

On The Beat – Automated Tickets: Here’s Your Sign

Written by Alex Teach
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1946. Shortly after the close of World War II, the United States government began the practice of adding fluoride to public drinking water in an effort to reduce tooth decay, particularly in young children and the poor in general who experienced agony from such decay frequently and without the means of affording care for the relief of it. Cavities, it turns out, cost society more to treat than any other disease, and scientists globally regarded this practice as “a pretty good move”.

What they never counted on, however, was the adverse reaction fluoride has when put in contact with tinfoil.

Hats, specifically.

There have been conspiracies for as long as there have been stupid, insecure people on this planet (which scientists also concur has been “pretty much forever”), but this one is the Stupid Grandfather of the modern age. Fluoridation has been associated with pacifism, mind control, population control, the abandonment of civil liberties and as an imminent sign of total governmental control of the populace, in lieu of a Democratic “supermajority” in the Senate. (“The 2008 Elections” is a column for another day.)

2008. There are 5.8 million car crashes nationally. That is 5,800,000: A ridiculous number, particularly for those educated in the Hamilton County public school system. Of those, 1.6 million people were injured, and 34,017 were killed. As with the masses with rotted teeth wandering around holding their jaws and making a huge racket 62 years ago, the government again takes notice of this and decides a society cannot remain civilized with 34,017 dead folks scattered all about the place...so again, it acts.

The initial thought is to educate people with positively huge reflective signs directly on the roadsides dictating the recommended limit for speed (or “speed limit”), but for a large number (it took at least 2,900,000 people to hit the other 2,900,000), this proves ineffectual and other ideas are sought.

The second most popular idea is one occupied police car being assigned to each driver in order to monitor and regulate their speed, but this is deemed not just cost prohibitive, at \$50,000 a pop with training, salary, and equipment, but with no small amount of irony it is also abandoned for fear of being misconstrued as an infringement of civil liberties.

A compromise was instituted in which one officer would regulate about 10,000 motorists on average, but the ratio of 1:10,000 people being regulated and ticketed was still leading to deaths in the tens of thousands. The government goes back to the drawing board, and this time, finds the answer in every bank, gas station, hotel, airport and cell phone in America: Cameras.

Americans go to hotels, gas stations, banks, airports, and many other places every hour of every day. They also complain to nine in ten officers pulling them over, “What about the real criminals out there? Don’t you have anything better to do?” Turns out, they do. So this marriage of ideas produces the Automated Ticketing System.

Fatalities in one section of Hixson Pike go from dozens to ZERO for more than two years now, addressing the scattered corpse issue directly.

People speeding in excess of 10 mph over the posted limits start receiving tickets by the bucket, with only one officer manning that ubiquitous White Van, and it doesn’t even add points to your driving record.

Costs of the cameras themselves are provided by the private sector, not taxpayers, and taxpayers don’t even have to cover the hideous costs of paying and training more police officers.

Then most unexpectedly (or was it?), the officers once assigned to sitting on the roadsides not catching “real criminals” are present in their communities, and a domino effect occurs in which response times to violent crimes goes down, and the number of property crimes begins falling in double digits in some areas.

Revenue generated from these tickets then goes towards once-abandoned driver-education programs (which, again, reduce crashes) and covers the cost of new police equipment for (you guessed it) further crime reduction actions.

The Government smiles. Then tilts its head in confusion.

The Stupid arrive with their nice teeth, and instead of joy at the wise use of tax dollars and reduction of dead folk, insurance rates, and crime in general...they complain. Automated ticket cameras from speed vans and red lights are associated with pacifism, mind control, population control, the abandonment of civil liberties and an imminent sign of total governmental control of the populace. (See why I told you that whole first story now? Clever, clever Officer Teach.)

Their right to privacy while driving on a public street is being infringed upon by a revenue generation system. (Think on this a second.)

I'm short on space, so I'll just say this: There IS no privacy in the middle of a one- or six-lane roadway, Nimrod. It's a ROADWAY. You can't even drive a car without windows to hide yourself. You even have to have a picture of yourself on a card saying you're allowed to drive there. Besides, if you said you did have an expectation of privacy in the middle of the street, besides being stupid, where is your moral outrage over the cameras you put yourself in front of in every aforementioned bank, gas station, hotel, and airport? It's not there, because they are necessary and make sense. The difference is, you are upset on the roadways because you have been caught speeding by an unbiased scientific device.

As for revenue generation? Of course it is! So—what now, when a human catches you and you go to court, you shouldn't be fined? All fines are wrong now? Or just the ones in which you have been caught? Again, where was the outrage before? Speeding and red light fines going to police equipment? "Duh!"

Your ever-present demands to see the radar gun and certification? They're right there. The red light cameras? Video is now awaiting you in the courtroom, every time. When an officer caught you, it was a "trap". He lied about you running the sign or the light, and the judge took his word over yours. Now you're on video...so it's "unconstitutional".

The Constitution doesn't give you a right to speed, folks. It doesn't even give you a reasonable expectation of privacy on the public roadways. I checked.

But, "Stupid" is the rule of the day, so you'll probably win. We'll take those officers back out of your neighborhoods, and go back on the side of the roadways. We'll let the bodies pile up in the S-curves, and property crimes increase like your property taxes to hire more officers to address the rising crime again.

All those government-based shiny teeth, all those savings of money and lives, but no one smiles for the camera.

You win.

Right?

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