

# Liberty is not about “other people,” it’s about you

By Jeff Knox

When it comes to liberty we must always take things personally. Should the federal government – or state or local government – be able to tell you that you are not responsible enough to make your own decision on personal matters? Most people answer “No,” but then they qualify that because “there are plenty of other people who need supervision.”



Every question of personal liberty should always be personalized. “Does the government have the right to decide this for *me*?” Whether the issue is smoking, disciplining your children, drinking soda-pop, or carrying a gun, the question isn’t whether it’s a good idea or whether other people are capable of making such a decision, the question is whether the government has the right to make these decisions for *you*. Your defensive sidearm has no effect on anyone until you remove it from the holster and there is strong evidence that such carry saves the public money and makes everyone safer. Does the government have the right to tell you – not other people – *you*, that you may not carry even when you consider yourself qualified and think carry would be prudent and appropriate? I don’t think so.

On the flip side of the coin, does the government have the right to kick down your door and threaten your family with deadly force? Don’t jump to arguments about dangerous criminals and destruction of evidence. Does the government have the right to kick down *your* door and threaten *your* family with deadly force?

Yes. Under narrow, well-defined guidelines and with an abundance of probable cause, reviewed by an impartial judge who recognizes that his primary responsibility is to safeguard your rights *and* if that’s the only way to achieve the lawful objectives of the warrant. Is that how it works today?

Now, for my police friends: If you were asleep in your home and were awakened by the sounds of gunfire, explosions, car alarms, pounding, and unintelligible yelling outside – your wife screaming in panic inside – what would you do? Would you grab a gun to protect your family? Go to investigate or take cover and wait? Or would you assume that you were the target of a police (or Department of Education, see <http://tinyurl.com/633oxfm>) raid, eschew your firearms, and take up a submissive posture on the floor?

Former Marine, Josey Guerena (see <http://tinyurl.com/3kfkpu5>), ran toward the threat. Bill Cooper (see <http://tinyurl.com/3u7sayz>) in Virginia huddled in his bedroom. Both were killed by officers who were responding appropriately to the immediate situation, but both situations were created by imprudent police actions. Officers, suspects, and innocents die needlessly every year because of the tactics and mindset of a system which puts rights secondary and depends on citizens reacting differently than officers would in the same situation.

Liberty isn’t about other people, criminals, or terrorists. Liberty is about *you*. What would *you* do?

*Published in the May-June 2011 issue of the Knox Report ([www.firearmscoalition.org](http://www.firearmscoalition.org)).*