

THE MAGIC BADGE

John was a strong, bulky teenager who seemed to attract fellows who wanted to challenge him. Sometimes John provoked confrontations, whether to get something or just to prove who was boss; but either way, he often wound up in fights. Now, at age 24, John carries a large caliber, loaded, semi-automatic pistol into courthouses, onto school campuses, aboard airplanes or any other place he goes. He conceals a loaded, small caliber revolver on his left ankle. Nobody stops him.

Rachel was friendly and studious, even a church volunteer and a popular babysitter. Being such a peaceful person, she has never been in a fight for any reason. Now, at age 25, Rachel is married and has a young child. If Rachel carries a sidearm of any caliber into a courthouse, onto an airplane or anywhere near a school, then she faces arrest and prosecution for state and federal felonies. If convicted, she could lose custody of her child and wind up in prison for years.

Why does the law treat John and Rachel so differently? After all, John had a history of using force to get his way, while Rachel had always been non-violent. The answer is simple: John is a government agent, while Rachel is a private citizen. John has a *badge*.

Does that distinction make sense? Yes, we should accord peace officers special legal authority to go places armed. The special authority goes with the job of detecting and capturing aggressors of all sorts. We all should appreciate and thank peace officers who do their difficult work with courage and honor to protect our free society.

It does not make sense, however, for the laws to treat the decent, non-violent citizen so viciously. By carrying a single sidearm in her purse, for example, Rachel poses no more threat to the public than does John carrying

his *two* sidearms. Yet the "gun control" laws in many States would destroy Rachel's life if she carried a defensive sidearm without a special license.

Confused Americans seem to believe that the government has special powers and privileges, as though elected officials, bureaucrats and agents have some kind of divine rights. It's time to dispel that confusion.

This Nation stands on the foundation that, "all men are created equal... with certain unalienable rights, [among which] are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." We Americans recognize the eternal concept that, "to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers *from the consent of the governed*." In this timeless passage, the *Declaration of Independence* of 1776 states that we the citizens delegate certain limited powers to the government, but *those powers are ours* to begin with.

John's badge signifies that he has received (from Rachel and from all of us) the legal power to carry defensive sidearms openly or concealed. John is not necessarily a better person than Rachel or the rest of the public. We do trust John with sidearms in every place in society. But Rachel has every moral right to carry a defensive sidearm, because Rachel and all of us had that right before John ever got his badge.

Americans must always remember that *the people* have the primary and unalienable right to have weapons for defense. The government has no powers unless we delegate those powers. Laws that place government agents high above the decent, non-violent citizens, and subject those citizens to devastation for carrying tools to defend the right to one's life, are laws that violate the founding principles. Such laws must be repealed. To learn more and get involved, visit www.jpfo.org.



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