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# "THEY DON'T STEAL ALL OF OUR CHICKENS"

By Bill Sizemore  
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NewsWithViews.com

They don't take all of our crops. They don't steal all of our chickens. They always leave us enough to live on.

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Remember the classic western, The Magnificent Seven, starring Yul Brenner, Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson, and James Coburn. It's one of my favorites. The plot revolves around a small village of poor farmers in northern Mexico in the late 1800s. Every so often, a gang of armed Mexican banditos would ride in to the village, seize all the chickens and corn they could carry; then ride out of town, plunder in hand, leaving the poor farmers even poorer than they were before.

After years of suffering at the hands of the bandits, a handful

**"Sure enough, however, every payday or every April 15th, there we stand on the shearing table, fidgeting or sometimes bleating a bit, but otherwise meekly suffering the abuse while the**

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of the hungry villagers suggested that perhaps the time had come for the peons to arm themselves and fight back. Perhaps the time had come to defend their crops, herds, and womenfolk from the bandits; or maybe pool their meager resources and hire some professionals to fight for them.

One of the browbeaten peasants, afraid of incurring the wrath of the bandits, made this case against fighting back: He said, in essence: The bandits don't take all our corn; they don't steal all our chickens; they still leave us a little, enough to live on. It's better to suffer the abuse than die.

Notwithstanding his advice, the beleaguered villagers decided to fight back, and eventually a wondrous thing occurred as the downtrodden villagers awakened to the fact that they were men, not mere sheep for the strong to shear. It is moving to see the metamorphosis that occurred when the poor, frightened peons realized that they could indeed defend themselves, and that they were not sheep after all, but men. Their cowardice was replaced by courage, and although some of the villagers lost their lives in the fighting, the village found that it is better to die like men than to live as cowards and slaves.

Even though The Magnificent Seven is just a movie, a western remake of an earlier Japanese movie, The Seven Samurai, it is nonetheless a story as old as human nature; the story of men enduring suffering and risking death, to break out of bondage, servitude, and slavery.

As with all stories and parables, though, it is human nature for the hearer or viewer to identify with the good guy in the story; not the bad guy. In the Biblical parable of the good Samaritan, for example, it is human nature to see ourselves as the merciful, generous one who goes out of his way to help the poor fellow in need, not the calloused, merciless men, who walked on by, ignoring the desperate plight of the man who had been robbed, beaten, and left bleeding in the ditch.

We never see ourselves as Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, or Peter, the coward. We see ourselves rather as the faithful and brave ones, doing the right thing; coming through under pressure; never compromising, selling out, or chickening out. Yet, we do.

shearers shear ever closer to the skin. After all, we say, the shearers never take all our wool; they leave us enough to get by."

**Editors Note:**  
Eli Wallach knew if he took all the peasant's food the peasants would die, which means he would have to go to work. It's better to leave the peasants enough to go on, this way they keep producing more food for the banditos. Cowards create bullies.

I doubt that many of us would watch *The Magnificent Seven* and even think to identify with the poor peon that is so browbeaten that he is content merely with the fact that the bandits don't take all of his chickens or steal all of his corn.

The average American taxpayer would not see himself as a mere sheep, standing fidgeting on the shearing table as the shearers separate him from his wool.

Sure enough, however, every payday or every April 15th, there we stand on the shearing table, fidgeting or sometimes bleating a bit, but otherwise meekly suffering the abuse while the shearers shear ever closer to the skin. After all, we say, the shearers never take all our wool; they leave us enough to get by.

Well, of course they don't take it all. Like the leader of the banditos, played in the movie by Eli Wallach, the politicians are not stupid. They always leave enough for us to live on. They don't take all our chickens. They don't steal all our corn. They want to make sure that it's easier for us to just get by with what they leave us, than to fight back. Then next April 15th, or next payday, they return and shear us again. The harder we work, the more they take.

Like Wallach's character in the movie, the politicians have grown accustomed to our timidity. They have learned that there are limits to what they can take, and they are generally careful not to violate those limits, or if they do so, to do so incrementally enough that no single offense is enough to cause a major rebellion.

You see, our shearers do fear certain things; things like get tough on crime ballot measures that direct where they will spend the money they take. They fear recall campaigns, tax revolts, and measures that limit their power. The shearers are fully aware that with Americans there is always a danger of awakening a slumbering giant, as the Islamic terrorists discovered after September 11th, when the flame of patriotism once again rose from the dimly glowing coals of a sleeping nation. For a year or so after the attacks, we remembered what it means to be an American, but unfortunately only in response to an attack from abroad, which has never been the real source of danger to the Republic.

Our shearers are much smarter than the terrorists, and they

have a different goal. Unlike the terrorists, who wanted to destroy us, it is important to the politicians that we are still around next April 15th, when once again they will say, "Give us your money or we'll take your house, garnish your wages, or levy your checking account."

There was a television commercial out a few months ago, an ad for a pain reliever or an antacid, as I recall. In the ad, a middle-aged man is sitting at a desk in front of an IRS agent, fidgeting and noticeably stressed about being there. The IRS agent eventually says to the man: Did you make any money last year? Yes, the man replies. Did you send us most of it? Yes, he replies again. Okay then, the agent says, you have nothing to worry about.

I couldn't help but chuckle the first time I saw that ad. I laughed, but the ad was only sort of funny. I laughed more at its frankness than its humor. The man was clearly relieved that the IRS agent was content with taking most of what the man had earned.

I can't help but wonder how the Founding Fathers would have responded in the same situation. Would they have been relieved that the government was letting them keep some of their money? Or would they have reached for their muskets, or at least the tar and feathers?

It is safe to say that the Founders would never have allowed their government to tax them at rates which today are higher than the taxes paid by medieval European serfs; people who at the time were considered little more than slaves. Frankly, the Founders of this Republic would be shocked at their ancestors' placid acceptance of the confiscatory levels of taxation with which the American people are burdened today. They would be shocked to learn that we are content to provide for our families with what is left, after the government has taken all that it wants of the fruits of our labors.

During the American Revolution, the vast majority of the colonists played it safe, fearing the wrath of the king and the British army and navy. Only a small minority, in fact less than twenty percent of the colonists, actually fought and sacrificed, sometimes everything, for the liberty that we now treat with disdain; content that the government doesn't take all of our corn, doesn't steal all of our chickens, but leaves us enough to get by.

When men like George Washington and John Adams decided to take a stand, they knew that for them there was no going back. King George III had decreed that when Britain won the war, Washington, Adams, and other rebels were to be shown no mercy, but rather hung as traitors. Thus their commitment to liberty was complete. They became consumed by their zeal to birth a new nation of free, self-governing men. Everything else in their lives was put on hold until that noble goal was achieved.

Someone joked once: You Americans revolted over taxation without representation. Well, how do you like your taxation with representation?

Well, we don't. But, should we then take up arms as the colonists did more than 225 years ago and forcibly overthrow our repressive, money-hungry government? Of course not, for they are us. The money-hungry politicians govern by our consent. They plunder our paychecks only because we let them.

Two hundred years ago, the weapons against overreaching government were muskets and swords, but today our weapons are different. Money and votes are the muskets and swords of yesteryear. We can revolt more effectively today with our checkbooks, our votes, and our efforts to get-out-the-vote of like-minded voters on Election Day than with bullets and swords.

We must not continue to go down this road that leads to bondage. Indeed, if the American people continue to meekly suffer the abuse and arrogance of those in power, history will judge us as undeserving of liberty; no better than those poor, downtrodden, browbeaten Mexican peons who were content merely that the banditos did not take all of their corn, but left them enough to get by.

Consider my home state, where so many of the citizens today are behaving as bleating sheep. Oregon has one of the highest state income taxes in the entire nation, and yet, because of the mismanagement of the revenue collected, our school year is the shortest in the nation. Mismanagement has become so bad that government officials recently ordered inmates to be released from their cells early because of "revenue constraints," but meanwhile continued to pay government employees, who are retiring in their mid fifties,

pension benefits literally exceeding their highest working salaries. We bleated a bit, and then went back to our daily lives.

Recently, a man who was convicted by a jury of raping and murdering a two-year old baby, an unbelievably heinous crime, was order released from prison by the Oregon Supreme Court; not because the court found that the man wasn't guilty of the foul deed of which he had been convicted, but because the state had taken too long to bring him to trial. The sheep grew angry and restless for a while, and then eventually settled back into business as usual.

How much of our liberty have we lost? Do you think the Founders would have accepted the government telling them that they literally couldn't nail some boards together to build a deck on the back of their houses without the government's permission and approval of the actual design. No way, but we do.

How do you think the Founding Fathers would have responded to a government edict that a private citizen couldn't cut down one of his own trees that was blocking his view or that a landowner could not build a single house on his own 20-acre or 100-acre parcel of land? They would not have allowed such injustice; yet thousands of Oregonians today own large parcels of land upon which the government will not allow them to build even a single home. Sure, we bleat. We complain. Then we go back to our grazing.

All over America, decent, God fearing people even are afraid to spank their disobedient children for fear that some bureaucrat will come and take them away and make them wards of the state. We forget that a free people do not fear their government; their government fears them.

Recently, because the state had decreed that thousands of multi-acre parcels of privately owned land in Oregon could never have even a single house built on them, Oregon voters passed a constitutional amendment to require government to pay just compensation to property owners, when such government imposed land use restrictions lowered the value of the owner's property. After the election, the Oregon Supreme Court simply nullified the entire voter-approved measure, stating that the measure was unconstitutional because the measure did not require that compensation also be paid to a pornographer, if his business was prohibited by

ordinance from opening an adult bookstore or nude dancing parlor across the street from a grade school or a church.

Arrogantly and brazenly, the court cited as their excuse for tossing the measure, a section of the state constitution that literally ends with an instruction to the court not to construe the section in a way that would impair the peoples' right to amend the constitution by initiative petition. There we were; the most important measure to pass in the past 50 years stolen from the us by a liberal court that invalidated it simply because the justices personally didn't like it, and what did we do? We bleated for a few days, and went back to grazing.

Elitist judges and politicians see us today as mere sheep and themselves as the shepherds and the sheerers They see us that way, because we act that way. Eli Wallach, the bandit leader in The Magnificent Seven, at one point in the movie said, "If God did not want them to be sheared, He would not have made them sheep." That is the same disdain with which many politicians, judges, and public employee union leaders see the taxpayers today.

How much more shearing are we going to take? Our own government is taking an ungodly share of our money. It's stealing our property; robbing us of our freedom; letting violent criminals out of prison to steal, rape, and murder again; and overturning voter-approved laws on the most frivolous of grounds.

So what do we do? Where do we go from here? If there is anything I have learned about politics over my many years working full-time as a taxpayer advocate, it is this: When it comes to lawmaking, there are winners and there are losers. In the legislative process, those who are organized usually win. Those who are not organized, usually pay the bills. It's almost that simple. Get organized or get sheared by someone who is.

Government employees, through their unions, are extremely organized. Using money deducted from public employees' paychecks, public employee unions work year around to obtain for government employees an increasingly larger share of the taxpayers' money. Public employee unions are literally paid by their members to obtain more money for them in exchange for less work and less service to the taxpayers. Public employee unions are paid to shear us, and

to shear as closely as possible.

Taxpayers on the other hand are not organized. In effect, taxpayers meekly lay their paychecks on the table every payday and let the government employee unions and the tax and spend politicians take what they want, and then try to live on the rest. The result: the public sector grows and the private sector, the productive sector, suffers loss. Organized public employee unions plunder. Unorganized taxpayers get plundered.

By not being organized, taxpayers say to the government employee unions and the tax-and-spend politicians, "Take what you want, and somehow we'll take care of our families and run our businesses with whatever you leave us. Sure, my wife will have to get a job, or I'll have to take a second one. Sure, I'll have to put my kids in daycare, but somehow we'll get by."

It's time to realize that we really are being sheared like sheep. It is time to recognize that we are standing there on the shearing table, fidgeting and bleating, while year after year the shearers shear closer and closer to our skin. Then, after the shearers have taken all they want, we stumble back to our jobs and businesses and try to grow more wool to replace what was taken.

Enough, I say. If you have never seen the movie, *The Magnificent Seven*, go rent it. Watch the amazing transformation that takes place when the poor, downtrodden farmers realize that they are able to fight back; that they don't have to take it anymore. Watch the self-respect and pride on the faces of those poor peons when they see the bandits turn tail and ride out of town with their tails between their legs. Fighting back changes them into different men, better men, real men.

Be forewarned though. Like our Founding Fathers, if we fight back, some of us will pay a price. Our names will be smeared in the press. Some of us will be sued and lose in their dishonest courts. For some, the cost could be high. But in the end, we will win. We will win because deep down we really do treasure freedom. We will win because we deep down there somewhere we realize that we owe it to our children and grandchildren to pass on to them a nation as free as the one our fathers and mothers entrusted to us. Most of all, if we fight, we will win, because we are right and

they are wrong. Involuntary servitude is always wrong.

How do you see yourself in this struggle? Careful now. Don't judge your commitment to liberty by your patriotic thoughts. Judge by what you actually do to fight back. Do you vent your anger and frustrations merely by moaning and groaning to your friends at work or to some sympathetic radio talk show host? Or do you write checks and walk precincts for good conservative candidates and causes? By itself, the former may be little more than the bleating of the sheep.

When you give to a cause you say you really believe in, do you salve your conscience with a painless check for \$25 or \$50? Or do you give until it hurts, because liberty really does matter to you?

Do you vote on Election Day? Or do you call twenty or a hundred like-minded people on Election Day and make sure that they also vote and vote wisely?

Finally, when you talk to your friends, do you say, "I've given up. This country (or state) is going to hell in a hand basket. No matter what we do, things just get worse." Or do you say, "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not going to take it anymore. I'm going to do something, even if it cost me customers at my business; even if I have to dip into my savings or Christmas money; even if I have to run for office myself." Do you bleat like a sheep or fight like a citizen in whose heart the flame of freedom burns?

Liberty is indeed a precious thing. We may all be entitled to it. It may be an inalienable right, but we will only have it if we demand it and if we are willing to pay the price it takes to keep it.

God did not make us sheep and He didn't make them our shearers. They shear us because we act like sheep. When we stop acting like sheep, they will stop shearing.

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