



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 23, 2013

George Zimmerman and the Wannabe Cop

In a Hollywood-worthy twist, it was just [revealed](#) that George Zimmerman helped rescue a family from their overturned SUV a mere four days after his trial's conclusion. Yes, that would be the much-maligned George Zimmerman. The accused "murderer" George Zimmerman. The targeted-for-death George Zimmerman. And what were the chances such an accident would occur in Zimmerman's immediate vicinity while he's still page-one news? It almost seems like a message about his character that could make an atheist believe in God.



And the whole Zimmerman fiasco says much about our nation's changing character. Part of this is the increasing racial and ideological polarization and media corruption, which was alluded to oh-so cleverly by an Internet commenter who wrote, "If Zimmerman said 'I'm going to pull you from underneath that vehicle,' NBC will change it to, 'I'm going to pull you ... underneath that vehicle!'" But the hopey-changey, getting-strangey difference I want to discuss here was brought to light by Zimmerman spokesman Shawn Vincent, who [asked](#) The Daily Caller after the rescue, "What if George hadn't gotten out of his truck?"

Vincent was, of course, alluding to all the critics who've said that Zimmerman never should have left his vehicle the night he was attacked by Trayvon Martin. "He had no business playing wannabe cop," we may hear, or his "John Wayne attitude cost a kid his life." And, yes, Martin would likely be with us today had Zimmerman been a retiring flower. But if we really want to play "what if," it's also possible that given how Martin was descending rapidly and rabidly into thuggery in recent times, had he lived he might have killed an innocent person — or people — sometime down the road. Such things must be considered when theorizing about alternative futures.

The point is that the same phenomenon causing Zimmerman to keep an eye on Martin also inspired him to help rescue that imperiled family from their SUV. Should he have simply waited for authorities? Many lives would have been lost throughout history had that been our attitude. And that's my point here: In a sense, Americans are supposed to be wannabe cops.

And wannabe emergency medical technicians, firemen, and social workers — we're supposed to be Johnny-on-the-spots. That's the American spirit.

And it's certainly still alive in some people, such as another man who shot an unarmed 17-year-old criminal. You likely didn't hear about this case, however, even though the shooter was an Adonis-like martial-arts competitor who admits the teen never laid a finger on him.

Even though he played a better wannabe cop than Zimmerman and testified that he wanted "to stop or detain the criminals" and approached them with gun drawn and assumed a shooter's stance.

And even though he also was tried for manslaughter and acquitted by a mostly white jury.



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But, then again, there were other differences between the two cases. The shooter, Greece, New York, resident Roderick Scott, was black.

And the teen criminal, Christopher Cervini, was white.

So the national media didn't latch on to his case and condemn Scott for not cowering in a corner and waiting minutes for the police when seconds counted. And even though the facts didn't weigh as heavily in his favor as in Zimmerman's (Scott never actually was attacked), I still support his acquittal. Why? Because I'll give the benefit of the doubt to the wannabe cop over the actually-is criminal anytime. For defense and security are not supposed to be just the state's domain.

When the great French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville toured the United States in the 1830s, he noted how Americans would voluntarily come together to further the common good, without government prodding. This is called brotherhood and solidarity.

And we are killing it.

This is what's so tragic about the attitude, "Don't you know you're supposed to wait for the authorities, subject?" Outsourcing everything to the "authorities" implies that the common man is to have no authority — and it's a recipe for a more authoritarian nation. Note that "authorities" in the sense of "those in charge" wasn't [originated](#) till the mid-19th century, and it is derived from a word that in the 1300s meant "power to enforce obedience."

This isn't to imply government doesn't have its place or that we shouldn't show due deference to legitimate authority; it's to say that society, the realm outside government, has been relinquishing its legitimate authority to an ever-expanding state. As G.K. Chesterton wrote in his 1905 book *Heretics*:

The professional soldier gains more and more power as the general courage of a community declines. Thus the Pretorian guard became more and more important in Rome as Rome became more and more luxurious and feeble. The military man gains the civil power in proportion as the civilian loses the military virtues.... There never was a time when nations were more militarist. There never was a time when men were less brave.

If you doubt this, consider how police forces today are being militarized as citizens' force is demonized. Consider how through bad laws and local-government and private sector policies, good Samaritans are actually punished now. For instance, there was the 16-year-old student [suspended](#) from school this past March after wrestling a gun away from a 15-year-old criminal on a school bus — "authorities" said it was because he was party to a fight involving a weapon. In 2009, 58-year-old bus driver Jim Moffett was [struck by a truck](#) after pushing two old ladies from its path — only to wake up in intensive care and learn he had been issued a jaywalking ticket. Then there was Florida lifeguard Tomas Lopez, who last year was [fired](#) for saving a man who was drowning outside his "zone."

And America is starting to sound like the Twilight of Civilization Zone. Would it be better if everyone copied the nurse who [refused](#) to perform CPR and allowed 87-year-old Lorraine Bayless to die because her California retirement home's policy was to wait for the "authorities"? Hey, we can eventually become China, where a woman who saved a toddler from an oncoming truck was found [partially liable](#) for injuries suffered during the rescue because she "intruded into the roadway to jeopardize road traffic safety."

The true "first responders" are supposed those first on the scene — even if they're not wearing badges and might be stealing a bit of glory from those who do.



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