



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on February 14, 2013

Armed Cops Descend on U.K. Man Over Facebook Picture of Toy Weapon

Anti-weapon hysteria — for instance, suspending children from school for [using their fingers as guns](#), [talking about shooting a bubble gun](#), or even [throwing an imaginary grenade](#) — is not confined to the United States, nor is it confined to children. A British man was recently visited by armed police for the offense of posting a picture of an action figure with a weapon on Facebook.



According to the [Daily Mail](#), on December 7, 43-year-old Ian Driscoll of Gloucestershire posted a photograph of an Action Man figure, the British equivalent of G.I. Joe, along with a toy Alsatian dog, on Facebook.

“The Action Man looked a bit like me so I decided to put it as my Facebook picture,” Driscoll told the paper. He added the dog, he explained, because he also owns an Alsatian.

Unnoticed by Driscoll, in the background of the picture was one of Action Man’s weapons: a mortar. Real-life mortars, the *Mail* notes, “are portable, short-range weapons used to fire shells or bombs at a steep angle to drop them on to enemy lines.”

The mortar did not, however, escape the notice of those viewing his Facebook page, one of whom apparently reported him to the police for his possession of this “deadly” weapon. On January 28, five officers, two carrying submachine guns, arrived at Driscoll’s home in unmarked cars.

“I was stunned,” Driscoll told the *Mail*. “It was just mad.”

“They flashed the search warrant in my face and said it was lucky I was in so they didn’t have to break my door down.”

Driscoll said he showed the mortar to the cops, who quickly realized it was no threat. At that point, reports the *Mail*, “the rather embarrassed team of officers apologized and took their leave.”

“I couldn’t believe someone thought it was real,” Driscoll told the newspaper. “It’s tiny and quite clearly a toy.”

The sharp-eyed informer who spotted the dangerous weapon on Facebook did not, it seems, take note of the fact that the mortar was about the same size as Action Man and was clearly not large enough to be a threat given its size relative to a television remote and other objects in the same picture. Or perhaps Driscoll has a Facebook “friend” who is anything but.

As usual, the police are defending their actions, no matter how ridiculous.

“The information was given to us in good faith and we acted with good intentions,” Gloucestershire police spokesperson Alexa Collicott told the *Mail*. “We are sure that the community would rather we acted quickly on information given to us of this nature, in case it had turned out to be a weapon. The



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officers attending were hugely relieved that it wasn't anything more sinister and we would much rather have a result like this than to put the public in harm's way by not taking action."

For his part, Driscoll simply sees the humor in the whole situation. "I can't stop laughing," he told the paper. "I think it's hilarious."

But if he hadn't been home when the cops showed up, or if he had put up even the slightest resistance, he might not be laughing. Action Man is no match for Big Brother.

Image: cropped screen grab of Ian Driscoll's Facebook photo showing Action Man and toy mortar



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