

You Are Being Watched

Don't assume the cops don't know things about you just because you are quiet and peaceable.

About 19 years ago, around half-past dusk, in an average town in a nearby state, I was riding in the passenger seat while my wife-at-the-time drove. Pulling a particularly blatant act of poor driving in the middle of town, she made a left turn and cut off an approaching coproach. She seemed completely oblivious when I mentioned this error. Unsurprisingly, the gangster in question made a turn, followed, and stopped her.

As he did the "*your papers, please*" shakedown on her, he bent over to get a better look at her passenger- me. He shined his flashlight in my face for a moment and uttered words that still echo in my mind to this day. He said "*You're that guy with all the guns.*"

I am not certain now if he actually added something to the effect of "*we better keep an eye on you*" or if my memory has added that in the years since. I feel it was implied, if not stated. I never said a word during the encounter.

I seriously doubt I had more guns than the average person in the area. I *did* usually open-carry around town, and I dressed "uniquely", yet I had never been involved in any "incident" of any kind. I was quiet and reserved, and never really made waves. I did know people who were more outspoken, though. I didn't yet spend my time writing anything more than the rare letter to the editor (2 or 3 over the years) and didn't even have an email address, much less a computer. I hadn't bought any guns since I had moved to town (as far as anyone in government knew, anyway). I was still months away from being surrounded by the police due to a lack of communication at the elementary school. Yet, he recognized me as "*that guy with all the guns*".

Was he joking? Did he mistake me for someone else, as unlikely as that was? Did he know something about me that I still don't know how he knew? Either way, it was a moment of paranoia made real for me.

How would this event have turned out in today's "*shoot first, ask questions if he survives*" police state? Regardless of the intent behind the comment, it was just another brick in the wall that made me the delightful anarchist you see before you today.