

Living the outlaw life: Freeing your inner outlaw

By Claire Wolfe

(This begins a regular series by Claire Wolfe. - Editor)

To be truly free, you will be an Outlaw.

I don't mean criminal - although you are probably that, also. I mean a person who thinks "outside the law." When you are an Outlaw, your body (just like everybody else's) may be subject to the dictates of bureaucrats, armed enforcers and various elected fixers, controllers, connivers, pork-barrellers, socializers, corporatizers, fear-mongers, cigar-sexers, bribe-takers, old-boy-networkers and global influence peddlers.

But when you are an Outlaw, your heart and mind (unlike most everybody else's) are your own.

What exactly does that mean, though, in this over-lawed, over-ruled, over-executive-ordered world?

Let's go back for a moment to the statement that you're already a criminal. I've said it before and it always offends somebody: "YOU may be a criminal, Wolfe. But I'M a law-abiding citizen. Don't paint me with your black brush."

Well, sorry. You may not already be an Outlaw. But definitely you are already a criminal. You can't help but be.

In *The Tyranny of Good Intentions*, Paul Craig Roberts and Lawrence M. Stratton write:

"The U.S. Code, which contains all federal statutes, occupies 56,009 single-spaced pages. Its 47 volumes take up nine feet of shelf space. An annotated version, which attempts to bring order out of chaos, is three feet long and has 230 hardcover volumes and 36 paperback supplements. Administrative lawmaking under statutes fill up the 207-volume Code of Federal Regulations, which spans 21 feet of shelf space and contains more than 134,488 pages of regulatory law. Federal law is further augmented by more than 2,756 volumes of judicial precedent, taking up 160 yards of law library shelving."

And you're certain you're not breaking one of those laws?

During the Clinton years alone, as James Bovard noted in *Feeling Your Pain*, "Federal agencies issued more than 25,000 new regulations-criminalizing everything from reliable toilets to snuff advertisements on race cars." And Bovard wrote that before Clinton's final year in office, when the federal government issued more than 100,000 pages of new regulations.

That's just federal. Let's not even mention the states.

Still think you're not a criminal?

Really. So you've never: "forgotten" to report a little extra income on your 1040, built an addition on your house without a permit, driven without a seatbelt (the Supreme Court says cops can throw you in jail for that), given a glass of dinner wine to your 17-year-old, smoked a joint, disconnected a pollution control device on your car, cut a friend's hair without a license, installed an "outlaw" toilet, carried a pocket knife with a blade longer-than-legal (bet you don't even know what length is legal, do you?), been in a room where friends were talking about doing something illegal (conspiracy!), put a dollar in a football pool, patronized a prostitute, taken a tax deduction you really weren't "entitled" to, lied to a bureaucrat, "willfully" failed to file, built a pipe-bomb just to watch it go boom, carried money with traces of cocaine on it (like some 82 percent of the paper money in circulation today), put prescription medicine into one of those little daily dispenser containers, given one of your own prescription pills to a sick friend (search Title 21 of the U.S. Code and just see if you can figure out exactly what you can and can't do with that itty-bitty bottle of Zoloft or Prozac you depend on to help you survive this modern madness), owned chemicals that might be used in bomb making (like the bleach and ammonia bottles under your kitchen sink), transposed the digits of your Social Security Number on a government form, or driven in a car with someone who might have been transporting contraband. Ever?

Remember, these days you can be convicted of "conspiracy" for crimes you don't even know about, or for buying legal items that might be used for illegal causes. Some acquaintance gets in trouble and needs to snitch on a friend to get his own sentence reduced

- and you're toast.

You can even be convicted of violating laws that don't exist - as plenty of "tax criminals" have been. Ask the I.R.S. for copies of the laws you're allegedly breaking and they'll respond with legalistic gobbledegook. I have a friend who once testified as an expert witness in a tax case. Her expertise? Grammar. On the stand, she diagramed a mega-monster sentence from the tax code and proved the alleged regulation couldn't be obeyed - because it literally had no meaning in the English language. Still, people get arrested for disobeying it.

Those are just a few of the ways individuals can get in trouble. Heaven forbid you should own a business and try to get through the day without committing a crime. For example, while Your Father in Washington still permits you, you lucky little person, to disconnect the crazy-making doodad that goes bingidy-bing-bing when you leave your car keys in the ignition and open the door, it's a federal crime for your car dealer to disconnect it at your request. Like, whose car do they think it is, anyway? Well, actually, it's not a federal crime to disconnect only the part that goes bingidy-bing-bing when you open the door and leave your key in the ignition, but it is a federal crime to disconnect the part that goes bingidy-bing-bing when you unhook your seatbelt and leave your key in the ignition, which is all part of the same system but a different set of wires from the other one. (Are you following this? There won't be a test, but there could be a hefty fine later.) Oh yeah, by the way, before you unhook the thing yourself, you'd better check your state law. You wouldn't want the state-o-crats' SWAT team swooping down on you when you're armed only with a pair of wirecutters.

Bottom line. You are no longer a law-abiding citizen. There are too many laws to abide. And it doesn't matter whether they call 'em laws, rules, regulations, or something else altogether. You break them every day.

With laws like these, who even wants to be a law-abiding citizen? When you put yourself at the service of rules and diktats of this nature, you put your life in thrall to the kind of people who make them. Even if you're a member of the infamous Snopes clan, you're bound to be better at figuring out how to live your own life than people who sit around all day cooking up stuff like this and figuring out how severely to punish you if you don't obey.

In the science fiction novel Pallas, one of L. Neil Smith's characters says, "People-pardon me, journalists and politicians-have often accused me of believing that I'm above the law. And yet, who isn't? . The law is created by demonstrable criminals, enforced by demonstrable criminals, interpreted by demonstrable criminals, all for demonstrably criminal purposes. Of course I'm above the law. And so are you."

Amen, bruthah Neil.

So why not enjoy being above the law? Why not embrace it? Why not do it with panache? Flair? Savoir faire? Pride and shining resolution? Why not, in short, free your Inner Outlaw?

For this is what divides the Outlaw-D.B. Cooper, Bonnie and Clyde, Robin Hood, the Scarlet Pimpernel, Zorro-from the mere criminal-the creep who steals your CD player or the furniture out of the White House. Or the person who breaks the same old everyday laws you do, but breaks them in a sniveling, sneaking, guilt-ridden way, rather than with a jaunty shrug.

Attitude. Attitude. Attitude.

Don't let me give you the wrong idea. You don't have to start holding up I.R.S. offices and distributing the proceeds to starving taxpayers to be an Outlaw. Whatever crimes you're already committing will do. The essence of free Outlawry is the way you live in the face of growing tyranny-the Outlaw way you think. Even when it's the government that's committing the real crimes, being an Outlaw comes in handy.

Some examples:

a.. You go into a doctor's office a year from now and they tell you, "Sorry, Comrade. Thanks to federal privacy protection, you can no longer get medical care unless you accept a unique identifying number and 'consent' to have your medical records shared with anyone the government wants to see them." The good little citizen, sick, vulnerable, overwhelmed and puzzled, submits. The Outlaw? The Outlaw has already prepared for this and, depending on the kind of Outlaw he is, has options. Maybe he meekly submits, also-using one of his five pre-built identities. Maybe he knows an Outlaw doctor who trades services for cash. Maybe he makes such a stink threatening to bring a civil rights suit that the doctor decides she'd rather risk the wrath of U.S. Health and Human Services than the wrath of a mad patient who knows his rights (and a

good lawyer).

b.. You're driving along minding your own business when you find yourself in the middle of a checkpoint. Who knows what they're trolling for today? Drugs, booze, seatbelt crimes-or perhaps just "Your papers, please" (an insurance checkpoint). A cop comes to your window and although his words say "please" and "may we?" his tone says, Cross me, muhuh, and you'll be on your face in the gravel with my knee jabbing a hole in your kidney. "Where are you going?" he asks. "Where are you traveling from? What's that in the back seat? Who helped you load your pickup? Do you mind if we search your vehicle?" The good little citizen, once again, submits. The Outlaw, once again, has options. That might mean anything from playing dumb and innocent ("I'm sorry, officer, are you sure it's okay for you to do this? My high school civics teacher told me they absolutely couldn't do things like this in America. You seem like a nice young man and I'd hate to see you get in trouble.") to calmly refusing any consent to search to covertly making note of all officers' badge numbers, names, and descriptions for possible later use. (You know, like maybe sending them a copy of the Constitution.)

The Outlaw doesn't always emerge victorious from encounters with authority. Bonnie, Clyde, and John Dillinger ended up with their bullet-riddled bodies on public display, after all. You really might end up with your face in the gravel and your nether portions in a world of hurt if the nice officer is having a Justin Volpe moment and thinks you're Abner Louima. Refuse to allow a random search of your vehicle, for instance and, as Boston T. Party describes in *You and the Police*, a drug dog and handler may be brought to the scene. The handler strokes a baggie of marijuana in his pocket then touches the trunk of your car. The dog goes wild and voila!-instant "probable cause." (Or the dog simply sniffs you, and the almost inevitable traces of cocaine on your federal reserve notes lead to a shake-down and the forfeiture of all the cash you're carrying.)

Government ruthlessness is a giant purple rhinoceros standing in the path between you and the free enjoyment of Outlawry. It's a rabid rhino. With a cyanide-tipped horn. It's rutting season and it thinks you're competition. It's got a thorn in its little hoofie. In general, it's having a really, really, really bad day.

Yes, resistance to arbitrary power is dangerous. Let's nobody kid herself about that. But resistance is not futile.

In most cases, being an Outlaw doesn't mean attracting attention to yourself. It simply means living, as much as possible, as you wish. More important, it means having the mindset needed to live that way in a world of adversity. More often than confronting, it means ignoring or evading insane and excessive rules. When confrontation is necessary, it means having the knowledge, preparation, and-once again-attitude to help you get through the situation without either passively submitting or going unproductively postal.

In practice, that means something different for every Outlaw. But in every case, it means you have an attitude of self ownership (or, if you prefer, of belonging to God), not being the natural subject, and easy target, of any bureaucrat or badge-bearer who wishes to push you around.

It means recognizing the pathetic state of law and justice around you, and recognizing its dangers-but resolving to live your life more like a free American than a Stalinist peasant, regardless. It means living by your own highest moral and ethical choices, rather than trying to tippy-toe around every persnickety regulation in every obscure book in every cubbyhole governmental office.

It means remembering that this is still our America. Not theirs.

It means remembering that you are still a human being with potential beyond anything those who want to put us all into tight little categories and boxes-and prison cells!-could ever conceive.

It means knowing every day that, despite the chains and travails of too much government, and their very real threats to your security, your heart and mind remain free.

It means you belong to yourself. That you think for yourself. That you have higher values than any do-gooder, lobbyist, congressthing, corrupt cop, or midnight raider will ever give you credit for.

But that's okay. Because it's not their approval you're looking for. Freedom is what you're looking for. And you're only going to find that by being determined to live it.

Gandhi said it: "We must be the change we wish to see."

Amen to you, too, bruthah Mohandas, fellow Outlaw.