

police maintain that the wearing and frequent use of firearms is necessary to protect themselves and the public.¹⁷

While it is true that police officers risk injury or death during their employment, there is a tendency among police and some commentators to exaggerate this risk. Policing is not the riskiest job around: truck drivers, farmers, miners and timber workers all work in more dangerous occupations. Independent research demonstrates that police perceptions of their job as becoming more dangerous are not well founded.¹⁸ It is true that, on occasion, police are targeted and killed simply because they are police but they are not the only people who live with the fear of being killed. Many thousands of women live with the well-founded fear that they will be hurt or killed by male partners. It is not generally argued that women in these situations should have access to hand guns, although they are clearly a more vulnerable group at greater risk of unlawful homicide.¹⁹

The reason police remain committed to bearing and using firearms is not because it reduces the risks involved in policing. It is the police self-image of crime fighters and the macho culture predominant in the police force that so

readily lends itself to an unnatural love affair with the gun.

References

1. *Herald-Sun* 4.2.92.
2. See, for example, letters to the editor by Sergeant G.L. Bashford, Victoria Police, *Age* 30.10.87, Dale Lewis, *Age* 29.4.89, J. Frame, Assistant Commissioner for Police, *Age* 15.8.87, the Reverend G.J. Poliness, Uniting Church, Shepparton North, *Age* 4.11.87.
3. *Age* 10.9.87.
4. *Age* 14.3.85.
5. *Age* 4.12.87.
6. Information obtained from Police Freedom of Information Office in letter dated 25.7.88; see *Age* 3.8.90; *Age* 30.5.88; *Age* 20.8.87.
7. See *Herald* 13.10.88, p.1.
8. Figures from Bruce Swanton, Australian Institute of Criminology, October 1991.
9. Boyanowsky and Griffiths, 'Weapons and Eye Contact as Instigators or Inhibitors of Aggressive Arousal in Police Citizen Interaction' (1982) 12 *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 398, at 406, quoted in Chappell, D., and Graham, Linda, *Police Use of Deadly Force: Canadian Perspectives*, Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto, 1985.
10. However, a Supreme Court jury found the four men charged with the murders not guilty, casting doubt on the police theory.
11. McCulloch, J., 'Police Shootings and Community Relations', in *The Police and the*

Community, Conference Proceedings, edited by Sandra McKillop and Julia Vernon. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, ACT, 1991.

12. Jefferson, Tony, *The Case Against Paramilitary Policing*, in the Crime, Justice and Social Policy Series, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, Philadelphia.
13. In three cases it has been alleged that the police planted guns on the deceased. In one instance, the gun alleged to have been planted was an imitation; in another a real but faulty gun; and in another a working firearm. See Final Submissions — an overview of evidence presented by Mr Graham Morrish QC with Mr Lasry, particularly, pp.7-13.
14. Final Submission to the Coroner re Fatal Shooting of Graeme Jensen, pp.9-10, presented to the Coroner's Court 9.10.91, Flemington/Kensington Legal Centre.
15. *Sunday Observer* 5.3.89; *Sun* 29.9.87, p.4, and 30.9.87, p.7; *Age* 13.11.87 and *Sun* 13.11.87; *Sun* 13.5.89; *Age* 23.12.88, p.3; The Ombudsman, Annual Report 17, 30 June 1990, p.105.
16. Ombudsman, as above, pp.104-109.
17. Geller, William A., 'Deadly Force: What We Know', (1982) 10 *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, p.171.
18. Australian Institute of Criminology, 'Police Work and its Health Impacts', Trends and Issues No. 7, Research Brief, October 1987.
19. Law Reform Commission of Victoria, Discussion Paper No. 13, *Homicide*, March 1988, pp.11-13.

OPERA, LIFE AND LAW

We reproduce excerpts from an opera review which appeared in *Hearsay* (Macquarie University Law Schools's Newsletter, No. 1, January 1992).

What's coke-ing?

Well, your MC has begun his/her opera subscription for 1992. Here follows his/her impressions of the first performance for the year, Leos Janacek's *Jenufa*. Your MC wishes to place on record at the outset that *Jenufa* is a truly magnificent production.

The opera is set in an unnamed village in Moravia (now part of Czechoslovakia), the composer's home country, at a time contemporary with its composition (end of the 19th century). It shows the composer's well-known love for his country and its ordinary people. This is in at least two ways: first, the folk music of Moravia inspires much of the melody and musical structure of the opera. (Never having been to Moravia your MC accepts this common opinion on trust.) Second, the characters in the opera are all village people involved in the working of a mill. Opera usually revolves around the doings of royalty, the aristocracy and the wealthy bourgeoisie. Peasants and workers may appear, but are usually seen only in relation to the nobility or employers. Usually then the drama ulti-

mately is generated within the doings of the aristocracy. There is simply no aristocracy in *Jenufa*; they are not even mentioned. And while some villagers are employed at the mill which the Bunya family owns, there is no class element in the drama. In this way, in your MC's opinion, Janacek tells us that ordinary people also lead meaningful lives: they form their own communities and generate their own morality. All this is not inevitably given to them by their rulers. If *Jenufa* is Moravia's first true national opera, as well as Janacek's first masterpiece then it is through its people that, for Janacek, the Moravian nation is constituted. If Janacek's love for his native Moravia was a 'fanaticism bordering on insanity', then it is the Moravian people that Janacek loves. And in his 'first masterpiece' he celebrates, musically and dramatically, their culture, their music, their juris-generative capacity, the meaning of their lives.

Of course, the morality of *Jenufa* is oppressive and ultimately destructive; but then so is the aristocratic morality of *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*. However, while Verdi gives us the impression that aristocratic morality is shallow and hypocritical, Janacek treats the morality of the Moravian villagers with respect, as genuine. The drama of *La Traviata* or *Rigoletto* hinges

on the hypocrisy of the aristocracy and the shallowness of their hangers-on. Verdi despised the aristocracy as surely as Janacek loved the people. Janacek's point in *Jenufa* is that these people really do live their lives according to their oppressive morality. They may be trapped, but they are not hypocritical. It is here that the overpowering drama of the story lies.

The story is simple but when combined with Janacek's passionate music which always perfectly expresses the drama of the action, and some excellent performances, the result is simply overpowering.

For your MC the appeal of opera lies in the fact that it is complete theatre. The music, the skill of the orchestra and the talent of the singers combine so that the drama of the action is impressed upon the audience. The audience is drawn in. Through the music they *feel* the drama, the meaning of the action. Opera-going becomes an emotional and involving experience. For this to work well it is simply essential that the music, the orchestra and the singers project a passion that envelops the hall. This is exactly what happens in this AO production of *Jenufa*.

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