



Paramilitary Police

The Militarization of American Police Forces

I originally posted this article over a year ago, but I feel it may be more relevant now than it was then.

This story began as a simple recounting of an actual incident that happened on my street. After one gets by the Keystone Cop-ish performance, by the S.W.A.T. Team of the local police department, one is left with an ominous feeling that has undertones of poor preparation, training, and even worse planning. One is also left contemplating the reason such militarized units exist. As with any scrutiny of our Government's activities, even a cursory examination reveals that, at its core, the purpose of these units is not to protect or serve "we the people." The purpose is, as always, the accomplishment and maintenance of total control of "we the people."

About thirteen years ago I was awoken early, before sunup, one Autumn morning, by my two Cocker Spaniels who were barking furiously, and wanted outside immediately, if not sooner. It was earlier than usual, but I assumed they had to do their bodily functions, earlier than usual, so I let them into the fenced-in back yard to do their morning business. Luckily, I was somewhat cognizant of my surroundings, which was unusual, for me, at that time of the day. First, I noticed my motion detector security lights failed to come on. Luckily, the dogs also noticed this and were too busy investigating to see that the gate to the driveway, and the street, was standing wide open. When Tuna, the male, and the older of the two, was certain he couldn't trigger the light he remembered his original mission and ran into the side yard and began his fierce barking again.

Then I discovered that my outdoor furniture had been rearranged so someone could use my patio table to climb up to my lights and unscrew the bulbs. Someone misjudged the strength of the table and destroyed it while using it, as a platform, to be able to reach my lights. I was secretly hoping that someone's body was as badly damaged as my table.

I didn't need to be completely aware to realize that someone had been trespassing on my property and, by the evidence they left behind, I could assume that they weren't there to do me any favors. I ran back into the house and grabbed my pistol from my nightstand and went back outside to retrieve the hounds.

I found them barking, through the chain link fence, at someone or something in the neighbor's side yard. In the dim light I could see a shape cowering beside the neighbor's porch.

"Get inside and take your dogs with you" I heard someone say, forcefully.

I began carrying on a conversation with my pistol at low ready. "They belong here, asshole. You don't." I answered, doing my best to sound seven feet tall and bulletproof.

"I'm a Police Officer. Do as I say, Ma'am."

"Were you in my back yard this morning?" I replied.

"Yes, I was" he answered.

"Then you're no Police Officer. My back yard's been vandalized. Do you normally moonlight as a vandal?" I asked. By now the sun was up far enough that I could see a man in SWAT type gear, hugging an M-4, and literally cowering beside my neighbor's porch. This was not what's referred to, among civilians, as an M-4gery version of the popular AR-15; this was the real military weapon and not a semi-automatic, 16-inch barrel, facsimile. The shortened barrel length, 14.5 inches, told the story. This was a select fire weapon. I asked him why he was there but all he would do was tell me to go back inside my home. I asked him twice for either his name or badge number and he refused. Then, again, he told me to go back inside and the last time he said it he was far from being polite.

By the time I got myself, and two super curious Cocker Spaniels, back inside my phone was ringing. The neighborhood grapevine already had the story and was broadcasting. Normally the local amateur news circuit is more accurate than our TV news but the story I was hearing didn't quite match what I had seen so far. The word was that late the night before, bar closing late, a gentleman, of Mexican descent, became drunk and maudlin and announced to the patrons, of a local bar, that he intended to go home and kill himself.

The bartender thought he may be telling the truth, so the local police were called. The Mexican gentleman lived two houses down the street from me. All the time the sun was rising higher and the voice on the other end of the phone blurted out “Oh my God, go look out your front window.”

There had to have been ten cruisers, two or three command vehicles, innumerable officers and it was impossible to determine how many more were out of sight like the one huddling against my neighbor’s porch. And then there was the War Wagon.

If one looked closely enough one could see a sniper under the War Wagon. That seemed like an odd place to deploy a sniper but what do I know? I thought “taking the low ground” went out of style immediately after Dien Bien Phu. He did, however, have an excellent view of the feet, ankles, and shins of all the officers milling around between his position and the dwelling where the alleged suicidal gentleman was thought to be. Again, I’m just a soccer Mom but I would have deployed the sniper a little differently, if at all.



The “War Wagon.” File picture, not the actual vehicle.

The milling about bothered me. I would suspect, again, just from the use of common sense, that if the situation were so dangerous as to warrant the SWAT team, with all its military regalia, then how was it safe to bumble and stumble around with little to no concern about anything? They acted like they were attending a picnic instead of a **Special Weapons And Tactics** deployment. I guess I was having a problem with the ratio of threat to response level. Actually, I was having a problem with them being armed and equipped to the teeth yet, all the while, not having the slightest clue as to what they were doing or even why they were doing it.

Other than milling around I saw only one other activity; site security. Within seconds, and I mean literally within seconds, of getting out my video camera and recording the goings on, I was ordered to stop recording or my camera would be confiscated. I was inside my home at this time. I’d already been forbidden from doing anything outside my home. I almost used the line they like to use on us. *If you have nothing to hide you shouldn’t mind us searching your [FILL IN THE BLANK].* If they have nothing to hide why don’t they want their activities recorded?

Through the window I informed an officer that I had a medical appointment and I was told I was going to miss it. Law enforcement vehicles were abandoned, not parked, on both sidewalks and the street, effectively blocking traffic from leaving the area even in the opposite direction of the supposed threat. Could or would they move the one cruiser that blocked my driveway and prevented me from leaving and honoring my appointment? I’m guessing not because the only answer I received was “Stay inside your home.” I was never asked the nature of my appointment. I was simply denied the ability to leave the area. They didn’t ask the nature of my appointment, nor did they listen to me when I attempted to inform them, so they had no way of knowing whether I was on my way to the podiatrist to have my toenails clipped or if I was reporting for my liver transplant. They did, however, convince me that they couldn’t possibly care less. They would have needed to move one cruiser to allow me to leave the area. They obviously didn’t consider the situation to be hazardous because, as I said earlier, they were acting as if they were at a social gathering rather than a situation requiring the finest of the finest.

Hours passed slowly; six of them if I remember correctly. The boys and I were playing *Go Fish* to kill time and Sean made a crack about being disappointed that the officers hadn’t used any flash-bangs. We hadn’t finished the hand we were playing before we heard *BOOM... BOOM* from the flash-bangs that signaled the final assault.

A dead man held off this city’s finest for over six hours. He was dead before they arrived on the scene. He had been dead the entire time since he’d returned home from the bar.

I’ve never studied police procedures so I may be way off base. I’m going to rely on common sense. The gentleman who was the subject of this operation wasn’t a fugitive from justice nor was he holding hostages. He wasn’t known to be a violent individual and he lived alone. He hadn’t threatened anyone, and no complaints had been filed against him. He had no restraining orders against him, and he didn’t have a criminal record or any record of domestic violence. Shockingly, he was in the country legally. His crime was that he was suspected of possibly wanting to take his own life. That’s the reason the SWAT team was dispatched.

The number of lethal weapons available to stop a man from killing himself was amazing. Is killing a man justified when one is preventing him from killing himself? If one believes the rhetoric of those who would confiscate our firearms there is only one purpose for military “style” weapons and that’s to kill humans. What I saw weren’t the neutered, civilian versions of military weapons that are available to the public. These were actual select fire military weapons.

I was on the scene the entire time. I had no choice. I was a captive audience. I tried to leave and was prevented; forbidden from doing so. When the “suspect” killed himself, the man was less than 125 feet from where I’m sitting right now. The authorities made no visible attempt to talk to the man. Had bullhorns been used I would have heard it and even

if I didn't the hounds would have. Since he was already dead, I know he didn't answer his phone. The city's answer to a suspected suicide was lethal force; lots and lots of lethal force. It almost made me wonder if they send tankers loaded with gasoline to combat fires.

My question is how many guns are enough to keep a man from killing himself? I know it's better to be too prepared than not prepared enough but, is it possible that this veritable smorgasbord of lethal weaponry and surplus military equipment was a teensy bit of overkill? Is it possible that this huge variety of weapons and military-style equipment were placed into service, on that day, simply because they were available? The level of the officer's training certainly didn't parallel the level of their weaponry. With the piss-poor muzzle discipline I witnessed it's a miracle there wasn't a friendly fire incident, or seven. Had I witnessed such behavior at the rifle range I frequent I'd have reported it as a grievous safety violation and these officers would have been escorted off the property and told they should never return.

I've related just about everything that happened that day and now I'll tell you what didn't happen. I've lived with some sort of a gate my entire life. Roughly 80% of all people who open a gate feel absolutely no responsibility to re-close that gate when they leave. It turns out that officers of the law are no different.

Nobody returned to put the bulbs back into my motion sensor lights or repair the damage caused to the fixtures when my table collapsed; the one the officer was standing on in order to reach my light. Nobody returned to put my furniture back where it was when they arrived, nor did they come back to explain to me why I no longer had a working table or security light. Nobody stopped in to inform me of the procedure to file for replacements or reimbursement for my property that they, employees of the city, destroyed through willful negligence.

Nobody bothered to inform me that I was welcome to go screw myself, either. That, I discovered, was the job of the representative of the Chief of Police who was gracious enough to grant me an audience. He was one of the most artificial, most mealy mouthed, most patronizing people I've ever had the displeasure to meet. He told me how sorry he was for the gate left open and how lucky I was that my pets didn't escape and die on the street. He assured me he was deeply sorry for the damages inflicted on my property and all the "inconvenience" caused by one of his officers. He also explained how much he would have loved to issue a severe reprimand but couldn't because I failed to get the officer's name, in the dark, when he refused to give it, or his badge number, any of the times I requested that information. He was also disappointed that he couldn't reimburse me for the destroyed table and light fixture because I couldn't prove it was in working order before that morning. Since I was unable to identify the officer who allegedly broke my property, I was welcome to go... use your imagination. He took great pleasure in making certain I understood that my word wasn't sufficient to prove my property was perfectly functional the night before.

Just in case the Chief regretted his treatment of one of his subjects, I mean one of the tax-paying citizens of his city, I hand-carried my paid receipts, for a new table, of the exact model destroyed, and a replacement for the damaged motion sensor light, along with photographic evidence of my claims, to the office of the Chief. The bills totaled \$207.65 for parts only; no labor. After hearing my story, the electrician refused to charge me labor. He said "Lady, the city already raped you once; the labor's on me." The Chief was in his office but was "extremely busy." I chose to wait for him to become available but in the 90 minutes I waited he never became accessible even though one person left his office, and another never entered. I left the receipts. To this day I've heard nothing. I have a long memory and I'm pretty patient. My day will come. It always does. I know I should feel fortunate. At least I wasn't sued, by the city, for injuries sustained by the officer who fell when he destroyed my patio table and light fixture. I surmise I was spared that indignation because, doing so, would have, consequentially, identified the officer possibly giving me some sort of recourse. This is purely speculation on my part because nothing is certain when dealing with bureaucratic arrogance of this depth and magnitude.

After some research, into militarization of police forces, I made a few discoveries that disturbed me. Large quantities of Government surplus military equipment, ranging from flashlights to armored vehicles, had been made available to police departments, all over the country, at extremely low prices. This research exposed much more information than could be included in an article, such as this, and could only be done justice by a series of in-depth reports. This is why I've chosen to not go into depth on this facet of this, somewhat disturbing, trend. I have, however, chosen to relate several dubious uses or, arguably, misuses of force.

SWAT team with guns drawn raids Arizona home for toddler with fever

Thursday, March 28, 2019

CHANDLER, Arizona -- Video shows a SWAT team raiding a home in Arizona with guns drawn looking for a 2-year-old child with a fever. The raid came as a result of a fight between the toddler's parents and a doctor over his medical care. But now, local lawmakers say it went too far. It was a scene that resembled police trying to take down a dangerous fugitive, bust down the door with guns at the ready. But instead of a fugitive, police were looking for a toddler believed to have an extremely high fever.

<https://abc7news.com/swat-team-with-guns-drawn-raids-home-for-toddler-with-fever/5220780/>

<https://thevaccinereaction.org/2019/04/armed-swat-team-in-arizona-breaks-down-door-of-family-with-unvaccinated-child/>

<https://www.kktv.com/content/news/Police-kick-down-507852302.html>

N.C. Mom Says SWAT Team 'Terrorized' Her 6-Year-Old Autistic Son

February 8, 2019

"My son with autism was forced out of the home with military-style rifles aimed at him and made to sit on the cold, wet ground for over an hour." This week a North Carolina mom told the Raleigh City Council that police "terrorized" her parents and her 6-year-old special-needs son.

A Selective Enforcement Unit (SEU) team—Raleigh's version of SWAT—had a warrant to search Michael and Wanda Clark's home last November. Michael's nephew, Brian Clark, was a suspect in a recent armed robbery. Police found a box Brian had left at the scene of the crime with his uncle's name and address on it, *Indy Weekreports*. So they paid a visit to the Clark home, where Michael and Wanda's daughter LaDonna had dropped off her son, who has autism and cerebral palsy, before going to work.

Brian Clark did not live at his uncle's house and was not there at the time. Nonetheless, police forced Michael, Wanda, and their grandson to walk out of the house and sit on the ground. "On a 35-degree and rainy night, my son with autism was forced out of the home with military-style rifles aimed at him and made to sit on the cold, wet ground for over an hour by RPD SWAT," LaDonna told the city council Tuesday:

<https://reason.com/2019/02/08/nc-mom-says-swat-team-terrorized-her-6-y/>

SWAT Team Overuse Endangers the Innocent, Says Author

July 29, 2013

WASHINGTON—The line between military combat forces and civilian policing has been eroding in the last 30 years. SWAT teams are ubiquitous in urban centers, and even prevalent small towns, suburbs and exurbs. Our cops get military training and use equipment designed for war. Many in law enforcement are fine with this trend. Others are disturbed by the change in the character of civilian police.

Speaking on Capitol Hill July 24 at an event sponsored by the libertarian think tank Cato Institute, Radley Balko made the case that this trend has led to numerous tragic outcomes of innocent people killed in SWAT raids. According to him, police typically show little remorse. They are unwilling to change procedures to avoid the same mistakes. Further, the SWAT team raids challenge the guarantee of the Fourth Amendment that one's home is a sanctuary and an individual can protect himself from intruders.

Balko wrote the *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces*, published July 9. He argues that policies begun in the Nixon-era war on drugs have blurred the difference between soldier and police officer.

https://www.theepochtimes.com/swat-team-overuse-endangers-the-innocent-says-author_213468.html

Lawsuit: SWAT Officers Dragged 10-Year-Old from Bathtub, Made Him Stand Naked Next to 4-Year-Old Sister, Terrorized Family

14 police officers with helmets and facemasks and assault rifles stormed in, family says.

July 26, 2013

Pittsburgh SWAT officers must face claims that they raided a family's home, violently dragged a child from the bathtub, and "terrorized" them at gunpoint, a federal judge ruled.

Georgeia Moreno and her family sued Pittsburgh, its police chief and 14 police officers in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

The events unfolded as Georgeia, her husband, William; and her stepfather, Mark Staymates were watching television in their living room as Georgia's sick mother, Darlene, slept upstairs at 7 p.m. on Dec. 7, 2010. They suddenly heard a loud explosion and saw bright lights, "as if grenades were going off," the complaint states.

Pittsburgh Police SWAT officers wearing helmets and facemasks then broke and "stormed through" the front and back doors of the home, according to the complaint. Those officers allegedly never identified themselves, pointed assault rifles at the family, shouted obscenities and destroyed their property.

Although the team purportedly sought to arrest William for quarreling with a drunk, off-duty police officer at a local veterans club early that morning, the family says that their "terrorization" continued for another 45 minutes after William was apprehended.

<https://www.alternet.org/2013/07/lawsuit-swat-officers-dragged-10-year-old-bathtub-made-him-stand-naked-next-4-year/>

FBI's show of force in Roger Stone arrest spurs criticism of Mueller tactics

January 25, 2019

"A SWAT team, searching the house, scaring his wife, scaring his dogs—it was completely unnecessary," Stone's attorney said. "A telephone call would have done the job, and he would have appeared. Mr. Stone has nothing to hide."

The arrest operation drew scrutiny on social media—even from President Trump, who said "Border Coyotes, Drug Dealers and Human Traffickers are treated better," and questioned "who alerted CNN to be there?"

<https://www.foxnews.com/politics/roger-stones-predawn-fbi-arrest-operation-sparks-controversy>

A .pdf copy of this article can be downloaded [here](#).