



## **Radley Balko defends the Cato Institute**

By Freddie deBoer April 13th, 2012

So: as for [this](#). I can't and don't speak for anyone else here, so these thoughts are only mine. Let me just say a few things to Mr. Balko.

- Nowhere on the poll or post was there any indication that it was private, only for the regular readership of that blog, or in any other way intended for a limited response.
- People voted on an Internet poll that has, at best, an entirely tangential relationship to police violence and civil liberties. From Balko's self-aggrandizing, aggrieved post, you'd think the Balloon Juice community had personally participated in police misconduct. Settle down.
- I don't know why libertarianism tends to attract that particular kind of Internet tough guy, the deeply *sensitive* Internet tough guy. Balko likes to engage with both barrels, and then turns around and pouts when people treat him similarly. Preemptive complaining about the rebuttals you think you're going to receive are always an indication of a weak stance, incidentally.
- Allow me to introduce you to my friend, the Internet. The Internet is a wretched hive of scum and villainy. Asking the Internet to play fair and nice is to demonstrate that you don't understand the Internet. If I posted a poll on Balloon Juice and said "now please only regular Balloon Juice commenters vote," and the cretins from Reason started voting, would Balko shed any tears for me? Of course not.
- Police misconduct is an extremely important issue. Even a cursory glance at this blog's history will inform you that it is taken seriously here. How best to serve that cause is, as most are, debatable. It's true: I, and presumably others here, doubt that the Cato Institute does have or will have a positive impact on the cause of preventing police misconduct. Character is important and Cato doesn't have any that can't be bought, or pushed out the door if it treads too far from Republican politics. It is frankly inarguable that Cato's political presence benefits authoritarian conservative politicians whose reactionary

policies keep the victims of political misconduct in a state of material and political powerlessness. That's a fact. And that was true *before* corporate oligarchs with no track record of interest in stopping police misconduct undertook an effort to squash whatever vestiges of evenhandedness existed at the think tank. Sorry: just because you say your buddies want to help doesn't mean that they do, or that they can, or that they will. Balko's whole complaint is based on a juvenile vision of the politics of personality: I think these are good dudes, so therefore they will do good deeds.

- One of the best, most certain ways to help those who are frequently the subject of police misconduct is to remove them from the poverty and political dispossession that makes police misconduct against them possible. That is an effort that both Balko and the Cato Institute have worked tirelessly to oppose. If he'd like, Balko is perfectly able to ask what the preferred policies are of the poor black and Hispanic people who are most likely to be the victims of police misconduct and police violence. In large percentages, they favor a redistributive social policy that he abhors. If he bothered to ask them, he might even be compelled to ask *why* the people he purports to speak for have such little interest in his politics.

Hey, look: no snark or tired Internet cliches. Just somebody who disagrees.