

Policing the Law Abiding



Dave Daubenmire

Note: This column was originally published in 2007. Does anyone know where I can get a mask?

I was out riding my bicycle this past weekend fighting my own version of the battle of the bulge. I usually ride on back roads in order to keep out of the way of traffic, plus it gives me more time to think about things of which I can write. My wife tells me that I spend way too much time alone with me.

Bicycles, I have always been told, are to be ridden with the same flow as the traffic. It doesn't make sense to me. Common sense tells me my chances of a healthy ride go up if I can see what is coming towards me. So, I ride my bike facing the on-coming traffic. I like my chances of avoiding a collision if the cars aren't clipping me from behind.

But that got me flipped-off by a driver last Saturday. Seems he had to edge into the center of the road to avoid my oversized load. *"Hey! Don't you know the law? You're on the wrong side of the road. I hope a cop gives you a ticket,"* this fine law-abiding citizen chastised me as he flipped his lighted cigarette out the window at me. At least I saw it coming.

Speaking of cops, my two-wheeled journey took me a few hundred yards down the road onto an overpass that crosses over Interstate 70. There, sitting along the highway, was an Ohio State Highway Patrolman with his radar gun shooting at on-coming traffic in the west-bound lanes. *"Protecting and*

servicing," I mumbled to myself, *"Probably part of the click-it or ticket program being promoted by the safety Nazis."* Funny isn't it, how much money the "authorities" make by enforcing laws that make us "safer"? Wouldn't his time, and our money, be better spent looking for car-jackers, or rapists, or illegal aliens?

And I'm curious, just where does the money go when I pay my \$100 fine for not buckling-up? Shouldn't the purpose of a fine be to pay back the one that I injured? Who does an unbuckled seat-belt harm? Seems to me someone is making a lot of money forcing me to be safe. You know what they say, "Follow the money." I have often wondered if cops get a commission on the tickets they write.

I heard somewhere, (it could have been me talking to myself on one of my previous bike rides) that you really aren't committing a crime if there is no victim. In fact, victimless crimes are a whole new genre of offenses that have been codified into law. Most of them are nothing more than do-good legislation sponsored by those whose palms are greased by special interest groups. The insurance companies want us to buckle-up so they "encourage" some pencil-neck to write it into law. Now our cops spend their time monitoring law-abiding citizens rather than chasing the real criminals. Write a law, create a crime, produce a criminal, and make a buck. Is America a great country or what?

Most of what we call laws are nothing more than the intrusion of government into the lives of otherwise peaceful citizens. Every time I see a State Trooper sitting with his radar gun blazing I can't help but wonder what the real criminals are doing while this policeman stalks the unbuckled. While thousands of man-hours are spent making sure my seat-belt is secure, and my speedometer is not over the posted limit, crime is exploding all around us.

I think law enforcement officials understand the game. They

know that they can't keep criminals from committing crime so they spend most of their efforts making sure that law-abiding citizens are controlled. They must never allow the law-abiders realize that they could get away with breaking the law. "Leave the career criminals alone and go get those dangerous folks who fail to buckle-up." As my father-in-law likes to remind me the purpose of a law is to keep honest people honest.

Sadly, most of what passes as crimes today really doesn't hurt anybody. Speeding is a victimless crime. Going 100 miles an hour on a modern freeway doesn't injure anyone. Of course the potential for injury is there, but in America we don't punish potential crimes. Every time I mow my yard there is a chance I could hurt someone with a flying rock, but if I don't mow I'll be in trouble with the authorities for letting my grass get too long. Throwing a rock out of my mower is not a crime, at least not yet. Hitting my neighbor with a rock should be.



In natural law this is called ***Malum prohibitum***. This means that smoking in public is only a crime because those who write the laws say it is. This is different from ***Malum in se*** which is a crime that is inherently wrong, such as rape or murder.

America would be a better place if we worried more about crimes that actually harmed others as opposed to those with the potential to harm or crimes that only harm oneself. Crime prevention is a good thing. Making up crimes is not.

You may think I am knit-picking but I think we need to realize what is happening around us. In the battle for liberty, small things cannot be ignored. Remember, it is the little foxes that spoil the vine. In a nation where everything is a crime, everyone will soon be a criminal.

Look at the 10 Commandments. Every one of them is not only a violation of the law of God, but they are an intrusion of the rights of another. That is why Jesus capsulated the 10 Commandments into two. A sin is something you do against another. Shouldn't a crime be measured by a similar standard?

Let's be honest. Most of the hassles in life don't come from keeping the Laws of God. No, most of my headaches come from keeping the laws of man. The purpose of God's laws is self-restraint while man-made law is government restraint.

We have traded the 10 Commandments of God for the 10,000 commandments of government. Tell the truth now; do you really think that was a good trade?

I recently read in our local paper the story of a man who was arrested for driving with a suspended license. It seems that the local police, in an effort to crack down on "crime" were on high alert. Tom was pulled over for having a burned-out tail light. (\$35) In the course of the traffic stop it was determined that he was guilty of failure to buckle his seat belt, (\$100), talking on his cell phone while driving, (\$100), and 45 in 35, (\$75). A quick-check on the in-cruiser computer showed that his license had been revoked for failure to pay a running-a-red-light charge earlier this year. It seems that a camera mounted at a busy intersection caught him pushing his luck against the yellow light. Bullheaded Tom neglected to send in his \$125 ransom to the camera committee and they suspended his license, much to his surprise.

The police cuffed him, took him to jail, and impounded his car. He hired a lawyer (\$1000) who bailed him out of jail, (\$275). He was found guilty of all charges and assessed court costs (\$210). The impound lot charged him \$150. His insurance rates went up, his name appeared in the paper, his family was mortified, and he lost his job as a truck driver.

Sign Sign everywhere a sign

Blocking out the scenery breaking my mind

Do this, don't do that, can't you read the sign. Five Man
Electrical Band 1973

Every day when I ride my bike I look for that fella that flipped me off. I hope our paths cross soon. I checked with the police. There is no law stating which side of the road one must ride a bike although they do suggest you ride with the flow of traffic.

"Well there oughta be a law against it," I can almost hear my antagonist growl as he flips his cigarette at me.

"Hey, that's littering", I yell at him as I pedal towards the Interstate. With some luck maybe I can flag down a cop, if he is not too busy looking for criminals with the radar gun.

Book 'em Danno!

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