

BUSINESS INSIDER

New Hampshire man lights himself on fire to protest America's decline

SIMON BLACK, SOVEREIGN MAN

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Late last week, Thomas James Ball reached his breaking point. Driven to desperation by a system that bankrupted him and destroyed his family, Ball walked up to the main door of the Keene County, New Hampshire courthouse, doused himself with gasoline, and lit himself ablaze.

Hardly anyone seems to have noticed.

Conversely, when a 26-year old Tunisian man lit himself on fire a few months ago after police confiscated the fruits and vegetables he had been selling without a proper permit, it launched a wave of revolution across the Middle East.

People were shocked into taking action... protests and riots swept the region and one regime after another crumbled.

Rather than sparking an "American spring" and shocking US citizens into taking their country back, though, Mr. Ball's act of self-immolation seems to have been largely ignored. There has been scant coverage (and scant is being extremely generous) of Mr. Ball in the mainstream media, and what [little coverage](#) there is generally discredits the man as a troublemaker.

This is how the system's gatekeepers have been so adroit at maintaining the status quo— by suppressing dissent, marginalizing the detractors, and distracting the populace with meaningless, irrelevant drivel.

Mr. Ball left behind a lengthy missive prior to his suicide, which covers a range of topics from political corruption to why the family court system in America is utterly disgraceful. He was, to put it mildly, a staunch advocate of violent change, and it's clear he hoped a great deal of others would follow in his footsteps to literally burn the system down.

(Ball even left instructions for how to make a proper Molotov cocktail along with specific vulnerabilities of police stations in his area...)

Perhaps the most interesting part of his final post, however, was the observation that the United States is no longer a nation of laws; Ball described what he calls the 'second set of

books,' which is essentially the collection of policies, procedures, and protocols that courts and executive agencies rely upon.

This includes police departments and other 'enforcers' across the country that come up with standardized responses to take judgment out of the equation. TSA agents, for instance, are only following procedure when they fondle children at airport checkpoints. Even the guys who drove the trains to the concentration camps were just following procedures.

Ball argued that the nation is now ruled by such procedures, even in such institutions as family court where judges (by policy) pass the buck down the line to mental health case workers.

His anger and desperation for this system, which tore apart his family and bankrupted his finances, led Ball to light himself ablaze at the local courthouse in a state whose motto is "Live Free or Die." Ball chose the latter.

The next day, life went on in America. There was no shocking front-page cover story or award-winning photograph to spark a national debate... let alone propel droves of fed-up citizens to flood the streets demanding change.

Rather, the New Hampshire courthouse cleaned up his charred remains and meticulously scrubbed the floors to eliminate all trace of the event. 24-hour news networks ran a quick blurb in their scrolling tickers amid more important coverage of the Miss USA beauty pageant and President Obama's Father's Day plans.

In other words, business as usual... suggesting that if there is, in fact, going to be a fight for the soul of the country, it's a long way off, and many more degrees for the boiling frogs who are stuck in the pot.

My assessment of this situation, however controversial it may be, remains very clear: the great faceless enemy that opposes us, irrespective of our country of origin, is the institution of government.

Over time, this institution has inserted itself into nearly all aspects of life, such that a man cannot so much as enjoy a pint of beer, discipline his children, ride on the train, go to the doctor, open a bank account, apply for a job, go fishing, or watch a sporting event without the heavy hand of government being involved.

This is a beast that feeds on citizens; the more it feeds, the larger it becomes and the hungrier it gets. Of all the solutions out there, including armed conflict, civil disobedience, self-immolation, active democracy, etc., the only one that truly destroys the beast is starving it— take away the feast of productive citizens and accelerate its collapse.

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