

# Private Property Rights, Show the Receipt and Stop Being a Jerk

By Michael Storm for Toward Anarchy

When you voluntarily enter a retail establishment with private property rights and they ask, you need to show the receipt and stop being a jerk. I cannot put it more simply than that. I hate it. I am with you; it is just obnoxious. But the fact is it is not without merit and when on private property your options are comply or leave.

You may have seen the viral video, or not. It makes no difference because almost all of us have experienced a receipt request by a retail employee. Specifically, when entering Wal-Mart, we know that when we exit, there is a chance we will be asked to show our receipt. The video in question shows some guy being a jerk to a Wal-Mart security employee over having been asked to show his receipt. I will not share the video because I do not think the guy deserves the views. In far too many circles this guy is receiving praise for his refusal. All that praise is misguided and any private property rights advocate cheering him on is a hypocrite.

## **Private Property Rights Trump Other Rights**

There is no legal protection of the individual right to free speech or privacy on someone else's private property. One cannot enter private property and start verbally abusing the owner or his other guests no more than he can physically. The Bill of Rights does not protect this form of 'free speech'. If a private property owner wants to confirm what is being taken when someone exists their property, there is no right to privacy. There is no specific or even general 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment protection from this form of demand for search and seizure. Sure, you can refuse, and the property owner can refuse to accept your refusal. It can be escalated, police, or violence, but I repeat myself.

Don't get it or yourself twisted, I'm not saying that just because someone enters private property the owner has the right to abuse them. If he tries, leave. I am not suggesting that rights cease to exist on private property. If entering private property compromises natural right, do not enter. I am however stating unequivocally that when voluntarily on private property, the owner's rules should be followed. The only recourse, for the non-violent and otherwise unviolated, is to exit the property.

## **vs The Bill of Rights**

The very political and legal organization of this nation is based on protecting private property rights. Private property rights existed here before People's rights, and the Bill of Rights was an afterthought. The Bill of Rights and private property are not at odds with each other. The Bill of Rights protects the ultimate private property, self, from The State. It protects all People on

American soil from the government and its agents. It does not protect someone from their own voluntary actions on someone else's property or the subsequent results.

A property owner cannot really violate a person's protected "Rights". If the property owner feels you have worn out your welcome, for whatever reason, it is time to go. When the property owner is done listening to you talk, it is time to shut up. Should the property owner not support the natural right to self-defense, you have no legal or moral right to carry on their property. Why would you even want to? Should the property owner want to quarter troops in your home, you are probably a renter, not an owner...

## **Wal-Mart and HVY have Private Property Rights**

Two weeks ago, on my radio show [Toward Anarchy](#), I said, "If you have a problem with private property rights, you have a problem with me. You might want to let that marinate!". The joke was a take on the phrase made popular by the ultra-funny show, [Letterkenny](#). I was otherwise quite serious. I went on to introduce my new playground and articles (now a defunct website). By the end of the show, a caller was accusing me of hypocrisy. How can I host a show with a name like Toward Anarchy while following the terms of 'employment'? I cut him short, and eventually off.

The gist of his argument was immediately clear because it was transparent and faulty. Regardless of apparent or assumed gatekeeping and property policing policies, I voluntarily agreed to the terms to use their space to host these words. I did not find any conflict in any policy that compromised my message. The word anarchy means, no rulers. It does not mean, no rules. It does not disregard, or disrespect, private property rights.

The guy in the Wal-Mart video appears to have a cart full of loose items. Every time I have loose items in my cart, an employee stops me to see my receipt. Just one loose item can draw their attention. Anyone who shops there knows this.

## **Arguing Against Private Property Rights!?**

I have asked supporters of this jerk-move how they can justify the public abuse of a hardworking man whose job it is to provide private security for a private business. (I am using the word private repeatedly for a reason, the circles I run in salivate like a Pavlovian mutt at words like private and voluntary, they're significant qualifiers.) So, what is the problem? Why not, knowing exactly what is going to happen, have the receipt ready?

## **The Arguments...**

1. "It's a violation of civil rights."

No, it is not, I purposely explained that away to open this denunciation, so I will not reiterate, but hold on, there are more excuses to be made for this jerk-move...

2. “Should anyone have the right to demand at any time to see your receipt for anything/everything?”

That is a fallacy, Reductio ad Absurdum. Outside the context of the property owner, or their representative, on their property, of course not. Mind you now, these are all real conversations...

3. “I paid for it, it’s my property now!”

Is that so? Then prove it. Silence follows naturally because the proof IS the receipt.

4. “I’m leaving their ‘private property’ but they won’t let me.”

You are leaving WITH their property, and... repeat argument number Three.

5. “If I invite you on my property, can I keep you hostage until you prove you haven’t stolen from me?”

Simply a rewording of argument Four, it is a circular argument refusing to address the fact that they are simply trying to protect their property. Moreover, they are trying to openly show to potential thieves that they are actively protecting their property. How can any private property rights advocate begin to fault them? Retail theft is a massively destructive market force, damaging bottom lines and increasing costs passed on to customers.

6. “I didn’t sign a contract, I just walked into the store.” – Dave Champion (Not an exact quote)

There are many contracts we engage in daily that are implied or assumed. Many of those are private property rights related. Most property remains unmarked as private, but that does not mean we stop recognizing that most property is not ours. If this is your argument, I am pretty sure most state laws allow retailers to do it regardless of any contract. Now you have your authority and fallacy. That should appeal to the likes of Champion.

## **The Final Word**

This is not an argument for authoritarian rule. This is about private property rights. There is no suggestion in my position that The State or another coercive or violent force has compelled any of the actions described herein. The actions I am suggesting here are voluntary actions we make under unspoken mutual respect for private property rights. Respect that YOU claim to hold. You are not being violated; it is merely an inconvenience. If you respect private property rights show the receipt and stop being a jerk.