

## Paramilitary police raids — terrorizing children and killing grandpa for your safety

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Police pointed a machine gun at a 13-year old girl and threatened to shoot the family poodle, in the latest drug raid gone awry. Several raids were conducted by the Spring Valley, New York police and the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). After the raids, 26 people were indicted, having been accused of distributing marijuana around Spring Valley, Ramapo, Clarkstown, Mount Vernon and the Bronx. Ten officers or so pounded on the McKay door at 5:30am and forced their way in as David McKay and his wife went to open the door. The police had their guns drawn and were screaming for someone named Michael. Mr. McKay attempted to explain no one by this name was in the house.

“They pulled me outside in the freezing cold in my underwear, manhandle my wife, point a gun at my daughter and they won’t even tell me what they are doing in my house,” said McKay. “It was terrifying and humiliating beyond belief.” Mr. McKay later had to take his frightened daughter to the hospital after she suffered an asthma attack and fainted due to the violent police encounter (full story [here](#)).

The police will have a hard time explaining even to their most ardent supporters how pointing a machine gun at a 13-year-old, threatening to shoot a poodle, manhandling an innocent woman and dragging an innocent man out in the freezing cold in his underwear is an act in furtherance of public safety. If the goal is to eradicate the purported “evils” of marijuana use and sale, then surely this country’s law enforcement methodology has risen to an entirely new level of comical idiocy. Even the fiercest critics of marijuana should concede the dangers of marijuana pale in comparison to the dangers of pointing a machine gun at a child, threatening to shoot pets, causing panic and asthma attacks and using physical violence on innocent people.

This is by no means an isolated example of “a few bad apples” or a rare mistake. The Cato Institute’s [raid map](#) of botched paramilitary police operations (for drugs or otherwise) reveals such occurrences happen far more frequently than Americans would like to believe — indeed, it is an “epidemic of isolated incidents” as described by Cato. The raid map depicts incidents involving deaths of innocent people and non-violent offenders, deaths or injuries of police officers, raids on innocent people, unnecessary raids on doctors and sick people, and other examples of paramilitary police excess.

What happened to the McKays might even be described as a best-case scenario of such raids. At least no one died. In May of 2010, police shot and killed 7-year-old [Aiyana Jones](#) during a televised raid targeting a homicide suspect. She was shot in the neck while sleeping. Police said the officer’s gun discharged and struck the girl in the neck. In that raid, the target was arguably of higher priority, but as the police ended up killing a

child and utterly botching the operation, it's safe to say no one was made safer by the incompetent paramilitary invasion.

In an even more malicious SWAT raid a few years ago, Fairfax County detective David Baucum overheard a local optometrist, Sal Culosi, betting on a football game at a bar. Baucum made an effort to befriend Culosi, and over the next few months convinced Culosi to raise the stakes on college football games until the amount was enough to charge Culosi with violation of gambling laws. SWAT moved in on Mr. Culosi's house in the middle of the night and shot him. Even after the death of a man who clearly had posed no harm or danger to anyone, Baucum shamelessly continued to press investigations against the victim's friends and family (more [here](#)).

More recently, Framingham, MA SWAT killed grandfather [Eurie Stamps](#) in yet another violent game in which police recklessly engaged in arbitrary execution. Stamps was neither armed, nor was he the target of the drug raid. Framingham Police Chief Steven Carl stated that "During the service of the search warrant Mr. Eurie Stamps was tragically and fatally struck by a bullet which was discharged from a SWAT officer's rifle."

Police are quick to assure the public nothing was intentional, using conveniently disingenuous descriptions of the executions. Aiyana Jones was killed when the "officer's gun discharged," while Mr. Stamps was killed "by a bullet which was discharged from a SWAT officer's rifle." Similarly, the DEA later issued an ["apology"](#) to the McKays, stating they were "inadvertently affected by this enforcement operation." The attempt to avoid responsibility could not be more glaring or offensive. News sources regularly report cases of ordinary people shooting victims in a straightforward manner, whether the shooting was intentional or accidental, but it appears police are incapable of shooting people. When people die at the hands of police bullets, it was entirely the responsibility of the weapon or a bullet that magically discharged — not the officer pulling the trigger.

While even a single instance of such incompetence and police abuse is unacceptable in a self-proclaimed free society, the numerous instances documented on [this map](#) may lead one to suspect the United States not only is *not* free; it is in fact a brutal police state. To add to the senselessness of such disasters, innocent people are not the only victims. The perpetrators themselves, the police, often endanger their lives and safety in conducting these raids. Thus, the operations are not only unsafe and unnecessary from a public welfare point of view, they are also downright stupid from a police safety point of view.

After these particular raids, the American public was left with a dead child, a hospitalized child, a dead grandfather, and other terrified victims. But rest assured – Mr. Culosi sure learned his lesson about the dangers of gambling, and the streets of the USA are much safer now that one sports better is 6 feet under ground. The others were just a waste of life, but oh well; as they like to say, "freedom isn't free." If the cost of freedom is the squandered lives of children, grandfathers and optometrists, then no one can dispute America has paid and continues to pay dearly.

And still the police, and much of the public continue to proclaim to the contrary that police serve for purposes of public safety, and that killing children and elderly men once in a while keeps all Americans free and safe. Police and their apologists have actualized the words of Vladimir Lenin – a lie told often enough becomes truth. The proposition that police must kill some innocent people to keep some other innocent people safe is simply nonsensical on its face. Even if it were true, society does not have the right to delegate violent force to a monopoly of people with guns, and make the determination that some innocent people should be sacrificed for the benefit and welfare of everyone else.

Despite these acts of senseless violence, the American judiciary (unsurprisingly) is of little help. It has frequently sided with police, having declared in the past that police may search people's trashcans at their will ([California v. Greenwood](#)), that dog sniffs are not "searches" for purposes of the 4th Amendment ([United States v. Place](#), [Illinois v. Caballes](#)), that people may be arrested and jailed for traffic violations normally only requiring a fine ([Atwater v. Lago Vista](#)), among other atrocious decisions.

Most recently, the Supreme Court of the United States heard oral arguments on the conviction of Hollis King, who argued police had no right to kick down his door after smelling marijuana coming from the apartment. The Kentucky Supreme Court overturned the conviction (more [here](#)). While Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg pointed out allowing this would mean "They (could) go to the apartment building and...sniff at every door," Justice Antonin Scalia was far more cavalier about police practices that readily employ physical violence and have caused the death of innocent people during the course of the Drug War.

"Everything done was perfectly lawful," Justice Scalia said. "It's unfair to the criminal? Is that the problem? I really don't understand the problem." Scalia further (ridiculously) stated that law enforcement has many constraints, and "the one thing that it has going for it is that criminals are stupid." One can only wonder what these constraints are, since many of the murders above happened pursuant to regular procedure, resulted in little discipline, and no criminal prosecution. It's high time for Scalia to realize that a pompous judge's declarations do not truth make.

It may be difficult for the esteemed Scalia to understand, since he has dedicated his life to worthless interpretations, some of which facilitate police in killing innocent people – but the fact that something was "lawful" does not make most people feel better about murder. Scalia's lack of foresight (or basic knowledge of current events) is also baffling, as he dismisses siding with brutal police practices as mere inconvenience for the criminal, and completely ignores the reality of such practices raining a hailstorm of abuse, brutality, destruction and death upon scores of innocent people, all under the aegis of the law.

Once in a while, the public might advise these tyrannical scholars and their legislator accomplices to stop and consider whether people's lives should be treated in this manner – as a trivial matter of academic exercise, petty sacrificial offerings to the almighty law.

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