

A Few Minutes with the Boss

By: Joseph Andalina

Turning into a joke

It's a joke, right? The idea of police body cameras, that is. Ever since Ferguson, where the rioters burned down a portion of their city when a police officer shot an offender because the officer was being attacked and the press and activists refused to even consider the officer's story. The hue and cry is body cameras. And then in Baltimore where a bad dude died in a police wagon. And where every suspect shot and killed by the police was murdered, according to black activists. "Body cameras" scream the politicians!

Yes, some shootings were criminal and the cops involved were arrested. Some were accidental. Most were justified. Many of these instances were covered by cell phone cameras, others by dash-cam videos. So really, who needs body cameras?

But that wasn't enough for the weasel-knee politicians and press. As if this could ever be a surprise to all of us in law enforcement. The hue and cry was for the mandatory wearing of a camera on every cop to record their bad deeds — and for the cop to be exonerated if the allegations were false, as they usually are.

So after months of testing, many of the nation's large city police departments are going to expand the use of body cameras — eventually! But the testing and studies done will result in only a small amount of cops wearing them (except for very small agencies). Now due to the cost of the cameras, the storage of data and the expense of maintaining them and other factors, departments are failing to implement the plan.

The equipping of officers in large cities is very small; maybe less than 10 percent of cops are wearing them because they still have not been issued. New York alone has 34,000 officers, and only about three percent of the police are wearing a camera.

Cities, governments, and their political hacks always talking big, but rarely deliver. Money is always the key word. They want federal money or taxpayers to pay. In Illinois, the legislators have concocted a scheme that for every ticket written, they add on a \$5 surcharge to the ticket to pay for the cameras. And cops are writing the tickets, assuring that cameras will be paid for from the backs of citizens. When I was on the road, I would only write the most egregious of violations. I think it's dishonorable to tack on a "surcharge." Just another racket by Springfield. But that's just me thinking out loud again.

It's also been reported that Los Angeles, to outfit 7,000 cops with cameras, would cost \$58,000,000 over five years. Holy what a stupid waste of money, Batman! Who in their right minds would do this? Bureaucrats, that's who.

In Baltimore, they **hope** to have **most** officers equipped by **2018**. Notice I said most. Forget it, the Aliens from Venus will be here by then, making body cameras obsolete because we will all be dead.

So add in the proverbial kicker, the civil rights activists who are now worried how the police use the cameras. The cops haven't addressed privacy issues and civil rights worries. And while they film us, the little babies don't want to be filmed in return.

So when does an officer actually turn on a camera, and how long will the police keep any videos? Just recently, Round Lake Park has introduced cameras on cops, leading to problems. More on that next time.

The ACLU, who wants their cake and eat it too, are already crying in some areas about guidelines of camera body use. They want the police chief to order when to turn them on and when the footage can be released to the public. The public, I bet, will not be privy to everyday folks calling cops bad names and stuff.

Finally, these gadflies don't even know if this will work anymore or reduce excessive force beefs. They are worried rather, that cameras will be used as tools to provide more surveillance and actually cause racial profiling. Really now?

Like I said, is this a joke?

Vita é bella