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Cops and Cameras

Tuesday, September 14th, 2010

I'm featured in this very good new Cato video on police, SWAT raids, and video cameras. Also featured are Cato's David Rittgers and Clark Neily of the Institute for Justice.



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This entry was posted on Tuesday, September 14th, 2010 at 1:25 pm by Radley Balko and is filed under General Criminal Justice, Police Militarization. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. You can leave a response, or trackback from your own site.

14 Responses to "Cops and Cameras"

#1 | **Joe** | September 14th, 2010 at 1:34 pm

We should have a constitutional right to record public servants on the job who are in public. There is something fundamentally wrong saying we cannot do that.



#2 | **Jack** | September 14th, 2010 at 1:37 pm

A news video in Houston was showing the arrest of a number of suspects in a retail theft ring. Apparently this is now a big time national crime problem.

During the arrest process, a number of the suspects were shown being taken into custody by the Houston Police. It was most revealing when one of the officers, suspect in tow, looked directly at the video camera. This officer gave the videographer the "look of death" as he "stared down" the camera. From the "look" that this officer gave, you would think the camera operator had just threatened to harm the guy's mother.

Another example of the problem. If the media doesn't get a handle on the legal issue here, they are going to find themselves unable to report on anything one of these days.

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+6

#3 | **Michael Chaney** | September 14th, 2010 at 1:43 pm

Radley, your black outfit makes you look like a floating head.

+0

#4 | **Peter Ramins** | September 14th, 2010 at 2:08 pm

His black hair does too!

(had to do it, I shave my head sometimes too.)

+0

#5 | **JS** | September 14th, 2010 at 2:14 pm

Jack "Another example of the problem. If the media doesn't get a handle on the legal issue here, they are going to find themselves unable to report on anything one of these days."

They don't seem to be willing to report on police abuse now, so I'm pretty sure not being able to won't be much of a hardship to them.

+4

#6 | **Cynical in CA** | September 14th, 2010 at 2:19 pm

Thumbs-up. Well-produced, well-paced, informative.

I'm always struck by how the police state is most evident near centers of political power such as Washington, D.C, kind of a cancerous growth spreading from the source.

Let video be the radiation treatment.

+6

#7 | **qwints** | September 14th, 2010 at 2:21 pm

The media seems to have sacraficed objectivity for access when it comes to covering law enforcement.

+4

#8 | **Marty** | September 14th, 2010 at 2:29 pm

well- done! I hope a few social studies teachers use it in the classroom...

+0

#9 | **Boyd Durkin** | September 14th, 2010 at 3:01 pm

Every interaction with the state and agents should be recorded. It doesn't matter if the interaction takes place in public or not.

Sometimes it feels like we're trying to convince grandpa to finally go see a talkie at the moving picture show. How the hell is the state going to handle it when I get the bugs out of my cyborg-super eye?!

+3

#10 | **Rojo** | September 14th, 2010 at 3:49 pm

We should also be talking about video-taping all police interrogations, if you ask me.

+2

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#11 | **Helmut O' Hooligan** | September 14th, 2010 at 4:03 pm

Congrats to Radley and CATO! Excellent summary of the problem. I hope many people from all political perspectives and all walks of life can view this kind of material. Letting the people in to the daily operations of law enforcement will be the only way to make it more transparent and accountable to citizens. Long live "little brother"!!!!



#12 | **Kevin3%** | September 14th, 2010 at 5:29 pm

Swat Teams use military weapons and military tactics....and guess what? A lot of these goons are recently returning from MILITARY TOURS OF DUTY!!!

So the line between civilian police work and military operations is blurred some of us now rue the day that this whole thing got started.

Yes, I liked to see a law requiring cops to be recorded anytime they are on duty but I would also like to see the use of SWAT teams banned except for the most difficult of barricade or hostage type situations.

STOP ALL SERVICE OF DYNAMIC ENTRY RAIDS FOR NON-VIOLENT CRIMES.



#13 | **GT** | September 14th, 2010 at 9:07 pm

Another excellent piece, Mr Balko.

Falls in the prices of 'sousveillance' tools (minicams like the MD80 clone for \$12) and storage media (an 8Gb micro-sd card for \$15), plus the ubiquity of video-capable mobile telephones, are giving the sousveillance movement the upper hand (except, of course, in the 'dynamic entry' raid).

Frankly, what should happen is for EVERYBODY who has a videocam to immediately whip it out whenever they see these Stormtrooper-meets-VillagePeople wankers doing anything... let them arrest fifty people for sousveillance every time they want to bust a move, and soon you will find that they will tire of being portrayed as swaggering jerkoffs.

Cheerio

GT



#14 | **Jesse** | September 15th, 2010 at 2:14 am

Unfortunately, GT, though there is not the ubiquitous use of cameras that you and I would like, even in the face of the increasing recordings that happen, the media is loath to portray any police as "swaggering jerkoffs" no matter how craven their actions.

They are selfless heroes, you see, "serving" the public in their particular line of duty. Everyone else is selfish, what with their private-sector jobs and what not. You are not a hero unless you have a gun and the legal license to use it, doesn't matter how inflated your salary or benefits, or how arrogant your behavior. As far as the news media is concerned, your government gun and government badge means you are above and beyond reproach until proven otherwise, even in the face of damaging, explicit evidence.

Everyone else? Well all those other non-police taxpaying citizens are guilty until proven innocent. Anyone who is not a cop is, prima facie, a suspected lawbreaker.



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