

"special cases" and "visible minorities" with exceptional deference, tact and diplomacy. Must carry a loaded firearm while on duty. The firearm may be used only for self-defence in a tight, life-threatening situation calling for a perceptibly correct split-second decision, but only after determining that the targeted individual is neither a "special case" nor a constituent of a "visible minority" group. In any event, the firearm must not be discharged until the family and friends of the targeted individual agree to swear a solemn oath that the action was appropriate to the circumstances and unavoidable. The successful candidate for this position will be required to tolerate gracefully, without suppressed anger, frustration or resentment, a self-contradictory regimen under which he will be damned if he does his job and condemned if he doesn't. Each candidate will undergo a psychiatric evaluation to determine whether he applied for this cockamamie job because he is nuts or because he is just plain foolish. All applications and interviews will be kept strictly confidential, more or less.

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A spurious, fanciful "ad", obviously. It is the kind of advertisement which should be in vogue today for the recruitment of new police officers. I assure you it is in line with the current realities of police work, as observed by this Canadian civilian from the outside.

These are perilous times. You know it. I know it. Lawful authority is being challenged today as never before. Violent crime and social unrest are increasing by leaps and bounds. The very concept of an orderly society is threatened.

One lone figure stands between those of us who desire to live in peace and the evil forces that are determined to annihilate every trace of good order in the civil sphere. It is the figure of the police officer

— the harried and harassed lawman who, every working day, lays his physical well-being and life itself on the line for you and me.

Perhaps, it is because he stands in the way of anarchy that the police officer has been made an object of unrelenting persecution. He represents law and order, peace and decency. Therefore, he must be crushed. Increasingly, he is held up to scorn. He is cruelly slandered. He is vilified and viewed with distrust and suspicion. When he is hurt on the job, he is more likely to be ridiculed than helped. In some ways, Canadian society, these days, treats its convicted felons better than its cops.

I notice a trend that alarms and disgusts me. There seems to be an excessive will-fulness, on the part of Canadians generally, to condemn their police officers to a living hell of opprobrium upon the slightest provocation. It isn't enough, apparently, to punish bad cops, individuals who should never wear the badge of police authority. It isn't enough to discipline good cops who make mistakes that mark them as ordinary human beings. No, every cop must be denied the respect to which his position and work entitle him. He must be distrusted and hobbled in the performance of his duties. Every cop must be regarded as "the enemy."

Let this rotten state of affairs go on much longer and perhaps we who are alive now will be privileged to witness the end of what we politely call civilized society.

Let's not kid ourselves. Canadians will either trust and uphold their police officers or they will weep as the chaos of unchecked riot and crime replaces the civil order we hold dear.

And I don't mean we should hold more frequent I LOVE COPS weeks. ■