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The Hammond Family Does NOT Want an Armed Stand Off, and Nobody Has a Right to Force One On Them



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by [Stewart Rhodes](#) , [January 1, 2016](#)

We cannot force ourselves or our protection on people who do not want it. Dwight and Steven Hammond have made it clear, through their attorney, that they just want to turn themselves in and serve out their sentence. And that clear statement of their intent should be the end of the discussion on this. No patriot group or individual has the right or the authority to force an armed stand off on this family, or around them, against their wishes. You cannot help someone who does not want your help, and who are not willing and ready to take a hard stand themselves.

Here is a video statement I made on the Hammond situation while at a recent Oath Keepers event in Idaho:

And here is an even more recent audio/video statement on this issue, where I am joined by several Oath Keepers who were at Bundy Ranch, Sugar Pine Mine, and other Oath Keepers operations:

WRITTEN STATEMENT ON HAMMOND SITUATION:

I regret having to even make this statement, but I have no choice, since Ammon Bundy has not made it sufficiently clear to the patriot community that the Hammond family has declined physical armed help, and by all indications does NOT want any kind of armed stand off with the Federal government, and they do NOT want anyone to attempt to protect Dwight and Steven Hammond from being taken into Federal custody on Monday, January 4, 2016 when they are scheduled to turn themselves in to serve additional time for their felony convictions (which came after a jury found them guilty). They intend to voluntarily turn themselves in and serve out the remainder of their sentence, under federal minimum sentencing statutes, after losing in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on that issue. In fact, they have made it very clear, through [a public statement by their lawyer](#), in a letter to the Sheriff dated December 11, 2015, that:

Neither Ammon Bundy nor anyone in his group/organization speaks for the Hammond Family, Dwight Hammond or Steven Hammond. In addition, I wish to report to you that, as recently ordered by the District Court, District of Oregon, Dwight Hammond and Steven Hammond intend to voluntarily report to the designated federal facility on January 4, 2016, as required.

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2660398-Letter-HammondRanchesInc.html>

Unfortunately, Ammon Bundy has not made that clear. And despite Dwight and Steven Hammond's decision to voluntarily report to Federal custody, Ammon has issued a video titled "BREAKING ALERT! URGENT CALL TO ACTION! ALL CALL FOR ALL PATRIOTS! MILITIAS! OATH-KEEPERS! FROM AMMON BUNDY RANCH!" In that video, posted on December 29, Ammon Bundy asks those who went to Bundy Ranch to now go to the town of Burns "to make a stand" and he urges them to "come to Burns and defend this family and defend this county." Here is a transcript of the last part of his video:

"I'm asking you, and you know who you are, you that came, and you that felt to come, to the Bundy Ranch. I'm asking you to come to Burns on January 2, to make a stand. And I feel that this is every bit, and in many ways more important, than the Bundy Ranch. I feel – I know – that the abuses this family has endured is much greater than even the Bundy family. And this is something that cannot be ignored. It has to happen now. We cannot allow these violations to be so blatant and do nothing and expect that we will not be accountable for it. We will be accountable if we do not stand, and **I'm asking you now, to come to Burns and defend this family and to defend this county,** because it is not just the Hammonds that are being affected by this. They have put this whole county in depression. in the 80s, this county was a thriving county that the household income was higher than the national average, and the highest in the state of Oregon. Now, because of the federal control of the resources, now Harney County is in an economic depression. They are the lowest – they have the lowest income in the county (country) and it is \$22,000.00 under the national average – \$22,000.00 less than the national average. And it's because they have no access – very little access – to their natural resources. And it is time that we make a stand, and I'm asking you to do that. And I want to thank you for your time and thank you for listening, and I hope that you can feel the urgency of what I am asking you to do. (emphasis added).

(And here is the video:)

And on his website, Ammon has [recently posted](#):

****Call to Action**** We are asking all able body men and women to come to Burns Oregon and come prepared. This is not a false warning!!! We must not be okay with what is happening to the people of Harney County.

He then describes plans for a rally, march, and protest on Saturday, January 2, that will march through town and end by placing flowers in front of the Hammond family residence in town. That description sounds like it will be only a protest, and that is the apparent intent of the Three Percenter groups involved, but Ammon's rhetoric goes way beyond just a protest. For example, [on December 11th](#), he posted:

Please understand that we must exhaust all prudent measures **before taking a physical stand** against the horrific actions that the People of Harney County are enduring (including the Hammond's). If this Notice is ignored, then one more Notice of Demand will be sent, it will list the many petitions that have been ignored and demand that the Hammond's rights be restored. **If that final Notice is rejected then People across the Union will have justification to assemble and once again restore individual rights.** (emphasis added.)

So, at the least, Ammon is sending out confusing and contradictory messages of what he is asking people to do, and at the worst, he is planning on going far beyond a mere protest, and intends some form of armed direct action (and all despite the Hammonds making it known that Ammon does not speak for them and they intend to voluntarily report to federal custody.)

At the very least Ammon needs to make it very clear what he is asking people to do, and he needs to make it clear that he is going against the clearly stated intent of the Hammonds. His rhetoric is all about taking a stand and defending the Hammonds from being taken into custody and then going further and defending the entire county against the Feds, despite serious opposition by the local community against any form of armed confrontation.

BECAUSE THE HAMMOND FAMILY DOES NOT WANT AN ARMED STAND OFF, AND THEY WISH TO TURN THEMSELVES IN, OATH KEEPERS WILL NOT TAKE PART IN ANY ATTEMPT TO CREATE A STAND OFF IN BURNS, OREGON.

Since Dwight and Steven Hammond, through their attorney, have made it clear they intend to turn themselves in and serve out the additional time, Oath Keepers cannot, and will not, try to interfere with that decision (peaceable assembly and protest is, of course, fine, but going beyond that against their wishes is not). We cannot force ourselves or our protection on people who do not want it. They have made it clear that they just want to turn themselves in and serve out their sentence. And that clear statement of their intent should be the end of the discussion on this.

Yes, they are apparently being coerced and threatened (told not to communicate with Ammon or face dire consequences), as is done to anyone who runs afoul of the Feds, but if they don't want their family in the middle of an armed stand off and have decided it is best to just go back to prison, no patriot group or individual has the right or the authority to force an armed stand off on the Hammond family, or around them, against their wishes. You cannot help someone who does not want your help, and who are not willing and ready to take a hard stand themselves.

In the Kim Davis situation, Oath Keepers offered her our protection against being arrested again for contempt, by order of the willful federal judge who was abusing his power. But Kim Davis, through her legal counsel, declined our protection and we had to respect her wishes and stand down and go home. It is the same here.

This org cannot and will not force itself on a family who does not want the help. We always get the consent of the person who is being threatened or oppressed before we take any action. Obviously, if someone is in the middle of being attacked with armed force, and are being murdered, patriots can and should defend them without waiting for them to ask for help, but that is not the case here. The Hammonds have had plenty of time to issue a call for armed help, and they have not, and instead, they have issued their statement of intent to comply with the Court's order to turn themselves in.

We went to Bundy Ranch after the Bundy family directly asked for help in their strong stand, and we went there specifically to prevent them from being "Waco'd" after we saw clear preparation and intent by the Feds to use military trained snipers and Special Forces veteran mercenaries against cowboys and their families.

Likewise, the miners in the [Sugar Pine Mine](#) in Oregon, and the miners in [Lincoln, Montana](#) asked for our help and we went there after seeing a pattern of behavior by the BLM of intentionally burning occupied cabins, drawing guns on miners, etc. that caused us to be concerned for the miners' physical safety, along with evidence that BLM agents intended to use force to remove the miners from their claims without due process.

And in [Ferguson, Missouri](#), we asked shop owners and residents if they wanted our protection, and only after they said "yes" did we deploy, rifles in hand, to guard them against deadly arsonists and violent looters. Without their consent, we would have had no right to go onto their rooftops.

And just this year, [in Idaho](#), our Idaho Oath Keepers joined with Idaho Three Percenters and other patriots, to stand on the front lawn of a veteran who the VA had decreed "unfit to handle his own affairs" and therefore prohibited from owning firearms. The VA informed the veteran they they intended to inspect his home for firearms. This man's neighbors and other patriots in Idaho let it be known that they would not let the VA enter this veteran's home or disarm him. And the VA backed off and issued a retraction of their "finding" (all of a sudden, the VA doctor decided that the veteran was competent after-all). That was a righteous cause, and a victory for the right to bear arms, but we only took action because he asked for help, because he was willing to stand with us, and because it was a very clear and egregious violation of his fundamental rights. Without his consent and participation, we would not have acted.

CRITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE HAMMOND SITUATION AND BUNDY RANCH

In addition to the fact that the Hammonds have not requested our help, and intend to report to federal custody to serve out the additional sentences, there are also several other important differences between this situation and Bundy Ranch. As stated above, at Bundy Ranch, we saw a very clear and present danger of imminent unlawful and excessive force being used against the Bundy ranching family (who's family home is always full of children and grand-children). There were military trained sniper teams, Special Forces veteran "contractors" and video footage of BLM agents tazing Ammon Bundy, sicking attack dogs on him, and throwing his elderly aunt to the ground. The Feds also set up their absurd and disgusting "First Amendment Areas" and tried to confine protesters to them, and arrested one of the Bundy sons for being outside of the taped off designated protest area.

All indicators were that the Bundy's were at risk of being killed in a Ruby Ridge or Waco type incident. And that is why we went (along with many other groups and individuals), after the Bundy family directly asked for help. And because the whole Bundy family, and many of their cowboy friends and neighbors were willing to take a hard stand, with the support of veterans and patriots, they prevailed, the Feds blinked, and backed off.

That was a clear win for Team Liberty, while maintaining the moral high ground in the eyes of the great majority of patriotic Americans - which is exactly why the Feds backed off. They knew they had overstepped, that the "optics" were bad, and they had severely underestimated the resolve and resistance, and could not win without using overwhelming military force, and they knew that if they tried to use that military force - as many leftists were screaming for them to do - the military would split at least in half, and many or most of the current serving trigger pullers in the Marine Corps and Army infantry would have sided with the resistance - joining all of us pissed off veterans - in the resulting civil war.

In the Hammond case, there is no clear and present danger of the family being mass murdered, there is no stand off, and the family has no intent of starting one. They have apparently been threatened with being sent to the worst sections of prison if they communicate with Ammon, and that is certainly an abuse of their rights, but they have chosen to not request assistance, to NOT take a physical stand against serving the additional sentence, and they have chosen to turn themselves in. We must respect that choice.

If you want to go protest, by all means do so (and I think going armed while you peaceably assemble and protest is perfectly within your rights, but beware agent provocateurs and hot heads), **but do not allow yourselves to be roped into an armed stand off the Hammonds do not want.** They have made their choice, and [their neighbors are also apparently unwilling to take a hard stand](#). Respect that, even if you disagree with them.

HOW THE FOUNDERS KICKED OFF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION THE RIGHT WAY

Those who intend to try to force this into some form of modern "Lexington Green" or "Concord Bridge" against the wishes of the Hammonds and their neighbors need to take a hard look at the Founders' example and their wisdom. The Founders, even after the Boston Massacre, did not immediately take up arms and fight. They gave the Crown and Parliament plenty of rope to hang themselves and show their true face to the colonists, and drive more Americans over to the Patriot cause. The Founders focused on smart resistance that poked at the Crown and goaded them into further abuse of more of the American people, and goaded Gage into attacking as the clear aggressor, to arrest the patriot leaders and confiscate arms and ammunition.

Even after General Gage was appointed Royal Governor over Massachusetts, and placed Boston under martial law (and suspended all town hall meetings throughout the Massachusetts colony) the patriots still did not fire upon the King's troops. Instead, they formed militia and minuteman companies in each town and county, they stored up ammunition, food, medicine, etc for the coming resistance, and they organized and prepared an effective resistance movement at the town and county level, which included both pubic militia and underground "Sons of Liberty" cells.

And they let the Crown piss off all of the other citizens of Massachusetts with the egregious ban on town hall meetings, which the people

ignored and intentionally violated while daring Gage to try to stop them from meeting, and *because they had formed into well organize militia*, that numbered in the tens of thousands, Gage knew he was powerless to stop those town hall meetings, as he made clear in his written request for more troops.

The patriots did not fire on the King's troops until General Gage ordered his men to march on Lexington and Concord to seize Hancock and Adams, and to confiscate guns, cannon, powder, and food supplies. In other words, the patriot leadership had the discipline and wisdom to maneuver Gage into attempting wholesale gun confiscation. And that was the spark that fully justified armed resistance in the eyes of the greatest number of Americans at the time.

By doing so, they retained the moral high ground, while also engaging the King's troops out in patriot dominated territory, where they were strong, well organized, and vastly outnumbered the Red Coats, and thus they kicked their ass all the way back to Boston. They poked Gage into vastly overstepping (and "stepping on his dick" as we would say today) and by doing so, they started the Revolution off with a win on all fronts – a military victory, a moral victory, and a morale victory. THAT is how you kick off a fight. And then they won a series of victories throughout 1775 that ended with Gage having to evacuate the British Army and Navy from Boston. And that is how you start off a Revolution.

LET OBAMA AND HIS FELLOW TRAVELER MARXIST BUDDIES "STEP ON THEIR DICKS" ON THE GUN ISSUE, AND MAKE A HARD STAND TO RESIST ON *THAT*

All of you who are impatient and itching for a fight, put your thinking caps on, and use your heads. Keep your cool, and don't worry, the fight will come to you soon enough. Obama, and the other anti-gun idiot politicians, such as the Governor of CT, will not be able to resist the temptation to attempt to violate our right to bear arms by executive decree, such as barring anyone put on no-fly list and other "government watch lists" from owning guns – which would include me, by the way, as I am on an "Aviation Security" watch list, and get a special "SSSS" designation every time I fly. I can't even check in and get a boarding pass from the ticket agent without the airlines calling DHS for permission to let me fly (which usually takes a half an hour), and I get the "full Montey" screening and groping each time.

Clearly, their intent is to eventually put all of you "dangerous" veterans, patriots, and constitutionalists on such watch lists, designate you as someone who is barred from owning guns, and then use that to disarm you, one at a time. And they actually think we will just roll over and let them do that.

The idiotic CT Governor, Malloy, is paving the fast track to the next American Civil War/Revolution with his plan to sign an executive order precluding "those on government watch lists" from purchasing or owning firearms. See [this](#), and [this](#). He is actually planning on confiscating the guns of anyone who lives in Connecticut who the Feds put on one of their many watch lists.

Who can be on those lists? Anyone, and everyone. What is the criteria for being put on such a list? Who knows? What due process is there? None. And Malloy thinks the gun owners of Connecticut, who have already refused to comply with his prior edicts on guns, will just comply and be disarmed. What a delusional fool! He is poking a hornet's nest while smiling for the cameras.

Entually, all of us, across this nation, who dare to stand for liberty and the Constitution, will be on one list or another, and what is being done in Connecticut will be done in other states, and at the national level too. Obama is also [considering an Executive Order decreeing background checks on private gun sales](#). And anti-gun weenies in NY [want to restrict how much ammo New York state residents can buy](#). And [in California, the police have now been given the green light to unilaterally disarm anyone they don't think should have a gun, on their say-so alone, without the person even knowing about it or having a day in court, through "Gun Violence Restraining Orders" \(GVRO's\)](#). Good! Bring it.

Let Obama and the other hoplophobes step on their dicks, with both feet, with cleats on. And organize local resistance, to help gun owners, like the old vet in Idaho, who are willing to take a hard stand, and put your muscle behind that hard stand, on the critical issue of guns, IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY (the three most important questions you have to answer are "who's on your buddy team, who's on your fire-team, who's on your squad.").

Get organized, get trained, get equipped, and help your neighbors unite in mutual defense and help to train them. Form minuteman companies and Quick Reaction Forces (QRF) in your town and county. Then let "them" come and try to take your guns. Make THAT the modern Lexington and Concord, and we will have the greatest number of Americans on our side, and the greatest number of the current serving military on our side, as possible.

That is how you do it. Not by trying to force the people of Harney County, Oregon to take a stand they apparently don't want to take, over land use issues most Americans don't even understand, and which rural America as a whole essentially gave up on long ago (just a sad fact – decades ago they rolled over and, with few exceptions, let their use of the land be stripped from them by activist judges and federal agencies with the blessings of the U.S. Congress). It will take time and lots of hard work at the local level to organize, educate, and create serious, lasting and effective local resistance on those land use issues in rural America. We should certainly do that, but it will not be done overnight. I think the gun issue is a far, far stronger one to focus on at this time, when it comes to hard stands.

For the Republic,

Stewart Rhodes

Founder and President of Oath Keepers

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About Author



Stewart Rhodes

Stewart is the founder and National President of Oath Keepers. He served as a U.S. Army paratrooper until disabled in a rough terrain parachuting accident during a night jump. He is a former firearms instructor, former member of Rep. Ron Paul's DC staff, and served as a volunteer firefighter in Montana. Stewart previously wrote the monthly Enemy at the Gates column for S.W.A.T. Magazine. Stewart graduated from Yale Law School in 2004, where his paper "Solving the Puzzle of Enemy Combatant Status" won Yale's Miller prize for best paper on the Bill of Rights. He assisted teaching U.S. military history at Yale, was a Yale Research Scholar, and is writing a book on the dangers of applying the laws of war to the American people.