

# Nightly Noodle Monthly

November 2011

the **I ♥ Cops** issue  
(supplement to the art show)

Nothing to see here





# EDITOR'S note

Hello everyone,

This particular Noodle came about in conjunction with a Noodle editor's curatorial debut at the Cellar Door Gallery with the show "I <3 Cops." This is like a piece of history — documenting the time Noodle headquarters set out to bring the police and the people together at an art show; to familiarize the police and the people with each other in the context of some deliciously good art celebrating the psychologically perplexing violent paradox of the police force, who are apparently made up of real people just like you and me.

The force is thick here in the Duke City. We've been all over this great nation, but nowhere have we lived where having a party was grounds for getting your house kicked in and your head beat in. Nowhere else have we been trapped in the kitchen with a bunch of college kids at the sick, sick mercy of a handful of cops with their hands on their holsters who entered under the guise of a "noise complaint."

We get that the Party Patrol is trying to stop underage drinking, but it's, like, the most unsuccessful way to stop underage drinking. I'd like to meet one person in this world who decided to stop drinking until they were 21 because they were inspired by the timeless truth and guidance of an officer's threats.

Anyway, we could find infinite reasons to illustrate why police tactics do not develop a greater sense of justice and just piss and stress everybody off and out. But because they're people, they don't react well to negative energy, just like all the regular people don't react well to officers' negative energy or anyone's negative energy. Elevating cops to art status and searching for ways to inspire them to find ways to be more humane on a daily basis seems like a good avenue to explore for awhile.

Incalculably yours,

The editors

This month's Noodle Thinktank consisted of

EVA AVE., baadford,  
Susan HAUSER,  
Carlos Ruiz de la Torre,  
SAM ADAMS,  
Jessica del Curto,  
and Tito Dameron



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# From Stressed-Out Cop to Buddhist Teacher

When a former police captain stumbled on spirituality, she discovered a different way to serve and protect.

By Susan Hauser

February 2011



Photograph: Saverio Truglia

For Cheri Maples, enlightenment began in a chiropractor's office. It was 1991, and the Madison, Wisconsin, policewoman needed treatment for a back injury—she'd been hoisting a stolen moped out of a car trunk; in the waiting room, Maples flipped through a copy of *Being Peace*, by the Buddhist monk and activist Thich Nhat Hanh. "It was so simple, so no-nonsense," she recalls. "He described what mindfulness and meditation actually look like in day-to-day life. It gave me the desire to know more."

Seventeen years later, Maples had traded her crisp police blues for earth-toned robes when Nhat Hanh ordained her as a Buddhist dharma teacher. As head of the Center for Mindfulness &

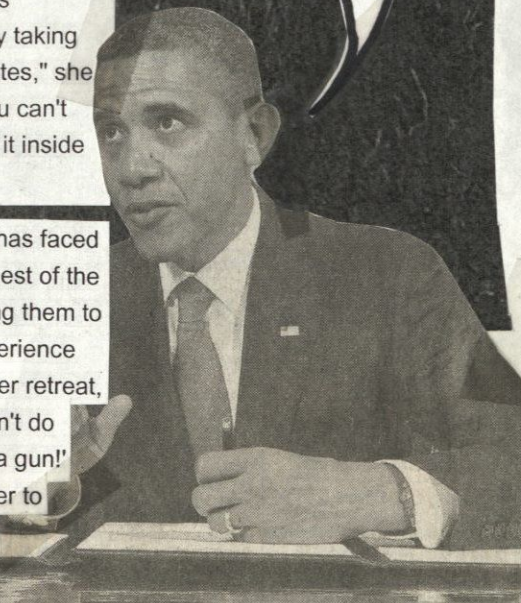
Justice, founded in 2009 and based out of her Madison home, Maples travels the continent leading workshops and retreats for cops and others in the criminal justice system—where she spent 25 years variously serving as a police captain, head of probation, and assistant attorney general.

"A cop's life is hard," she says. "There's a lot of stress, trauma, and emotional shutting down. People turn to alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, infidelity—anything to cope." (Maples herself has been clean and sober for 21 years.) "The workshops give cops the tools to examine their own intentions and biases—to approach their job not with anger and cynicism but love and fierce compassion."

To date, Maples has trained more than 1,000 criminal justice personnel in mindfulness techniques. "It's amazing to watch a guy taking off his bulletproof vest before he meditates," she says. "Police are peacemakers. And you can't bring peace anywhere unless you have it inside your own heart."

Maples, the mother of two grown sons, has faced skepticism from what she calls "the biggest of the boys' clubs." "Some cops think I'm asking them to drink the Kool-Aid, so I use my own experience as a blueprint," she says. "At my first-ever retreat, I had a chip on my shoulder. I said, 'I can't do mindfulness training—I'm a cop. I carry a gun!' But then a teacher asked me, 'Who better to carry a gun than someone who does so mindfully?'"

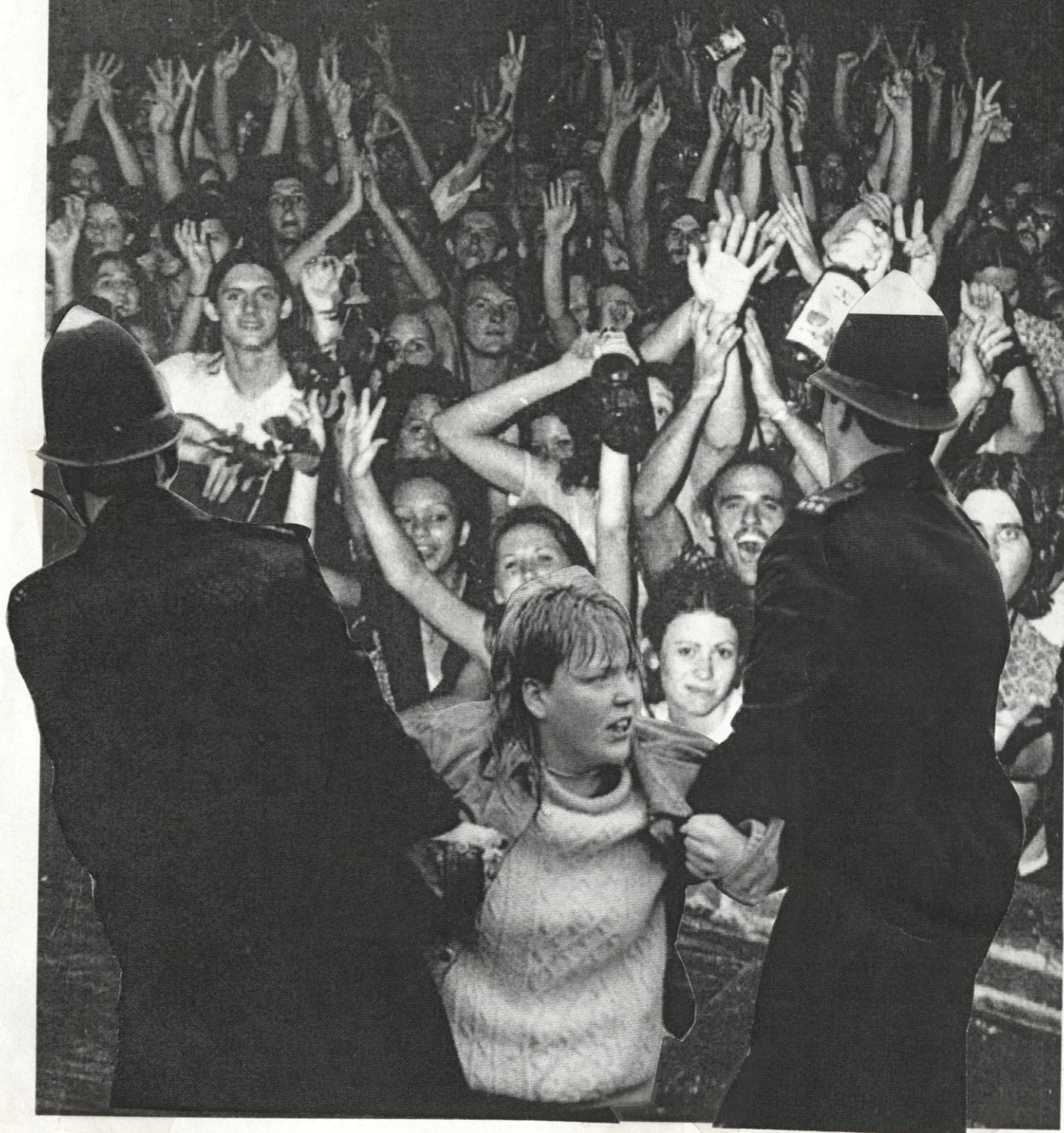
A recent police study found that you're much more likely to get shot by a fat cop if you run.





Show me how to:

# DANCE





# It's a lot of text, but it's good stuff: Cops talkin mindfulness on the job.

The following is a straight sample taken from an online police forum thread:

*Posted by BamaBodhisattva in Birmingham, Alabama on July 7, 2009*

## Buddhist Police Officers?

"Hello, everyone! I'm new to the forum, taking the written exam in Birmingham, AL this Friday.

I'm a more or less practicing Buddhist, meaning that I have not taken any vows, but I do meditate on a regular basis and read Buddhist literature. I've found some things written about Buddhism and war and police work, but I'm wondering if anyone out there is a practicing Buddhist and can share how that has manifested in your police work, what practices you've found particularly useful, what challenges have come up for you, etc.

As I prepare for police work I've been focusing primarily on samatha, tonglen, and loving-kindness meditations. I've also been trying to further cultivate a general openness and precision in my everyday post-meditation activities, thus trying to be alert but also relaxed (recently read that one of the stresses of being a police officer is a hyper-vigilance and seeing the world as "one big felony just waiting to happen"). Any other suggestions?"

## Response posted by FNA209 from Connecticut

"I'm not really up on the teachings of Buddhism. So I don't know how the whole use-of-force issue will interconnect with your religion.

Just keep in mind the "Rules of Gunfighting" are a tongue-in-cheek list of rules to follow if you are required to engage in that possibility. They are kind of humorous in a dark way but they don't lack truth: Be polite. Be professional. But, have a plan to kill everyone you meet if necessary, because they may want to

kill you.

Forgetting that can kill you - or - kill another officer.

You get a hero's funeral if the former occurs.

You lose a lot of friends and support and most likely your career if the latter occurs because you let a religious belief stay your hand when you should have been taking action. You'll become a pariah in the LEO community.

Just saying. Although he was not a Buddhist, I once had a recruit explain he would be incapable of shooting someone. After him and I discussing it at length, he finally came to the conclusion he was in the wrong line of work and moved on to other employment. Some personal views, ethics, morals, and even religious beliefs can make a person unsuitable for this job if the person is so bound by them that they prevent the person from functioning."

## Response posted by BamaBodhisattva from Birmingham, AL

"The typical view in Buddhism is complete non-violence, but it is better termed non-aggression: I do not believe in killing, maiming, or hurting someone because of anger, retribution, or revenge, but if I needed to kill or incapacitate someone in order to reduce someone else's suffering, to protect someone else or myself, I believe I can do it. The primary question is the motivation behind the killing: is it self-serving or in the service of others? But, yes, it is a contested issue in some Buddhist circles.

I read that most officers go their entire career without having to fire a single shot. I hope I'm in that camp, but I realize I need to prepare for the contrary."



Response posted by TrooperDen in Fremont, Ohio

"I would not want you backing me up."

Response posted by BamaBodhisattva in Birmingham, AL

"Why? What could I do differently that would make you feel more comfortable?"

Response posted by CPLHARRISON in California

"Some things just don't mix. You do have to have some sense of violence for the job. I am a former Buddhist myself and a former U.S. Marine. The ideology of traditional Buddhism doesn't mix well with Military/Police Life. Police Officers personalities are generally not gentle from the get go. You have to be ready to do violence and I don't think you sound up for it. If all you want to do is help people be a fireman."

Response posted by Kieth M. in Colorado

"There is a simple yes-no question which appears on many PD applications:

"If, in the course of my employment, It became necessary to take a human life, I would be able to do so."

People volunteer to die at the hands of the police every day. Although not in the numbers movies and TV would have us believe. BUT, if you had to stop someone from taking your life, the life of your partner, or an innocent person's life...would you, could you? If the answer is yes, then feel free to follow any path you wish, and we'll work toward the same goal of public safety.

Once upon a time at LAPD, there was an officer who married a woman involved in a very strict non-violence preaching Christian church. He elected to leave and get a job with the Coroner's Office. He admitted that toward the end, he was going

into the field with an unloaded gun. That may be fine for him, but a slap in the face to his partners. One guy was very incensed at his behavior.

Religion can make one a better person, but it can also render some folks quite foolish...snake handling, poison drinking, avoiding a life-saving blood transfusion or organ transplant, strapping on an explosive vest, etc.

If you're ever read the Tao Te Ching, one of my favorite passages goes:

*The good boxer strikes not in anger,  
The good soldier is peaceful,  
The good victor is not vengeful."*

Response posted by Back to NYC in New York

"I know plenty of people I work with became cops because they like to put their hands on people. I also know plenty of people I work with became cops because they wanted to get good benefits and a steady paycheck. Fortunately, I also know plenty of people I work with who are intelligent, level-headed, good-hearted, and brave, who became cops for the right reasons and who I would take as my partners any day of the week over cops from the first two categories I described.

Just judging from your posts, you sound like you're more likely to fall into the third category I described. Being a hardass isn't always the best approach to law enforcement. In fact, being a 24/7 hardass tends to lead to a lot of "officer needs assistance" calls and maybe even trips to the hospital - and not just because you broke your hand punching some guy in the head. We're not soldiers whose mission is to go kill the enemy. Yes, we are paramilitary and we have some overlap with soldiers in terms of how we are trained, but we are not soldiers. Maybe a Buddhist philosophy would make being a Marine or an Army Ranger difficult, but being a cop is not the same as being in



**If actions are stronger than words,**

When I am, Death is not.  
When Death is, I am not.



**why is the pen mightier than the sword?**

Then why fear what I cannot be?

**PHILOSOPHER**

**RAPTOR**

All things are subject to interpretation

We avoid risks in life...



whichever interpretation prevails at a given time is a function of power and not truth.

...so we can make it safely to death.



# ...Cont'd...

the military. I don't see anything you've said you believe keeping you from being a good cop."

*Response posted by BamaBodhisattva in Birmingham, AL*

For those who might be interested, [here](#) is a discussion by a Wisconsin police captain on the positive effects of applying Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness training to her and her department's police work. Thich Nhat Hanh has also written a book, *Keeping the Peace: Mindfulness and Public Service*.

*Response posted by LA DEP in Los Angeles, CA*

I would not have any issues with working with you..... IF you have made the conscious decision that you can point your weapon at another human being and turn that living, breathing person into a pile of rapidly cooling meat.....without hesitation.

*Response posted by djack16 in California*

An officer once told me it is perfectly normal to size up and figure out the most efficient way to kill or disable a perfect stranger upon first meeting them. My aunt is a practicing Buddhist and, as far as I know, there is no problem with the cynicism needed for police work.

It's important to be your own person. You sound like you are weighing the responsibilities in your head...awesome. I would hope anybody pursuing the career would be that conscious of how serious it is.

*Response posted by ChevyPower in Tallahassee, FL*

Not a police officer, but I went through kind of the same thing when I was applying to FHP. And I came to realize that I wasn't ready to be a Peace officer yet, but in my case, I was worried that I maybe

had a little too much violence in me. I'm just eager for a fight, and that, in my mind, doesn't hold up to what I want to be as an officer. Which is why I'm going in the military, to get that worked out of me, so then when I come out, I'll be ready. I'm only 21, so I got time.

*Reponse posted by renCopTx in Houston, TX*

First off, let me extend my best wishes to you - good luck with the application process - it can be a very stressful test of your intention to become a police officer (and I think it should be), but if you are truly motivated to become a cop for the right reasons, you will see your way to the end result. Good luck!

As for your question about Buddhism and police work, I'll say right off that I'm a practicing Buddhist ("practicing" being the operative word here). I'm not the "best" Buddhist, but I've found that the Noble Truths make sense to me, and that the practices of mindfulness and compassion are an authentic set of practices for me. In the day-to-day, I visit a local Zen center about once a week or so to do some meditation and have contact with the resident teacher and some of the sangha members. On my own I do a fair amount of reading (Thich Naht Hanh, whom you mentioned, is among my fav's). My at-home meditation practice isn't great, but hey, that means there's only room for improvement, right?

I'm caucasian, with a mix of WASP and atheistic Jew. I wasn't raised in any particular church, but over my formative years had a lot of contact with Protestants, Jews, and Catholics. It was only by chance that reading "Siddhartha" in high school opened a new door for me, and when I talked with my father about it, it turned out he had been really deeply into Eastern philosophies and Zen earlier in his life, and he encouraged my path.

Fast-forward to now: I've been a police





officer in a big-city Texas police department for almost 9 years now, and I still enjoy it. The thing for me about being a Buddhist is that what's important to me is trying to carry through the intentions into my work. The thing is, life isn't always going to give you exactly what you think you want, need or expect. Perhaps life is smooth sailing for some people, but I find that I'm forever getting taught a lot of "lessons", to put it one way. What's important to me is that I try to be mindful as much as possible, and act in the way that is most appropriate and compassionate.

I think a lot of people get caught up on the violence thing. Would it be nice to live a life free of violence? Sure. But that's not necessarily the world we inhabit. That said, I chose to become a police officer to be helpful and useful to people and to, as it says in one part of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics **"protect the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder."** That means I have a duty to fulfill. It's not my duty to enlighten myself and walk away. It's my job to help others, and to be the last one through the door after everyone else is saved, literally and figuratively.

So in a practical sense, what does that mean? It means that when I go out on patrol, I'm watchful and mindful for problems, crimes, bad situations. When I walk into a disturbance, I try to see what is there, hear what is being said, and be patient enough to tease out the details that are just below the surface. When a threat needs to be contained, I try to apply the amount of justifiable force that will contain, neutralize, stop or de-escalate the threat, without going overboard. Sometimes I fail; the ego is a B|TCH! But being a Buddhist means that when I give in to my ego, I try to recognize it, pick myself up, dust myself off, and go back to doing the work I need

to do.

Part of being a compassionate person also means having compassion for yourself. You need to take care of yourself and protect yourself, not just physically, but mentally, emotionally, spiritually. Being a Bodhisattva, to me, doesn't mean being a martyr; it means being a warrior.

As for deadly force... here's the thing. Buddhism isn't about extreme asceticism, it's about the middle path. I think the middle path is maybe more difficult than the extreme paths. Anybody can swear off all killing and become a vegetarian. But the middle path is about moving forward, trying to do the right things, which is always about balance, compromise. Of course, we don't compromise our intention, but we're frequently forced to compromise when we translate intention into action.

I don't go out looking for excuses to use deadly force. I've been fortunate not to have to exercise it so far in 9 years. I have been in some of those "pucker factor" situations though, where I've had the finger on the trigger, ready to go. Fortunately for the suspects, they made the right decisions, albeit at the very last second. But that's the point. I really try to avoid violence and killing, but I don't make the decision to create those situations. The crooks do. I make the decision to intervene and try to unwind them. Sometimes the crooks cooperate, and everyone's happy. Sometimes they don't; I've had to go hands-on, use baton, pepper spray, taser, drawn leather more times than I can remember.

All the "well-your-religion-makes-you-too-weak-to-do-this-job" stuff is BS.

*Response posted by BamaBodhisattva in Birmingham, AL*

That's what I've been looking for. Thanks!

end





# CULTURE SHOCK

by SAM ADAMS sam@alibi.com

## Cop Some Art

Artist Eva Avenue thinks police officers could be more Zen-like. That notion and the much-documented officer-involved shootings in Albuquerque are the driving inspiration behind *I ♥ Cops*, a group show she's curated at Cellar Door Gifts & Gallery.

Eleven artists created a total of about 30 original works for the show. Avenue's pieces depict Buddhas dressed as cops. "I'm not saying that we need to convert the police force to Buddhists," she says. "I was just going off the idea that we could have a police force made up of super-people that are really awesome at handling really bad situations."

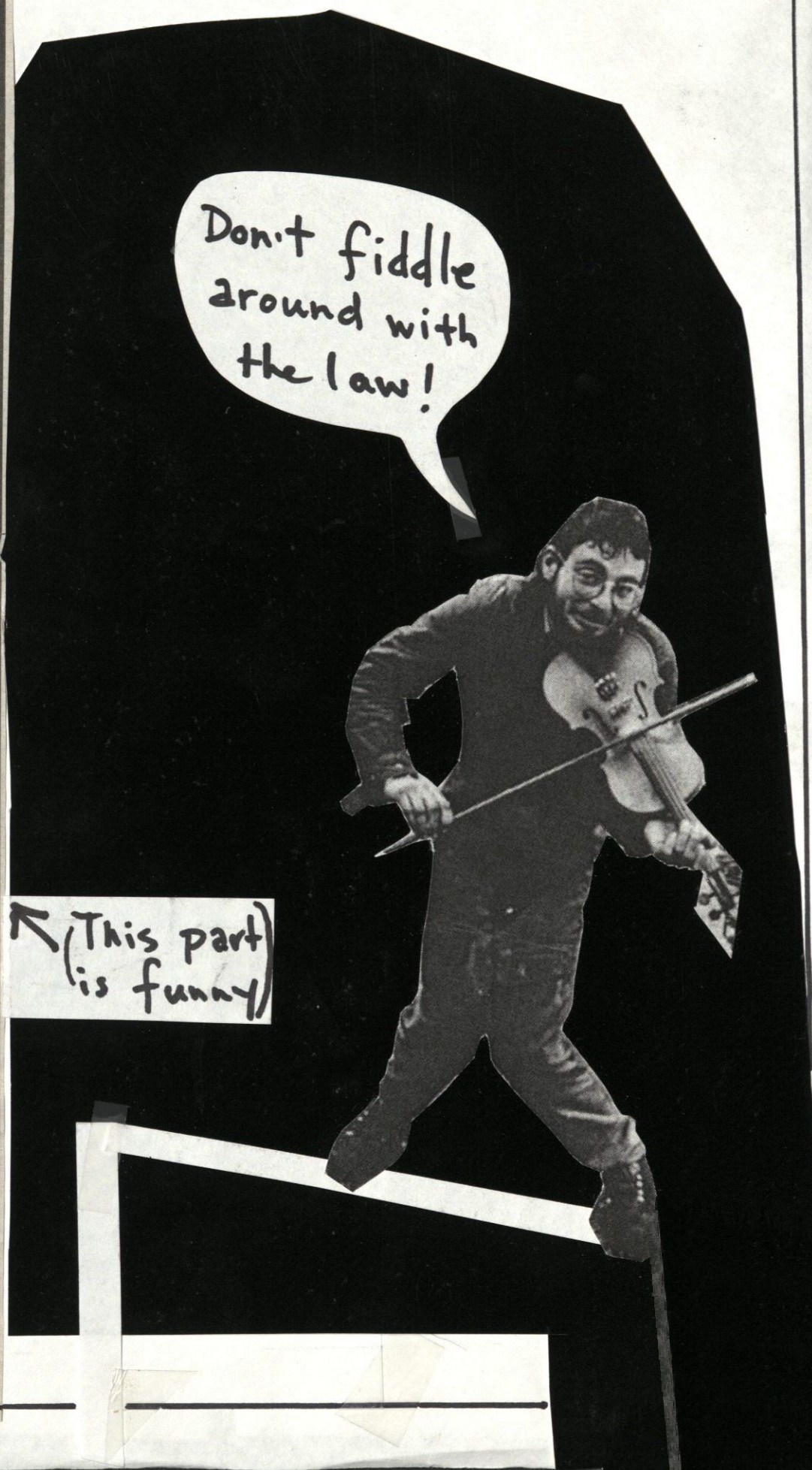
Avenue has invited police officers to the show and stresses that the intention isn't antipolice. "I'm trying to get beyond the us-vs.-them thing."

Other artists include zinester Billy McCall, who's created a zine titled "Good Cop, Bad Cop" specifically for the exhibition. Then there's artist Baadford, who's using an old parking meter as the base for his statue of a headless, life-size British constable. Bethany Delahunt is also involved. If you walked past the *Alibi* offices and saw our newspaper-distribution-box-turned-phone-booth, or if you were one of the folks who kicked the living shit out of it and filled it with Burger King cups and cigarette butts, you're already familiar with her work.

Avenue says the idea for *I ♥ Cops* started as a musical a few years ago but morphed into a visual arts project over the last six months. She also says the show isn't necessarily a protest, but she's fed up with seeing people get pushed around by authority. So while it isn't antipolice, "I don't think any of this is pro-police," she says. "What would be the 'pro' part—if there was one—is saying that, Yes, we can have a force, but the entire way it works should be redone with an entirely different type of people with just a greater sense of humanity." Here's to wishful thinking and what should be a well-armed exhibition. ☺

### *I ♥ Cops*

Opening reception  
FRIDAY, NOV. 4, 7 TO 9 P.M.





Some slices of life from a local journalist named Jessica:

One time I was so drunk I chugged a bottle of beer in front of a cop. He asked me what it was and I told him it was water. He almost arrested me.

One time Reed was so drunk he peed in his pants and passed out in the driver's seat while talking to the cop. AND THEY LET HIM go! I think its cause he was white, because no one else would get away with passing out in the middle of being pulled over — or peeing their pants

One time I was at a party and this cop came in and pulled my roommate (a small Asian girl — owner of the house) to the floor and stepped on her head so she couldn't move.

He is still in Rio Rancho, terrorizing any person who is under the age of 30.

Cop-related songs from the I <3 Cops show's music playlist from the night of Nov. 4, 2011

- Bob Marley — *I Shot the Sheriff*
- Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim — *Gee, Officer Krupke*
- Wally Pleasant — *I Hate Cops*
- The Clash — *Police On My Back*
- The Clash — *Jimmy Jazz*
- The Clash — *Guns of Brixton*
- The Clash — *I Fought the Law*
- The Clash — *Police and Theives*
- KRS-One — *Sound Of Da Police*
- Le Tigre — *Bang! Bang!*
- Bruce Springsteen — *State Trooper*
- Johnny Cash — *Highway Patrolman*
- Operation Ivy — *Officer*
- Inner Circle — *Bad Boys*
- Bob Dylan — *Hurricane*
- Bob Dylan — *The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carol*
- Peter Gabriel — *Biko*
- Pixies — *Hey Asshole*
- Paper Lace — *The Night Chicago Died*
- Supergrass — *Caught by the Fuzz*
- Willie Nelson and Toby Keith — *Beer for my Horses*
- The Bottle Rockets — *Radar Gun*
- Chamillionaire performing *Ridin' Dirty* (remix)
- Jimmie Rodgers — *I'm in the Jailhouse Now*
- Johnny Cash — *Cocaine Blues*
- Eva Ave. & Carlosaur — *Cops R. Nuts*
- The Clash — *Know Your Rights*







NO  
TAILG.