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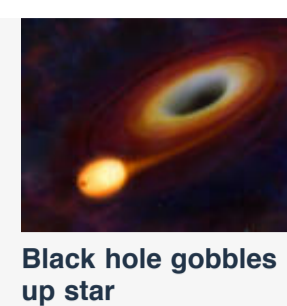
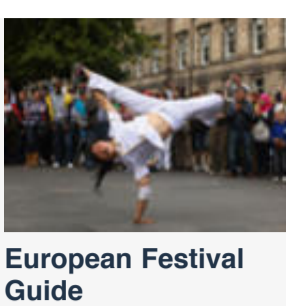
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Woman in kissing couple photo was knocked down by police

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Scott Jones and Alexandra Thomas share a laugh in Vancouver on Friday. RICHARD LAM/FOR THE TORONTO STAR



VANCOUVER — It was a tender and intimate moment caught on camera, but for Alexandra Thomas and Scott Jones, the only thing they felt was terror and fear for their safety.

Speaking to the Toronto Star, Thomas and Jones, the kissing couple who were photographed in between police lines at the Vancouver riot, described a very different scenario than what people saw.

"We were struck by police shields, pushed to the ground and I was just very, very frightened," said Thomas. "Everything happened so fast, faster than we could ever imagine it could happen."

Jones and his girlfriend had been watching the game at a friend's house downtown when they first heard there was a disruption. They decided to go see what was happening.

"We wanted to go down and see for ourselves but it was crazy," said Jones, an Australian native living in Vancouver. "We didn't know where we were supposed to go. We wanted to get out of there and we ended up in the line of police marching forward."

Thomas doesn't remember the exact sequence of events, but knows she had been struck by a surge of police and was on the ground. Jones was also struck and, while on the ground, was trying to keep her calm. "I just wanted us to go home safely. It was unbelievable that it was happening and all I wanted was for us to be safe."

Thomas said he remembers that his girlfriend was very stressed out and all he could do was help her out.

"Nobody was getting out of the way. It was all of a sudden they charged us. Very strong-handed and we were in one spot. The only thing we could do was try to stay calm and try to get up," said Thomas.

Scott talked to her and tried to calm her down then helped her up.

Bus closures downtown meant the couple weren't sure at first where to go. They walked to the train station and took a train out of downtown.

The next day, the couple was shocked to see their experience had been captured by photographer Rich Lam.

"When I first saw it, I thought, 'No way, that's not ... I can't believe that's us,'" Thomas said. "Then I looked some more and realized that is us. That's a very revealing picture of us."

The couple is leaving in a few days on a trip to California before Scott heads back to Australia. Thomas said the response from her friends and family has been overwhelming.

"When I saw that picture I couldn't believe it and then I looked at it more and realize it's quite artistic and really something beautiful."

On Friday morning, Jones spoke with his dad, Brett Jones, by Skype in Australia after his family first identified the couple when the photo was seen worldwide.

"How's that for making love, not war," Brett declared on his Facebook page, telling the world that the famous Romeo in a Vancouver riot picture was his son.

"He lay down next to her to comfort her. She was crying and he just kissed her to calm her down."

Even as a young boy, said Brett Jones, his son demonstrated his "gentle side for other people. I'm not surprised he would comfort Alex."

Thomas, who graduated with a degree in environmental engineering from the University of Guelph, works in Vancouver on the Zipcar street team and as a technician for the FreshPure reverse-osmosis water-filtration systems in Whole Foods grocery stores.

Jones and Thomas started dating shortly after the young Australian actor arrived in Vancouver on a working holiday. Since leaving acting school in Melbourne, Jones has mostly been bartending, as he has been in Vancouver, but he did get one standup comedy gig in the city.

Comedy performance is "his passion," said Brett Jones, his father. "He has a natural ability to make people laugh."

Brett Jones can see that the couple's now-iconic photograph may follow them for the rest of their lives, for good or bad.

"Relationships do buckle under that pressure unless you have the ability to be very centred. Even if it wasn't Scott, the guy who took the picture captured a moment in time that is iconic."

With files from Lesley Ciarula Taylor

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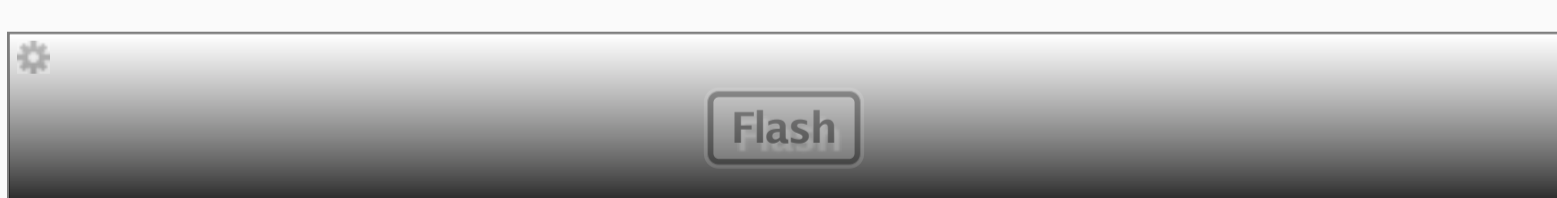
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