

# The illegal case of cliven bundy, a long- time rancher

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Cliven Bundy, a long-time rancher became involved in an armed stand-off over the removal of his cattle, which he had deprived himself of after not paying his grazing fees which topped to about \$1 million. The fees he owed also included fines that he had accumulated over the years as he ignored the government's requests. Collecting something of value from the government, in Bundy's case, grazing fees that you don't pay for makes you either a thief or a fraud. Many activists supported Bundy throughout this time and even thought ahead in case violence broke out. They strategized and came to the decision that if violence were to break out they would put the women and children in the front so if shots were to be fired, women and children would be televised getting shot by officers. It's bad enough that he refuses to pay to use the government land, but when the government moved to do something about it he and his supporters all stood there with their guns and all hid behind women and children. Bundy, although is not an activist despite his fight about protecting his "rights and liberties". Is Bundy fighting for what's right? It seems that Bundy is refusing to pay his lawful taxes. When disputing your tax bill, it should be done through the legislative process and the courts, not by assembling a gang of armed men challenging the government. The behavior that Bundy shows is anything but heroic. Cliven Bundy is clearly a hero to some, but I believe he is just a freeloader. Although the land is not government property and is public property, it is managed by the government who collects rent for the public. Collecting this rent is used to help pay for public services and also to prevent overgrazing on shared land. If anyone can graze for free on public land, it will over time become overgrazed much quicker and will in the end become futile.

After reading the case thoroughly I concluded that Cliven Bundy is a dangerous man who has undermined the legal order and who should be punished for his crimes. One of the biggest reasons that Bundy had for having the right to stay on the land was that his Mormon ancestors had been using the land way before the federal government had claimed it. When thinking about this reason on being why he should be able to own the land with no problem it does not seem to be valid. Comparing this to other topics that we have discussed in class, like genital mutation, it was seen as something that was normal for many people to get but after time went on and more research has been done, it was proven to have many negative effects. Studies show that 3,000 girls a year are subject to genital mutation and in many religions, it is a rite of passage for girls to turn into women, so that they can reach adulthood. This has proven to cause many health problems like risks for child birth, permanent damage to nerves, increased risk of mortality during child birth, etc. It is considered to be a "female circumcision" and studies have validated genital mutation as a dangerous procedure that is a violation of professional ethics. You cannot practice one set of rights that'll deny another set of fundamental rights. Just because Bundy's ancestors owned the land way before the government had claimed it does not mean that it is completely ethical that he gets to keep the land without having to maintain it or pay the fees that his neighbors around him do. Because he is uncaring with the cattle and does not maintain anything on his ranch, it has become a nuisance for his neighbors and the surrounding private land that the cows intrude on.

Bundy is one of the only cattle ranchers left in the Mojave Desert. It is one of the driest deserts in North America which is a big reason why the cattle roam so far because they are in search of water. Instead of controlling his cattle himself or hiring a cowboy to manage it for him, he lets them run freely on government owned land. His original grazing allotment covered 154, 000 acres of public land but his cattle have wandered over 500, 000 acres, land that he does not have a valid permit to let them wander on. Bundy also does not vaccinate his cattle which leaves them open to diseases that can be spread through breeding which Bundy has no knowledge of because he is unaware of where the cattle is at any given time. Because the animals are able to roam freely, they often trespass on private property like golf courses or gardens. He believes that it is not his job to get the cattle when they trespass and if the owners of the property don't want the animals roaming on their land that they should put up a fence to keep them out. Because Bundy refused to run his business more conventionally the BLM decided that it was necessary to put up fences to protect the ecosystems and sites that the cattle would frequently intrude upon, but Bundy's cows frequently destroyed it since he let them roam freely. Because Bundy is doing this, he is not only causing an infringement on the property, but he is infringing the rights of the rest of the general public that are being affected by his roaming cattle.

In a state of nature, we are all equal physically and mentally. When compared to the beliefs of Thomas Hobbes, the acts of Cliven Bundy are not acceptable. Hobbes explains in his writings that the only things that will stop

a person in motion is another person stopping them or killing them. It is apparent that Bundy will continue to use the land as he is until he is forced to stop by the government or until death is inflicted on him. He has openly ignored all the requests for the government and is doing as he pleases. The federal government has done as much as fine him, build barriers to keep the cows in, and threaten to seize his cattle and nothing has worked. Bundy has continued to do as he pleases which has caused an abundance of issues between him and the federal government and his neighbors as well. Another subject that Hobbes' talks about is that without commands driven by force, the world will have disorder. Although the federal government has done an abundance of things to try and get Bundy to either pay his fines and taxes or to maintain his cattle in the appropriate manner he has yet to do either. It seems that it is not enough, but in reality, the federal government has the power to do more but has not reached the extreme they need to pursue. The BLM has threatened to seize his cattle but have not followed their word therefore Bundy has not thought twice about anything that they have thrown his way. In this case the disorder that Hobbes' talks about is the lack of respect that Cliven Bundy has for the government and the up rise in the general public who will think that they are above the law and that it is okay to go against the law. Dismissing Cliven Bundy of the charges that he should be receiving shows the public that it's okay to break the law because sometimes you can get away with it.

Not only did Bundy's cattle have a negative impact on the private land around him and the federal government but it also affected the surrounding

delicate plants and animals that were native to the area. Another negative impact that Bundy's cattle has on the land is the affect it has on the desert tortoises that share the land with the cows. Grazing was prohibited during certain seasons to protect many of the native wild life like the tortoises. Bundy's cows fed on the same plants as the tortoises, so food was scarce once it was time for the tortoises to feed. When approached with the situation, Bundy claimed that both the cows and tortoises could have a healthy symbiotic relationship if the government allowed them to and that the tortoises could eat the cow manure because it is filled with protein. The cattle ruined many habitats that brought advocates to seek protection so that it did not harm the other animals. Bundy's ranch also included many endangered plants that were not payed attention to because he did not maintain the land.

Before the conclusion to Bundy's case, the BLM did not seize the cattle and decided to back down. Bundy although was charged for threatening officers, carrying and using firearms, and engaging in conspiracy. Bundy refused to be put on house arrest by the government while his trial was pending because he believed he hadn't done anything wrong and was held in jail because of it. Although Bundy was clearly guilty, he entered the courtroom in a jumpsuit because he was being held in jail which already made him look guiltier than he already was. Bundy's charges had been dismissed because of evidence that had been withheld and the judge then ruled that the case had not been prosecuted properly. Bundy still believed that he had done nothing wrong and claimed the whole time that he was " a man of principle".

Many people were outraged at the outcome because the failure of this case will only make it seem that you are able to break the law and justify it if you think that you did nothing wrong. This case has given a negative outlook on the behavior that citizens have to uphold to the federal government. It is not ok that Bundy formed his own little armed militia to try and stand up to the government, and it's even worse that the government backed down to him and these armed men. There is nothing to law other than commands backed by force but in this case, there has not been much force to try and stop this once and for all. His neighbors were not surprised by his actions, but were surprised by the fact that the federal government did not take the appropriate measures that should have been taken when they saw armed men coming from around the world to back him up during this fight.

Cliven Bundy is not a hero. He is not fighting for what is right. He's refusing to pay for the use of federal land in violation of the agreed-upon terms of his lease. That's breach of contract and cheating all other tax payers who have to make up the shortfall. Standing up for defending such actions also does not make him a hero. Cliven Bundy may have courage, but he lacks any heroic purpose.