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Scenes From the Drug War, Ctd

07 May 2010 03:25 pm

A reader writes:

Your reader [commented](#), "If there are other documented examples of this kind of behavior, they need to be compiled into a single place so we can get a handle on exactly what kind of society we are running here." There is; Radley Balko has compiled a [map of botched paramilitary police raids](#) at Cato.org. I think at this point the map might be outdated (the last year available to search is 2008), but it gives you a good idea of how often this occurs in the US. Balko has done extensive work on this subject. I suggest you point your readers to [his 2006 paper](#) on the rise of military tactics in fighting the drug war.

Another writes:

Balko's been regularly posting stories of what he calls "puppycide" for a couple of years now. A search of the term [yields 130 results](#).

Another:

Just wanted to bring to your attention a couple of news articles published today in Columbia's local papers: "[Chief details SWAT incident](#)" and "[SWAT raid prompts police review of policy](#)". I think what's important to take away from this is our local police department is learning from its mistakes while at the same time explaining to the public why it acted as it did. I don't disagree that our drug laws are sorely in need of rethinking, but people have to keep in mind that at this point the laws are what they are, and it is incumbent upon our police officers to see that they are enforced.

We are lucky here in Columbia, Missouri to have a relatively progressive police chief (on the job for a little over a year) who has been making great strides in making our police department more receptive, and in particular accountable, to the public. If the public wants the drug laws changed, they need to appeal to the legislators who can make those changes a reality. Our police department will address this incident professionally, changes to procedures will be made to ensure that the serving of 10-day old warrants will not happen in the future, and the law will continue to be enforced.

What I have found most troubling in the many, many comments I have read regarding this incident is the automatic presumption that our police department did everything wrong. Heavy-handed? Yes. Killed an innocent dog? Maybe, maybe not. I know from personal experience that very dangerous and violent people abuse pit bulls and other animals in an abhorrent manner, using them as guards and warning signals to provide cover for illegal activities, and putting them in the position of meeting a violent end when the inevitable search warrant is served. Who is the worse offender in this scenario?

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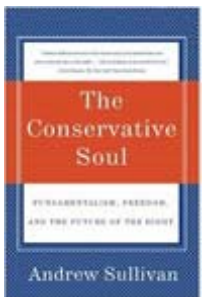
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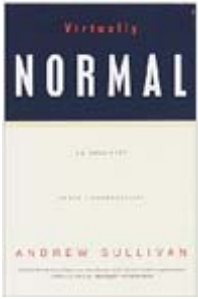


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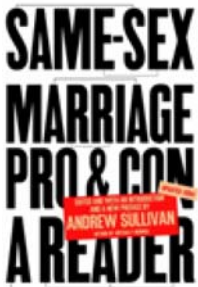
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