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# Gangsters in Blue

Posted by [Kevin Carson](#) on May 22, 2009 in [Commentary](#) • [No comments](#)

In an earlier weekly commentary piece, I argued that the enormous sums of black market money created by the drug war led to the proliferation of gangs — and turned local police forces into just another kind of gang fighting to control the drug money.

Anyone suspecting me of hyperbole only need read the news. One needn't go far for examples of thuggish, ganglike police behavior.

Police lie and plant evidence to cover up their lawlessness, to manufacture “probable cause” for fishing expeditions against those they “know” are guilty, or to justify civil forfeiture of goodies they covet. Witness police attempts to plant drugs in the home of Katherine Johnson, an elderly woman murdered by a SWAT raid gone bad, in order to cover their tracks. The LAPD Ramparts Division routinely engaged in unprovoked beatings and shootings, stole narcotics and dealt them themselves, and planted evidence to conceal their crimes. The Philadelphia police engaged in similar evidence planting. A simple Google search finds allegations of systematic planting of evidence in Huntington Beach, Atlanta, New York, Omaha, and St. Louis—all on the first page of the search results.

Police, like other gangs, terrorize the populations under their jurisdiction in order to secure obedience and maintain unquestioned rule over their “turf.”

A Cato Institute study on police militarization quoted urban police on deliberate shows of force in inner cities to intimidate the local population: “We send out two, two-to-four-men cars, we look for minor violations and do jump-outs, either on people on the street or automobiles. After we jump-out the second car provides periphery cover with an ostentatious display of weaponry. We're sending a clear message: if the shootings don't stop, we'll shoot someone.”

Recently Homer, La. Police Chief Russell Mills was quoted as saying: “If I see three or four young black men walking down the street, I have to stop them and check their names. I want them to be afraid every time they see the police that they might get arrested.”

Police, like other gangs, use terror to intimidate “snitches.”

A Queens bar owner, Eduardo Espinosa, suffers police harassment because he implicated police for framing suspects in a fake sting operation: “Every two to three weeks, there's cops in here, searching the bar. If there's no violation, they'll make it up. I lost all my clients — everybody's scared to come in my place right now.”

Police in Pickerington, Ohio organized a public pressure campaign to intimidate a character witness, high school principal Scott Reeves, who vouched for the character of a man who shot at a SWAT team he mistook for armed robbers.

The “Rate-My-Cop” website was created as a national public database, compiling publicly available records to enable people to compare the performance of police forces and individual police officers across the country when it came to such issues as police brutality, corruption, etc. So naturally police unions across the country began screaming to have the site shut down.

During Police Week in 2007, a D.C. resident collected 48 hours of footage of police misconduct, including public drunkenness and disorder, public urination, throwing empty liquor bottles on church property, and driving segways with open containers of alcohol. Naturally, D.C. police stood by and watched it all happen, and refused to respond to complaints. And when the heroic citizen posted the footage to YouTube, naturally he received numerous anonymous death threats from people who identified themselves as police.

Police, like other gangs, prey upon those living on their “turf.” Consider, for example, the recent story of Philadelphia police cutting the lines to surveillance cameras in immigrant-owned shops, and then helping themselves to snacks, alcohol, and cigarettes — not to mention cash from the till.

Fellow C4SS commentator Thomas Knapp recently cited Aaron Russo’s litmus test for whether we live in a police state. Imagine yourself driving normally, under the speed limit, when a cop pulls in behind you and begins to tail you through several turns. Are you reassured that you’re being protected and served, and gratified to know that your city’s finest are on the job? Or do you get nervous and start wondering what you did wrong, overcome with dread that you’re about to get pulled over for some unknown offense? If your reaction is the latter, you’re living in a police state.



C4SS Research Associate Kevin Carson is a contemporary mutualist author and individualist anarchist whose written work includes ***Studies in Mutualist Political Economy*** and ***Organization Theory: An Individualist Anarchist Perspective***, both of which are freely available online. Carson has also written for a variety of internet-based journals and blogs, including Just Things, The Art of the Possible, the P2P Foundation and his own **Mutualist Blog**.

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