

An open letter to all Michigan Libertarians

On the evening of April 16, 1990 I was at the Royal Oak post office participating in the Metro Detroit Libertarians (MDL) annual tax protest. A letter bomb went off near where I was passing out libertarian literature. My hand was burned and my pants were ruined. The postal worker who found the smoking letter suffered facial burns.

Following the bombing the MDL protesters became subjects of the postal inspectors investigation. The letter bomb was addressed to "The Tax Thieves" and the return address was from "Freedom loving Americans". These libertarian sounding phrases served to intensify the focus of the investigators on the MDL demonstrators.

We were questioned, finger printed and photographed. Our handwriting was subjected to analysis. My place of business was invaded by these inspectors on three different occasions frightening my employees. My school records were subpoenaed. Members of my family were rudely interrupted at their offices.

In the suspicious logic of the postal police I was a suspect. My proximity had given me opportunity. I was standing alone which weakened my testimony, no corroborating witness. I hadn't sought medical attention for my burn, a sure sign of evil intent to the postal paranoids. In addition I'm single with no children, a clearly deviant life style.

Initially my anger focused on the investigators. I hadn't told the investigators everything I knew. Some of what I knew pointed to possible libertarian involvement in the bombing. After the bombing additional information greatly increased my suspicions.

I discussed my situation with family and friends. My family in particular were horrified that I hadn't completely cooperated with the investigators. They argued that the cause of my discomfort was not the postal police. The attack on my freedom and livelihood was a direct consequence of the creep who planted the bomb. One argument which slowly burned at me was that I had been set up as a fall guy. If libertarians were involved in the bombing, they knew that MDL protesters would be there to take the brunt of the investigation.

The evidence I had about libertarian involvement was circumstantial and hearsay. This made my decision to cooperate with the feds very difficult. I was aware that a few hopefully innocent people could soon share my unpleasant experiences dealing with the postal inspectors. This was very depressing.

I called a libertarian friend from out of town to discuss my situation. My friend was also horrified that I hadn't cooperated with the postal inspectors. The bombing was a perfect example of the very thing libertarians are most opposed to, the use of force to achieve political ends. This was tremendously destructive to the goals of libertarians. He argued that even in a libertarian society

there would still be some form of police to investigate and prosecute violent criminals. In addition if I didn't cooperate I was in essence encouraging the perpetrator. Did I really want to see a repeat performance.

So I decided to cooperate with the authorities. I knew that there would be some libertarians who wouldn't understand my decision. I would soon feel the angry glares of (former?) friends who would blame me for the continuing investigation. I hope that over time they will realize that their pain was caused by the criminal who planted the bomb. The person or people who perpetrated this crime are enemies of liberty. Such acts of violence are mothers milk for the ever expanding leviathan which oppresses us.

My advice to anyone caught in the fire bombs ever widening path of destruction is to cooperate with the authorities. Don't be a martyr for the cause of violence. The liberty movement took a giant step back on April 16. Don't encourage a repeat performance by confusing cause and effect.

— Steve Silver