

Keeping an Eye on Grandpa, the Terrorist

I've just learned I may be a terrorist.

On Aug. 13, the Secretary of Homeland Security issued a [statement](#) warning about an increase in domestic and foreign terrorism. At the end of the document's summary were these words: "Such threats are also exacerbated by impacts of the ongoing global pandemic, including grievances over public health safety measures and perceived government restrictions."

For more than a year, I have criticized in print our state and federal government's mandates regarding the Wuhan virus. I have expressed "grievances over public health safety measures" and government restrictions. These were not, by the way, "perceived government restrictions." These were real restrictions that closed businesses, some of them permanently, shut down schools, restricted services at my church, closed my library for months, and forced me to wear a face mask.

Still, I've never thought of myself as a terrorist. And so I wondered: If I am declared a terrorist, how am I supposed to fit that image?

Should I dress differently? On most days, I wear khaki trousers and a button-down shirt. The Taliban wear head coverings and Middle Eastern clothing. Antifa members dress in black. In my basement is a tuxedo I've worn once in 15 years. If it still fits—that's doubtful—should I adopt that as my signature uniform and become a dapper desperado?

What about my physical appearance? Those Taliban dudes sport beards, and the Antifa rioters have long hair and tattoos. I've never grown a beard in my life, and my body is afflicted with enough old age marks without adding ink to the mix. So that's not going to work.

Terrorists also seem like a scruffy lot. Do they brush their teeth, bathe, or clip their nails? If I go more than a couple of days without shaving, I start thinking I might make some money standing on a street corner with my hand out. I'm not a pretty sight, to say the least.

Nor have I shot a rifle or pistol in 20 years. Perhaps I should start popping off a few rounds with my .22 every once in a while. I do confess that when my six-year-old grandson visits with the inevitable question, "Can we shoot the BB gun?" we step into the backyard, and he plinks away at a cardboard box while I teach him gun safety and offer some shooting tips. The kid's got quite an eye, and...Good Grief! Am I creating a junior terrorist? Should I throw away that Red Ryder and give the little guy some dolls for his entertainment?

On holidays like Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Flag Day, I put out five miniature American flags along the sidewalk of the house in which I live. Is that an act of terrorism? Some people who these days find flying the flag "[disturbing](#)" may think so.

And last winter, when my local grocery store still required masks, I once strolled the aisle and softly sang "America." Did that gentle protest against masks and that reminder of who we are as a people constitute an act of terrorism?

If I'm a terrorist, shouldn't I issue some sort of manifesto? In my case, I'd print out two truly radical documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Another question: Can Grandpas be terrorists? I'd prefer reading a book on my front porch to being chased down the street by a cop half my age.

The truth is I don't know how to be a terrorist. For example, I have no idea what foods terrorists eat or what sort of cars they drive. Do they stay awake half the night, drinking

heavily and railing against the system? My own mood mellows when I drink wine, so I wouldn't do too well on this front.

In fact, I wasn't even sure of the definition of terrorism, and so looked it up online and found that terrorism is "the unlawful use of force and intimidation, especially against civilians, in pursuit of political aims."

That set me to thinking.

If a government orders businesses to lock their doors and churches to close down, banishes discussions of therapeutic treatment for the Wuhan virus, and arrests citizens as "insurrectionists," holding them for months in jail for trespassing, would those unconstitutional maneuvers qualify as unlawful intimidation?

Just kidding.

But the same government that issues directives like the one above has spent the months since January 2021 by opening our southern border to hundreds of thousands of migrants, some of whom may intend harm to the United States. In more recent months that same government has created and armed battalions of terrorists in Afghanistan.

We can only hope someone in our government is paying attention to the real terrorists.

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