



## **What is my issue? It is I**

By Thara Lynn Tenney, CSG Student

My father was the cowboy in Eastern Oregon who was shot three times in the back by government agents while his hands were up in surrender on January of 2016. He was on his way, with others, to a meeting with a county sheriff. As a man of high integrity, he was seriously concerned about the abuse and irresponsible actions of government prior to this tragedy.

In his concern, he took on the heavy responsibility of media spokesman at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in the State of Oregon. This task fell upon him due to his keen ability to calmly and competently communicate in stressful situations. I deeply respect my father for his moral courage to stand firm against tyranny and for the proper role of our constitutional republican form of government.

Several others in the convoy were arrested and put on trial. The court first tried those whom they considered were the “leaders” of, what the prosecution called, “*a conspiracy to impede federal officers from discharging their duties and other federal weapons charges.*” I must emphasize the importance of the Oregon Federal District Court’s outcome. The jury found ALL the defendants in the first trial NOT GUILTY of all charges.

As the media spokesman, my father’s right to life, due process, and a fair trial would not have been taken from him, had he been tried in the first group of “leaders”. He would have been acquitted by the jury, and would have returned home to his family a free man—a *living* free man.

But killing this innocent man was not enough. The media and the “powers that be” maliciously showcased his death with edited footage strategically intended to deceive and sway public sentiment. This continued for as long as the story served their purpose. Fools mocked. Countless uninformed people passed judgment. The media spewed deceptive rhetoric based on lies and laced with slander. Their goal to destroy the lives of innocent Americans was accomplished.

Out-of-control employees of government, who were acting on false political rhetoric from appointed and elected state and federal governors, abused their authority, arbitrarily satisfying their personal agenda of greed and pride. It shames our country that a peaceful American’s right to life, liberty, and property was vindictively taken as a result.

My dad’s inalienable right to life, to peacefully assemble, and to petition his government for a redress of grievances was also robbed from him. His own government was used to kill him for merely doing the very thing government was created to be used for – secure the natural rights of its citizens.

After my father’s murder, my mind was filled with questions. How, in America, could a God-fearing, peaceful, family man with no criminal record (or even a parking ticket) be shot in the back by authorities while his hands were in the air in surrender? I had been rudely awakened to the horrific state of our nation, to say the least. If this could happen to my father, it could happen to any of us.

After a few months of traveling the nation with my mother, telling the true story of LaVoy Finicum, I became angry at the world. I lost an unhealthy 30 pounds and my hair was literally falling out. I was sick of and disgusted with people profiting from our trauma so they could increase their subscribers, listeners, and ‘Likes’. I grew wary and suspicious.

I wanted to share with others and teach them the lessons learned, but it was not working out. I felt like my efforts were having little effect. It was me against the whole evil world. Through it all, the good Lord kept gently reminding me of the truth, *“One cannot give that which they do not have”*. I wanted and needed to learn. I yearned for real, meaningful relationships of trust. I needed mentors.

While I could confidently testify of Jesus Christ to all those following our story across the nation, I could not confidently provide wise counsel to those seeking answers concerning effective interaction with my government.

In response to my personal, prayerful pleadings, my journey with the Center for Self Governance began the summer of 2016, just a few months after my father's murder. At my lowest point, I enrolled in a Level 1 class. I really enjoyed the content of the class and was excited to progress and learn.

While in times past I had found satisfaction in my life's ecclesiastical studies, I quickly found myself humbled by the CSG training, because of my ignorance regarding civics and government. I quickly pleaded for forgiveness and began adding knowledge to my virtue.

I have since gained an undeniable understanding that in my mind, the church of God promotes spiritual liberty and the kingdom of God promotes civil liberty. I discovered that the kingdom of God and "*the laws of nature and nature's God*" are one in the same. Applied to our form of government, the result is freedom, peace, and prosperity.

Quite honestly, at the end of the Level 1 class, I was stuck on what my issue should be when instructed to write the position paper for the training exercise.

Ideas such as property rights and agent intimidation crossed my mind, but I was frustrated that these subjects did not ring true. Because of my ignorance of our system of government, I could not connect the principles to the system. I had no idea how to go about addressing my issue on paper.

I wrestled with this for weeks. During another level 1 class I hosted, the instructor made the point that the position paper training exercise is to impress upon the mind of the student how they lack understanding of their system of government. This made complete sense and I determined that the focus of my issue paper should be about my lack of understanding.

So, what is my issue? It is I. Again, *“I cannot give that which I do not have.”*

I intend to continue to study and understand constitutional republican principles that produce the fruit of freedom and liberty. I also intend to learn my current state and federal systems of government so that I might use the political power, coupled with other citizens, to maintain and restore our constitutional republican systems.

Since I still deeply fear being deceived, I will call upon God and my trusted mentors to assist me in my journey as I study and practice seeking to be a “Keeper of the Republic”.

I am now fully aware and understand my duty to myself, my children and my God, to stand for truth and what is right in all things and in all places, both temporal and spiritual.

*The Language of Liberty series is a collaborative effort of the Center for Self Governance (CSG) Administrative Team. CSG is a non-profit, non-partisan educational organization, dedicated to training citizens in applied civics. The authors include administrative staff, selected students, and guest columnists. The views expressed by the authors are their own and may not reflect the views of CSG. Contact them at [CenterForSelfGovernance.com](http://CenterForSelfGovernance.com)*

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