding, said Shawn Strahon, a Department of Public Safety officer. Because they are not as visible to drivers during the winter months, bicyclists must ride more defensively and dress brightly or use lights to increase visibility.

"Bicyclists need to be aware of traffic laws and obey them," Strahon said. "Use a light when it's dark, which is required by law."

The rain can also have a harmful effect on riding during the day.

"Watch out for wet leaves, white lines and manhole covers," Wallis said. "All get extremely slippery during wet weather."

Be sure to turn and brake before or after passing these objects and watch for uneven pavement, standing water or narrowed lane widths. Bicyclists also need to remember that wet roads make braking harder and should anticipate longer stopping times.

Riding in tune

If you're not doing basic maintenance on your bike, take it to a shop a couple of times a year, depending on how much you ride, Hanlon said.

Covered bike parking on campus:

- Recreation Center
- EMU
- Knight Library
- Pacific Hall
- Residence halls
- Law school
- Chapman Hall
- Lawrence Hall
- LTD Campus South Station
- Bowerman Science Library

Bike Cages

The Onyx Bridge bike cage is available on a first-come, first-served basis. The usage fee is \$10 per term or \$20 per year. Users are issued a personal code to access the cage. The Department of Public Safety manages registration of the cage and lockers.

Biking in Eugene

The city of Eugene consists of a well-coordinated system of bikeways. The system includes 28 miles of off-street paths, 78 miles of on-street bicycle lanes and 5 bicycle/pedestrian bridges spanning the Willamette River. Eugene's bikeways connect to Springfield's bicycle system and to bikeways in metropolitan Lane County.

Helpful Links

1. Eugene Bikeway Program
<http://www.ci.eugene.or.us/pw/bike/bikesite/bikewaypgm.htm>
2. Bicycle Manual
<http://www.odot.state.or.us/techserv/bikewalk/manual/index.htm>

"If you hear a squeak, you need to lube your chain," Hanlon said. "Replace your chain frequently to prevent having to replace your whole rear cog."

Students are also required to register their bikes through DPS. Registered bikes are much easier to find if they are stolen, Strahon said. Students who don't ride often during the winter need to check on their bikes routinely to ensure that

they are still there. Locking bikes properly is an excellent precaution, and DPS offers classes at the beginning of each term to teach bike safety.

By dressing properly for the winter months and abiding by common-sense rules regarding safety, bicycling in the winter can continue to be a pleasant method of transportation or leisure.

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