

Tuesday, October 9, 2007

### **Tasers: Additional violence in police arsenals.**

Bill of Rights. (From the public domain.) Violence begets violence. If you disagree, ask the Hatfields and McCoys. During the John Kerry tasergate, the UCLA tasergate, and the Ohio tasergate (in the state of Kent Stategate), numerous commenters on blogs and online news websites proclaimed that the police must be obeyed, and that tasing is about law and order. Fortunately, plenty of people do not buy such arguments. Tasing is violent, and only adds violence to police arsenals. Without tasers, we likely would see more police patience and, consequently, less violence. Tasers might obtain quick compliance in the short run and might be more sexy than patience. However, in the end, patience and non-violence is the better route. Gandhi knew that; so did Martin Luther King, Jr. The United States Justice Department funded a study at Wake Forest University (how reliable and objective is the study, seeing that it was funded by the nation's largest law enforcement machine?) on taser safety, and the study apparently downplays taser dangers. Not so, says Amnesty International, which reports dozens of taser-related deaths in the United States and Canada through 2004 alone, and over 200 such deaths in the United States through present. According to CNN: "The Wake Forest researchers acknowledge that there have been roughly 270 people who have died in police custody after being Tasered, but they say that there is no clear evidence that the deaths can be attributed to Taser or other causes." Imagine if the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved drugs with such an approach: "There is no clear evidence that deaths can be attributed to LSD, so we will allow it to be sold at 7-11 stores, and to be used on criminal suspects." Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in Criminal Defense at 00:00

I think that some police departments are too ready to use tasers thinking that it is okay because it is "non-deadly" force. However, it is extremely painful and some people go into heart attacks or suffer severe reactions to such tasing. Some police departments do not require the officer to shout I will taser you if you fail to comply. If the officer was required to give at least one warning before using the taser, I believe that most people would comply with the officers request. Some police departments actually authorize the use of a taser or pepper spray to enforce any officers request for compliance (even when arguably the use of force to gain compliance would not be proper). There are too few limitations on the use of tasers and officers are too ready to use it since it is considered "non-deadly force."

Anonymous on Oct 10 2007, 21:27

Hi, Glen- Thanks for your comment. This Wake Forest study will only embolden police departments to permit taser use, and cops to use tasers, unless and until enough people insist that their police stop doing so.

Anonymous on Oct 11 2007, 07:24