

Let's Get Back to Having Peace Officers, and Away from Law Enforcers

There is something seriously wrong with the state of policing in the United States. I'm not sure it's anything new, just more apparent thanks to the growth of personal recording technology.

But I also don't think it's always been this way. Sure cops were naughty from time to time in the distant past, but so was everyone else (so *is* everyone else). Having that kind of power is bound to cause flawed human beings to abuse it here and there. Power corrupts, right?

I think perhaps the beginning of the end occurred with the initiation and expansion of the War on Drugs. Suddenly, peaceful and otherwise law-abiding people were being targeted by ever-expanding law enforcement programs.

Maybe it started earlier, or maybe not, but at some point cops stopped being primarily concerned with keeping the peace, and instead were expected to enforce the law, however justified it was.

Can laws that prohibit non-aggressive and non-violent behaviors ever be justified? Even that inquiry begs questions on what law is and where it comes from, *et cetera*.

In any event, here is a short list of what I believe is the proper role of cops as peace officers in a free society.

1. **Security:** provide the eyes and ears, or their electronic equivalents, to being on the look-out for never-do-wells and actual criminals, that kind that hurt people or take their stuff.
2. **Training:** provide training in self-defense, martial arts, and weapon use and safety.
3. **Investigation:** provide detective and forensic work to determining whodunit when an actual crime is committed.
4. **Response:** when an actual crime is in progress or believed to be in progress, providing a response, with force as necessary, to keep the peace and ensure the safety of all parties involved.
5. **Pursuit:** bounty hunting when criminals have been convicted (*not* merely charged) with an actual crime, to ensure restitution will be paid to their victims.

I think that's it. Look it over again, and then again. What do you see? Items 1 and 2 are for vigilance in preventing actual crimes. Items 3 through 5 are for dealing with actual crimes once they have been committed.

Nowhere in that list will you find what 90% of policing today entails, ie: enforcing laws that prohibit nonviolent behaviors in myriad ways. Nor does any of this need to be paid for via government taxation. There are interested parties to fund it in every case (people, businesses, insurance companies).

Society doesn't need cops issuing traffic citations, pursuing suspected nonviolent criminals, killing family dogs, flashbanging children, harassing bystanders, or otherwise initiating and escalating conflict needlessly.

Believe it or not, I *want* to respect cops. Sticking to the above roles, they'd deserve our love, respect, and admiration. They'd rightfully be considered heroes. But unfortunately, 90% of what cops do today is utterly without merit.

I hope to see that change one day.