



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 18, 2013

Decorated Army Vet Disarmed and Arrested for “Rudely Displaying” Firearm

A prominent military blogger and self-described constitutionalist is the focus of the latest outlandish efforts by local law-enforcement agencies to impose their own brand of gun control on citizenry. On March 16 Army Master Sgt. C.J. Grisham, an 18-year veteran who has been decorated for valor in Iraq and Afghanistan, was on a 10-mile hike with his 15-year-old son Chris near their rural Bell County home near Temple, Texas. The area is known for cougars and wild boars, and Grisham was duly armed with an AR-15, as well as a .45-caliber handgun. Grisham has a conceal-carry permit for the handgun, and was legally carrying the rifle strapped on his pack.



But about two miles from their house, the father and son were approached by a local Temple police officer, who stepped out of his cruiser and confronted Grisham, demanding to know what they were doing. Grisham explained that they were hiking for a Boy Scout merit badge his son was earning. “He then asked me what I’m doing with the rifle,” recalled Grisham, “to which I responded in a calm manner, ‘Does it matter, officer? Am I breaking the law?’”

At that point, without warning the policeman, later identified as Officer Steve Ermis, quickly reached out and grabbed Grisham’s rifle, prompting Grisham to pull back and ask him what he thought he was doing. The officer “then pulled his service pistol on me and told me to take my hands off the weapon and move to his car, which I complied with,” recalled Grisham. “He then slammed me into the hood of his car” — at which point Grisham recalled that he had his camera with him. Grisham quickly handed the camera to his son, who, though understandably shaken by what was occurring, proceeded to videotape the entire incident (shown in its entirety at the end of this article).

Up to this point, Grisham had not been informed why he was being stopped, why he was being disarmed, or if he was under arrest. It was soon made clear that Grisham was being arrested, although the veteran said the officers never indicated why.

In the video Grisham can be heard protesting to Ermis that “you’re trying to disarm me illegally,” to which Ermis replies that he is indeed going to disarm the law-abiding citizen. “Am I threatening you?” Grisham demands to know, to which Ermis replies, “If we find out there’s no issue then...” Demanded Grisham, “Am I doing something against the law?”

As the officer proceeds to handcuff and arrest Grisham, and as Chris Grisham tapes the whole unsettling incident, Ermis informs a visibly shaken and angry Grisham that he will be released as soon as it can be confirmed that he is legally carrying the rifle. When Grisham asks what he was doing wrong, Ermis say that he was “rudely carrying” the rifle.



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At this point, Ermis' supervisor, identified as Sergeant Minnicks, steps into the scene and, as Ermis paws through Grisham's person and relieves him of both his handgun and his wallet, tells Grisham that someone had called in to complain about him walking along the dirt road with his rifle. "Did you explain to them what the law is?" Grisham asked. "They don't care what the law is," a smug Minnicks replied. "Do you care what the law is?" demanded Grisham. Minnicks then claimed, "We have the right to disarm you."

When Grisham again demanded why he was stopped and disarmed, all the officers could muster was that they had gotten a call about him carrying a firearm openly — an act that is not against the law in Texas. But as the tape continues to roll, the police are obviously at a loss for what charge they can level against Grisham. While Ermis tried to accuse Grisham of resisting his instructions, it is clear from the video that this did not happen.

Ultimately, Grisham was charged with resisting arrest, which the Temple police department realized would not hold, as the entirety of the video demonstrates. Grisham was not in the process of being arrested for any crime, and while he vehemently protested the aggressive actions of the police, he never resisted when they handcuffed him and took his firearms.

That bogus charge was downgraded a few weeks later to "interference with public duties," an offense that falls under Texas Penal Code Section 38.15, which states, "A person commits an offense if the person with criminal negligence interrupts, disrupts, impedes, or otherwise interferes with ... a peace officer while the peace officer is performing a duty or exercising authority imposed or granted by law."

But as Grisham commented to *The New American*: "What was the criminal negligence that I am supposedly guilty of? How did I disrupt or impede the officer in whatever his duty was that day." Grisham said that the more important issue is whether or not a police officer "has the authority to disarm a citizen that isn't suspected of committing a crime, isn't threatening the safety of the officer or the public, and is legally exercising his rights to carry under the law?"

He said that while he is not a lawyer, "I think the answer to that is no. So, if the officer is acting without authority, there cannot be criminal negligence. It is the duty of the citizen to resist the illegal and unauthorized actions of any public official. If I saw a cop beating or raping a woman, would I be charged the same if I interfered? I don't think so."

David Carter, a retired Air Force colonel (a fighter pilot with 34 years of service) and friend of Grisham, who has closely followed the case from the beginning (he bailed Grisham out of jail), noted that while Ermis cited concern over his personal safety as the reason for disarming Grisham, the video reveals that there was never any indication of his being in danger. In fact, as the beginning of the video shows, even as Ermis is in the process of disarming Grisham, he assures Grisham that once he finds that there is nothing amiss, he and their son could be on their way. But over the next few moments, that assurance is ignored as Ermis takes Grisham's passive protest as resisting and handcuffs and disarms him.

"Until the moment the officer initiated verbal contact ... there was no reason for arrest," Carter explained in a document provided to *The New American*. It was only when Grisham refused to relinquish his legally carried firearms that Grisham proceeded to place him under arrest. However, Grisham "did not respond to contact's request for statement of the crime for which he was being arrested," explained Carter.

Thus far the police have not returned Grisham's firearms to him as the law prescribes. He related to *The New American* that this is not the first time local police in Bell County have played fast and loose



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with the law and confiscated an individual's firearm in the process. Last year Iraq veteran Nathanael Sampson was arrested at a local hospital where he had accompanied his wife for a medical emergency. Sampson, who has a conceal-carry permit, walked into the facility with his handgun, and was promptly arrested, even though there were no signs posted prohibiting the gun. Grisham related that it took Sampson nearly a year and thousands of dollars in legal bills before the county finally dropped all charges against him and returned his handgun.

"This kind of thing has happened too often," Grisham told *The New American*. "We're going to stand up and fight these charges." On his blog site he added that "because of the nature of my arrest and what my son was forced to witness at the hands of these officers, we are fighting not only the charges against us, but will be filing a civil lawsuit against the officers, Temple Police Department, and City of Temple."

[Fox News](#) noted one other troubling aspect of the March 16 incident. As Grisham was being hauled away by police, one of the officers offered to drive his son Chris home. Even though Grisham emphasized to his son that he was not to answer any questions the police asked, the 15-year-old said that the police officer who drove him refused to let him get out of the car until he had interrogated him. "The officer told me that I wasn't getting out of the patrol car until I answered his questions," Chris Grisham told Fox News. "He said I didn't have a choice. I was scared."

Grisham said the incident has traumatized his son. "Every time he sees a police officer he has a panic attack," he said. "That's unfortunate because we always taught our kids to respect police officers. My wife and I are angry about it."

He added that he has had to explain to his son that while they did not break any laws that day, they must stand up for what is right. "My son has his own copy of the Constitution," Grisham said. "He understands his rights. He understands the concept of choosing the hard right over the easy wrong."



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