

Answering Mr. Sound Bite © by Rep. Phil Hart

When a friend handed me a recent copy of David Oliveria's Sunday Spokesman-Review column, it became clear what Thomas Jefferson meant over 200 years ago, when he said, "The man who reads nothing at all is better educated than the man who reads nothing but newspapers."

In that column Oliveria referred to me as an "artful tax dodger." One must assume he gets this term from the Charles Dickens story "Oliver Twist." I had a difficult time making any connection between that story and my circumstances. But there is one similarity, in that, the Dickens' novel is a fictional story and what Oliveria wrote about me was also fiction.

The following are a few non-fictional facts, none of which Oliveria cares to report.

In my situation, I have paid \$150,000 in state and federal income taxes over the last seven years, on taxable income of \$449,000. However, the government claims I owe \$740,000. Those of you who are good at math will discover this constitutes a tax rate of 165%.

The entire alleged unpaid State of Idaho amount as of this date is based on having lost 8 years of business deductions. The IRS has illegally denied deductions that are allowed by statute. The State of Idaho has piled on demanding its share of this trumped up increase in so-called "taxable income." For these 8 years, both the state and the feds have not allowed me to deduct a single postage stamp nor a single paperclip. No business on planet Earth can operate for 8 years without any expenses - nor afford the taxes without deducting those expenses from their gross income.

This was my punishment for not turning over the names, addresses, phone numbers, and credit card numbers to the IRS for people who purchased the book I authored about the history of the income tax. Had I rolled over, no one would know that I had surrendered the names, and I would have long ago had closure on my tax controversy. But I would have left the readers of my book in harm's way.

As for "dodging": in addition to authoring a book, I have been on radio and TV, appeared in a Hollywood movie, spoken many times in public and produced a DVD - all about taxes. This is not the behavior of a "dodger."

Since David Oliveria has been most unkind to me over the past year, one can only conclude his big government world view requires me to rat out my readers in violation of their First Amendment right to Free Speech. It surprises me - and it is ironic - how hostile the media is to one who has taken heat for the defense of the First Amendment. The summons demanding the names, etc., is posted on my website. My attorney, Michael Rosman of the Center for Individual Rights, a Washington D.C. Freedom of Speech lawfirm, thinks I am the first author in American history to deal with such a demand for names.

A word of caution is warranted to those who would be a "source" of information for Oliveria. If he finds fault with me for interposing myself between the IRS and my readers, you might logically assume he will not protect you as a source.

So where is the line, David, between what constitutes an "artful tax-dodger" and a defender of the people and their constitutional rights? It appears you believe objecting to a 165% tax rate is tax-dodging, as those are my circumstances. But how, David, does one pay any tax at a rate greater than 100 percent? It is mathematically impossible. Shall I ask Ben Bernanke? Maybe he can show me how to create money out of thin air.