

CRIME

DECORATED VET ARRESTED AFTER 'RUDELY DISPLAYING' HIS RIFLE — AND SAYS OFFICER PULLED GUN ON HIM IN FRONT OF HIS SON

UPDATE TO THIS STORY: [Texas Police Dept. Provides Statement to TheBlaze on Vet Arrested After 'Rudely Displaying' Rifle \(Plus, a Texas Firearms Attorney Weighs In\)](#)

Army Master Sgt. C.J. Grisham was on a ten-mile Boy Scout hike with his son in Texas when he was arrested and accused of “rudely displaying” his firearm. Knowing there are wild boars, coyotes, and cougars in the area, he had an AR-15 rifle slung over his shoulder and was also carrying a .45 caliber pistol, [according](#) to Fox News' Todd Starnes.

A “huge Constitutionalist” and prominent military blogger, Grisham has served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan throughout his 18 years in the military. He was awarded the Bronze Star with Valor for his service.

But on the day he was arrested in mid-March, Grisham says he was treated like a “street thug.”

He [described](#) how it all happened:

At about the 5 mile mark of our hike, a voice behind us asked us to stop and the officer motioned for us to approach him. He got out of his car and met us a few feet later. He asked us what we were doing and I explained that we were hiking for my son's merit badge. He then **asked me what I'm doing with the rifle**, to which **I responded in a calm manner, “Does it matter, officer? Am I breaking the law?”**

At that point, the officer **grabbed my rifle** without warning or indication. He didn't ask for my rifle and he didn't suggest he would take it from me. He simply grabbed it. This startled me and I instantly pulled back – the rifle was attached to me – and **I asked what he thought he was doing** because he's not taking my rifle. He then **pulled his service pistol on me** and told me to take my hands off the weapon and move to his car, which I complied with. **He then slammed me into the hood of his car** and I **remembered I had a camera on me** (one of the requirements of the hiking merit badge is to document your hikes)...Up to this point, I am not told why I am being stopped, why he tried to disarm me, or even that I'm under arrest.

[...]

The arresting officer is Officer Steve Ermis and the supervisor is Sergeant Minnicks of the Temple Police Department.

Grisham's 15-year-old son recorded the entire incident, and the video is posted on YouTube.

In it, you can see a handcuffed Grisham repeatedly asking what he is being detained for. TheBlaze spoke with attorney Michele Byington of Texas Law Shield who confirmed that, while Texas does have open carry laws, they don't apply to "long guns," like Grisham's AR-15. He would only be in trouble if he had been carrying the rifle in a way "calculated to cause alarm," like waving it in the air — not strapped to his chest and pointed towards the ground.

"In this day and age people are alarmed when they see someone with what you have [a rifle]," one of the officers explains, noting that someone had called the police. "They don't care what the law is."

"Do *you* care what the law is?" Grisham shot back.

Video shows the veteran continuing to elicit clarification as his hands are handcuffed behind his back, asking why the officers didn't ask him to drop the weapon instead of resorting to such drastic action.

"I will not be in the habit of doing that for anybody with a firearm, because it's dangerous," one of the officers replies.

"So just because a guy's got a firearm he's dangerous?" Grisham responds.

"Yes sir," the officer says.

The video has even more stunning dialogue, but Grisham says he is the most upset about how his son was treated, and how the incident will shape his view of the police.

"What a bad excuse you guys are showing for [the] police force," Grisham says at one point.

"Actually, it's a bad excuse as a dad," one of the officers replies.

Todd Starnes at Fox News [has more](#):

As the officers put Grisham in the back of the car, the video picked up sounds of [Grisham's son] Chris crying. The officers told Grisham they would take the boy home.

"I told him not to answer any questions," Grisham said. "I **told him not to answer a single question until his mother was there** — and she would answer the questions for him."

But that's not what happened.

Chris told Fox News that **the police officer refused to let him out of the car until he answered a series of questions**. The boy had not been arrested.

“The officer told me that I wasn’t getting out of the patrol car until I answered his questions,” Chris said. **“He said I didn’t have a choice. I was scared.”**

Grisham said his boy was traumatized by the incident.

“Every time he sees a police officer he has a panic attack,” he said. “That’s unfortunate because **we always taught our kids to respect police** officers. My wife and I are angry about it.” [Emphasis added]

Chris told Fox News that he wants to be like his dad when he grows up. “He inspires me,” he said, adding that his father “didn’t do anything wrong at all.”

At this point, roughly a month later, Grisham says is still “100 percent confused” about why he was arrested. His charges were downgraded from resisting arrest to interfering with a peace officer while performing a duty, but he still thinks the situation is absurd and inexcusable.

“For me, it’s a difficult turning point,” the decorated veteran said. “I wonder what it is that I’m fighting for. If our basic rights are being violated this way — what is my purpose?”

TheBlaze has reached out to the Temple Police Department, but did not receive an immediate response.

“Where this case goes now is really up to a jury,” Grisham’s attorney Kurt Glass told TheBlaze. “It’s up to the citizens of the state of Texas.”

The entire, unedited video from the scene is worth watching:

UPDATE #2:

TheBlaze is aware of accusations that Army Master Sgt. C.J. Grisham has a controversial past, but the video is — at the least — curious, and deserves to be fairly debated. TheBlaze is working on getting more information on all facets of the story, including Grisham’s past, and will keep you posted.

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Editor’s note: An editing error in the headline originally suggested the father claimed multiple Boy Scouts were present. It has been corrected to reflect that he was on a Boy Scout-related hike, but that his son was the only Scout present.