

RADAR DETECTORS

Ordinarily, I would have ignored Mark Recob's reply (**Radio-Electronics**, Sep-

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tember 1981) to my letter in the June 1981 issue, but the editorial agreement with his arguments demands comment, so I must write again.

What efficient law enforcement, aimed at saving lives from irresponsible drivers, has to do with Hitler and "Big Brother" is beyond me. One need only look at the statistics on highway deaths caused by speeding to realize that some action must be taken. I agree that a computerized ticketing system should be designed carefully, to avoid abuse; but when we talk about saving lives, we have to look where the greatest risk is. People who think that the law should have no authority over them are not only killing themselves, but millions of other people who respect those laws.

I oppose too much big government as much as anyone else; but people like Mr. Recob are demanding it. Laws exist for a reason. Just because you disagree with a posted speed limit does not give you the right to ignore it; and claiming that enforcement is an invasion of privacy is no excuse.

No—radar is not 100% foolproof. (It's so unreliable that it is used at nearly every airport and military base in the world. The police are using a simplified version, but the same principles of physics apply there.) Like any other high-technology device, radar requires proper training for correct use. Of course, such training should be required by law for all police radar operators. But to argue against a technology because untrained (or poorly trained) persons make mistakes in using it is absurd. By that kind of fuzzy logic, we should condemn all other kinds of electronics, too. Even with the poor training programs in existence in some (but by no means all) areas, errors are the exception rather than the rule.

Mr. Recob says: "...a receiver is still a receiver, whether it provides communications or not." But to be protected by an unforeseen loophole in the *Communications Act*, the communications aspect is obviously the key issue. At the very least, certain types of receivers can (and should be) banned from moving vehicles. No one has any objection to Mr. Recob's (or anyone else's) using a radar detector in his bedroom. But it shouldn't be used in public to break laws when such violations clearly endanger life and limb.

His comment, "...our only defense is offense: radar detectors..." would be funny, if it wasn't so frightening. If you are driving within the local legal speed limit, a radar detector is of no use to you at all! It only tells you that you are being watched at that moment. What can you do with that information? If you've been driving carefully and observing the law, nothing—you do nothing at all—you just continue as you were.

Still support radar detectors? Read over the latest highway death statistics and notice the percentages caused by speeding. And sleep well, if you can.

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