

guardian.co.uk

# Vancouver kiss couple 'were knocked down by riot police'

Couple whose photo has been shared around the world may not have been in a passionate embrace, say witnesses

**Dominic Rushe** in New York and **Haroon Siddique**  
guardian.co.uk, Friday 17 June 2011 15:10 BST



The couple apparently kissing during the Vancouver riots. The man has been named as Australian Scott Jones.  
Photograph: Rich Lam/Getty Images

At first glance the picture, snapped during Vancouver's hockey riots, seemed to show a young couple lying on the road and kissing, oblivious to the chaos around them. Now it appears that the real force behind the arresting image was not romance, but a charge by riot police who knocked Scott Jones and his girlfriend, Alex Thomas, to the ground.

The picture taken by [Canadian photographer Richard Lam](#) became a global sensation – appearing in the media, shared on Facebook and tweeted around the world – and looked set to take its place as one of the world's most iconic kiss photographs.

"How's that for making love, not war," astonished dad Brett Jones declared on his Facebook page, announcing that his son, Scott, was the Romeo depicted in the picture.

But others wondered if it was a fake, and the photographer himself had doubts about what the picture really showed. A second shot emerged showing [more people around the couple and adding to the mystery](#).

A witness, identifying himself as William, wrote to the Vancouver Sun to give his take. He said he was on top of a carpark looking down on the place where the picture was taken. "What happened was the police line rushed the crowd and this couple trying to stay together couldn't react in time and were run over by my two riot police officers.

"The girl who was knocked over landed head first on the pavement with her boyfriend landing partially on top of her. She was in visible pain, crying, but the two officers gave them a parting shove and moved on. Bystanders went to go make sure she was OK. I understand that the frontline police have to control the crowd but it is a bit ridiculous that they couldn't have other officers or paramedics behind the line to help anyone who is hurt."

Australian media have widely identified the man in the picture as Scott Jones, a 29-year-old from Melbourne who has been living in Vancouver for six months. The woman is said to be his girlfriend Alex Thomas, a Canadian.

His mother, Megan Jones, told NineMSN: "I knew it was him because he doesn't have a lot of clothes with him and he always puts on the same thing."

Before the full story emerged, she said she was shocked to spot her son lying in the middle of the street but not surprised. "It is something he would do, that's our boy. He has always lived in his own world, he's special like that. He doesn't always connect with what going on around him. I'd have to have my house flooded to get on the news, but he just has to kiss a beautiful girl."

Scott's sister Hannah said people had been posting on Scott's Facebook page. "You keep getting played on the news. You're famous!" one wrote. Jones replied: "Classic! This was shortly after the riot police run over the top of us and naturally Alex needed some comforting."

Lam took the photograph while covering the riots that followed the Vancouver Canucks' 4-0 loss to the Boston Bruins in the Stanley Cup.

The photographer was being buffeted by rioters and riot police when he spotted the couple. "I was about 20 or 30 yards away," he said. "There were these two people on the ground in this empty street. Initially I thought one of them was hurt." He took a few shots and then the moment was lost.

"It was complete chaos. Rioters set two cars on fire and then I saw looters break the window at a neighbouring department store," he said.

"At that point the riot police charged right towards us. After I stopped running I noticed in the space behind the line of police that two people were lying in the street with the riot police and a raging fire just beyond them.

"I knew I had captured a moment when I snapped the still forms against the backdrop of such chaos but it wasn't until later when I returned to the rink to file my photos that my editor pointed out that the two people were not hurt, but kissing," Lam said before the real story behind the photo came out.



A second photograph

taken by Richard Lam of the 'kissing couple' lying in a Vancouver street after the hockey riots. Photograph: Rich Lam/Getty Images

Officials in Vancouver said almost 150 people required hospital treatment and almost 100 were arrested during the riot.

A spokeswoman for the local health authority said three stabbing victims had been admitted and one man was in a critical condition with head injuries after a fall from a viaduct.

Rioting and looting left cars burned, stores in shambles and windows shattered over a roughly 10-block radius of the city's main shopping district.

The police chief, Jim Chu, said nine officers were injured, including one who required 14 stitches after being hit with a thrown brick. Chu said some officers suffered bite marks. He said 15 cars were burned, including two police cars.

He called those who incited the riot "criminals and anarchists" and said officers identified some in the crowd as the same people who smashed windows and caused trouble through the same streets the day after the 2010 Winter Olympics opened.

"These were people who came equipped with masks, goggles and gasoline," he said. "They had a plan."

Chu said those who stood by and filmed and cheered also bore responsibility.

The assistant fire chief, Wade Pierlot, said people were rescued from rooftops and bathrooms where they had hidden for safety. He said some people moved burning dumpsters away from buildings to prevent further damage.

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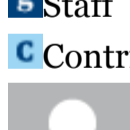
## Comments in chronological order (Total 113

### comments)

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Staff

Contributor



[paqman78](#)

17 June 2011 9:46AM

Errr, just looking at that other angle of the photo - why is his arm halfway down her skirt and between her legs???

Recommend? (47)

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Clip

| [Link](#)



[toospean](#)

17 June 2011 9:55AM

Nice photo but I wonder how much interest it would raise if she was wearing trousers.

Recommend? (212)

[Report abuse](#)

Clip

| [Link](#)



[CharlieFarley](#)

17 June 2011 10:04AM

paqman78

Errr, just looking at that other angle of the photo - why is his arm halfway down her skirt and between her legs???

His hand is clearly not halfway down her skirt and up her legs - he's comforting her around her waist. Get yourself to specsavers!

Recommend? (344)

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[LiuShaoqi](#)

17 June 2011 10:05AM

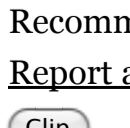
Somebody should resign over this photo.

Recommend? (73)

[Report abuse](#)

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[kimaldis](#)

17 June 2011 10:09AM

Why?

Recommend? (29)

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| [Link](#)



[Ganzo](#)

17 June 2011 10:13AM

I'm always amazed how often people want others to lose their jobs. Or was that tongue in cheek?

I think it's a great photo either way.

Recommend? (47)

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[shoogledoogle](#)

17 June 2011 10:14AM

Not quite Marc Riboud, is it?

Recommend? (4)

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[TheGrinch1897](#)

17 June 2011 10:15AM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).



[Alanplant](#)

17 June 2011 10:20AM

This comment was removed by a moderator because it didn't abide by our [community standards](#). Replies may also be deleted. For more detail see [our FAQs](#).



[yeoldetifosi](#)

17 June 2011 10:27AM

The police chief, Jim Chu, said nine officers were injured, including one who required 14 stitches after being hit with a thrown brick. Chu said some officers suffered bite marks. He said 15 cars were burned, including two police cars.

He called those who incited the riot "criminals and anarchists" and said officers identified some in the crowd as the same people who smashed windows and caused trouble through the same streets the day after the 2010 Winter Olympics opened.

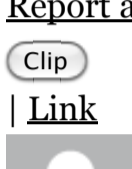
Any politician, official, civil servant or any other holder of public office should lose all credibility when using the term "anarchist". Perhaps the police chief concerned would be equally happy to allow all police officers to be "pigs".

Recommend? (128)

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[traderwinds](#)

17 June 2011 10:33AM

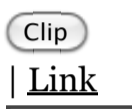
I'd like to be the first person on the record to notice this is clearly a fake. You can see a mile off that it's a PhotoShop job.

Recommend? (19)

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[AlanMoore](#)

17 June 2011 10:41AM

And thus begins Alex's modelling career..

Recommend? (9)

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[Bauhaus](#)

17 June 2011 10:45AM

Outstanding photo.

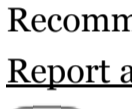
Personally, I hope they are simply getting it on.

Recommend? (62)

[Report abuse](#)

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[PatrickNeylan](#)

17 June 2011 10:47AM

Perhaps the police chief concerned would be equally happy to allow all police officers to be "pigs".

No.

"Anarchist" is a term of political affiliation, often applied carelessly. "Pigs" is an out-and-out insult. The two aren't comparable.

Recommend? (117)

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[ratata89](#)

17 June 2011 10:48AM

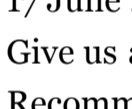
Give us attention!

Recommend? (8)

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[ifriday](#)

17 June 2011 10:50AM

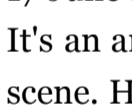
It's an amazing photo. The photographer is very lucky to have stumbled upon this scene. He would have been even more lucky if these riots had had any political significance, and weren't just a load of idiots causing trouble after a hockey game.

Recommend? (136)

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[yeoldetifosi](#)

17 June 2011 10:52AM

PatrickNeylan...

No.

"Anarchist" is a term of political affiliation, often applied carelessly. "Pigs" is an out-and-out insult. The two aren't comparable.

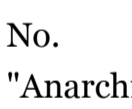
The, er, "pig" concerned has quite plainly used the term in a pejorative sense.

Recommend? (40)

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[skywa2ker](#)

17 June 2011 10:56AM

so in other words, slow news day?

Recommend? (12)

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[traderwinds](#)

17 June 2011 11:06AM

I'd like to be the first person on the record to notice this is clearly a fake. You can see a mile off that it's a PhotoShop job.

Ok, maybe not PhotoShop but it's still some kind of fake:

<http://www.esquire.com/blogs/politics/vancouver-riots-2011-photo-5929916>

Recommend? (3)

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[breakdown001](#)

17 June 2011 11:18AM

It was faked

[http://a2.sphotos.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-snc6/248874\\_192737507444666\\_100001252547210\\_562811\\_5787390\\_n.jpg](http://a2.sphotos.ak.fbcdn.net/hphotos-ak-snc6/248874_192737507444666_100001252547210_562811_5787390_n.jpg)

Recommend? (4)

[Report abuse](#)

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[Polymorph](#)

17 June 2011 11:21AM

Lets see which underwear manufacturer is the first to claim she's wearing their brand. 15 minutes of fame beckon...

Recommend? (5)

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[Polymorph](#)

17 June 2011 11:22AM

Tell us how you determine the pics are fakes you budding Photoshop experts

Recommend? (67)

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[falzmania](#)

17 June 2011 11:26AM

If you want lots of photos of people making out in public, you can get them on Saturday at the official parade for the 2011 Stanley Cup Champion Bruins in Boston. The Vancouver antics remind me of an old joke: "I went to a fight, and a hockey game broke out!"

Recommend? (13)

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[Pete97](#)

17 June 2011 11:42AM

breakdown001

Be very careful, if the photographer reads your post and what you've said is untrue, you could be in trouble.

Recommend? (15)

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[Buckster69](#)

17 June 2011 11:48AM

It's the Robert Doisneau 'Kiss by the Hotel de Ville' of our age.

A couple stealing a kiss after being railroaded by riot police.

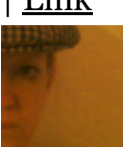
Beautiful.

Recommend? (18)

[Report abuse](#)

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[Mewl](#)

17 June 2011 11:51AM

Yes, because that's what you'd do in the middle of a riot with police running everywhere - you'd think - 'oh baby let's have a lie down on this nice cold hard road and have a bit of nookie'. If they weren't knocked over and he isn't looking after her, then you can call me Al.

Recommend? (63)

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[dholliday](#)

17 June 2011 11:59AM

It is a great photo but it proves that if a picture can tell us a thousand words, then most of those words probably form own fantastic constructs and have little to do with the actual reality.

What does this pic tell you?

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/15170132@N05/3109282657/in/set-72157614885660474/lightbox/>

Recommend? (6)

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[MadamMiaow](#)

17 June 2011 12:05PM

Do we know what the protest was about? Why were they rioting?

Recommend? (3)

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[Buckster69](#)

17 June 2011 12:06PM

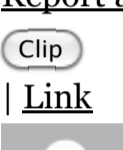
@dholliday - It tells me king kong should light his own cigars.

Recommend? (7)

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[loamfeet](#)

17 June 2011 12:10PM

PatrickNeylan wrote:

"Anarchist" is a term of political affiliation, often applied carelessly. "Pigs" is an out-and-out insult. The two aren't comparable.

True, it is a disgrace that people refer to the filth in such a pejorative way.

Recommend? (74)

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[cjhazard](#)

17 June 2011 12:12PM

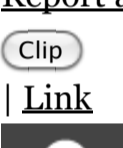
Now there's a staged photo if ever I've seen one.

Recommend? (4)

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[yeoldetifosi](#)

17 June 2011 12:19PM

dholliday...

What does this pic tell you?

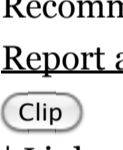
That Boosey & Hawkes R&D people have lost the plot?

Recommend? (7)

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[ram3in](#)

17 June 2011 12:21PM

Do we know what the protest was about? Why were they rioting?

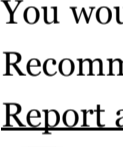
You would think people would read an article before making a comment.

Recommend? (145)

[Report abuse](#)

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[LucyQ](#)

17 June 2011 12:22PM

Actually the woman was hit and knocked down by a cop and the man was comforting her. There will be some aerial shots later on that more clearly show what happened. CBC will have the folks on the telly later on today.

Shame on the drunks in Vancouver that supported the destruction of downtown.

The Mayor should be held responsible too, encouraging a large crowd to get drunk in a city with poor transit infrastructure and no Emergency Preparedness plans in place is a recipe for what happened.

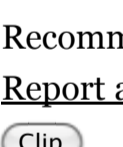
Downtown Van is hard enough to maneuver without exacerbating a situation.

Recommend? (33)

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[TVwriter](#)

17 June 2011 12:24PM

@MadamMiaow

Do we know what the protest was about? Why were they rioting?

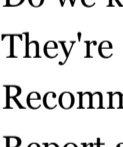
They're Canadian. They're hockey fans. Next question?

Recommend? (37)

[Report abuse](#)

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[LucyQ](#)

17 June 2011 12:29PM

Do we know what the protest was about? Why were they rioting?

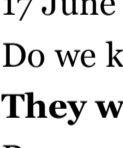
**They were drunk.**

Recommend? (30)

[Report abuse](#)

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[shatnersbassoon1](#)

17 June 2011 12:40PM

Damn...initially i thought it might be some new wave of 'love not war' protesting - that the kids might be starting a revolution.

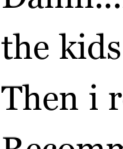
Then i read it was the aftermath of a hockey game. Meh. Next!

Recommend? (7)

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[BaldricksBrother](#)

17 June 2011 1:04PM

MadamMiaow

Do we know what the protest was about? Why were they rioting?

TVwriter

They're Canadian. They're hockey fans. Next question?

Does violence inflame passion? And if I may add a follow-up question - is Canada really this exciting - if I visited now would I be too late?

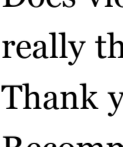
Thank you.

Recommend? (10)

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[BaldlyGoing](#)

17 June 2011 1:12PM

What was the riot about? It was about rioting. It had nothing to do with the ice hockey as it was clearly pre-planned. If the situation had gone the other way we'd be reading headlines about the over-zealous celebrations.

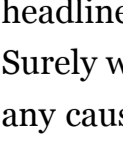
Surely we've had enough experience in this country to realise that very few riots have any cause other than a minority's desire to go on a destructive rampage under the cover of whatever convenient banner they can attach themselves to.

Recommend? (32)

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[artpunx](#)

17 June 2011 1:12PM

"Actually the woman was hit and knocked down by a cop and the man was comforting her. There will be some aerial shots later on that more clearly show what happened. CBC will have the folks on the telly later on today."

really, oh...

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/story/2011/06/17/vancouver-kissing-couple.html>

...your not still wearing your 'nucks jersey as you type are you?

I'm so sad for our city right now.

Recommend? (1)

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[yakaboo](#)

17 June 2011 1:26PM

were the rioters incensed by third world poverty, environmental destruction or fat cats' incomes?

no, their favourite ice hockey team lost.

tossers.

nice photo though

Recommend? (39)

[Report abuse](#)

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| [Link](#)



[EmilyMinty](#)

17 June 2011 1:38PM

Shameful image. Ladies should not dress in such a way during a protest. My partner and I have attended many (peaceful) protests in the 60's and we never dressed in this harridan like fashion! Such nakedness. appalling.

Recommend? (24)

[Report abuse](#)

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[Joova](#)

17 June 2011 1:46PM

Caption competition:

"My sex is on fire"

Recommend? (9)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

| [Link](#)



[typoman](#)

17 June 2011 1:52PM

Anyone wonder if this photo should still be up the site? It seems the girl was injured and now she has the indignity of having a photo up her skirt all over the web.

Take it down, Guardian.

Recommend? (26)

[Report abuse](#)

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[LucyQ](#)

17 June 2011 1:53PM

Those who don't know downtown Van may have a hard time imagining how bad traffic and infrastructure is there. There are only two bridges to get to the North Shore. The other suburbs have scant public transit service and it seems as if there is only one road south to Seattle.

City Hall ignored emergency plans and advice from experts, invited drunkenness when that is a recipe for social disaster and there were no escape routes for those who were leaving the stadium.

Thousands of drunken people participated in the riots and destruction. Hopefully their employers will see pictures and fire them.

A moronic woman holding a handbag she had just stolen was shown on the news last night. When the reporter asked her why she took it she said 'because she wanted it'.

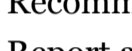
WTF? One store lost \$500,000 worth of merchandise.

Recommend? (6)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

| [Link](#)



[eagleone](#)

17 June 2011 2:07PM

**typoman**

Looks more like shorts to me.

Recommend? (4)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

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[aliasboy](#)

17 June 2011 2:09PM

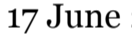
In the picture he's obviously adjusting her crotch.

Recommend? (7)

[Report abuse](#)

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[gfdrake](#)

17 June 2011 2:17PM

'd like to be the first person on the record to notice this is clearly a fake. You can see a mile off that it's a PhotoShop job.

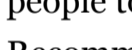
I'd like to be the first person on the record to comment on the moronic tendency for people to say something is a fake when it looks slightly outlandish

Recommend? (55)

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[TeflonBlair](#)

17 June 2011 2:32PM

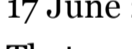
That 2nd photo's worse. Looks like they're in to dogging to me.

Recommend? (6)

[Report abuse](#)

[Clip](#)

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[EgonRonay](#)

17 June 2011 2:35PM

I don't even think it's Vancouver. Looks more like Grimsby to me.

Recommend? (26)

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