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Death of a Patriot

Schiff Staff



My father Irwin A. Schiff was born Feb. 23rd 1928, the 8th child and only son of Jewish immigrants, who had crossed the Atlantic twenty years earlier in search of freedom. As a result of their hope and courage my father was fortunate to have been born into the freest nation in the history of the world. But when he passed away on Oct. 16th, 2015 at the age of 87, a political prisoner of that same nation, legally blind and shackled to a hospital bed in a guarded room in intensive care, the free nation he was born into had itself died years earlier.

My father had a life-long love affair with our nation's founding principals and proudly served his country during the Korean War, for a while even having the less then honorable distinction of being the lowest ranking American soldier in Europe. While in college he became exposed to the principles of Austrian economics through

the writings of Henry Hazlitt and Frederick Hayek. He first became active in politics during Barry Goldwater's failed 1964 presidential bid. His activism intensified during the Vietnam Era when he led local grass root efforts to resist Yale University's plans to conduct aid shipments to North Vietnam at a time when that nation was actively fighting U.S. forces in the south. Later in life he staged an unsuccessful write in campaign for governor of Connecticut, then eventually lost the [Libertarian Party's presidential nomination to Harry Brown in 1996](#).

In 1976 his beliefs in free market economics, limited government, and strict interpretation of the Constitution led him to write his first book [The Biggest Con: How the Government is Fleecing You](#), a blistering indictment of the post New Deal expansion of government in the United States. The book achieved accolades in the mainstream conservative world, receiving a stellar review in the Wall Street Journal, among other mainstream publications.

But my father was most known for his staunch opposition to the Federal Income Tax, for which the Federal Government labeled him a "tax protester." But he had no objection to lawful, reasonable taxation. He was not an anarchist and believed that the state had an important, but limited role to play in market based economy. He opposed the Federal Government's illegal and unconstitutional enforcement and collection of the income tax. His first book on this topic (he authored six in total, self-published by Freedom Books) *How Anyone Can Stop Paying Income Taxes*, published in 1982 became a New York Times best seller. His last, [The Federal Mafia: How the Government Illegally Imposes and Unlawfully collects Income Taxes](#), the first of three editions published in 1992, became

the only non-fiction, and second and last book to be banned in America. The only other book being Fanny Hill; Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure, banned for obscenity in 1821 and 1963.

His crusade to force the government to obey the law earned him three prison sentences, the final one being a fourteen-year sentence that he began serving ten years ago, at the age of 77. That sentence turned into a life sentence, as my father failed to survive until his planned 2017 release date. However in actuality the life sentence amounted to a death sentence. My father died from skin cancer that went undiagnosed and untreated while he was in federal custody. The skin cancer then led to a virulent outbreak of lung cancer that took his life just more than two months after his initial diagnosis.

The unnecessarily cruel twist in his final years occurred seven years ago when he reached his 80th birthday. At that point the government moved him from an extremely low security federal prison camp in New York State where he was within easy driving distance from family and friends, to a federal correctional institute, first in Indiana and then in Texas. This was done specially to give him access to better medical care. The trade off was that my father was forced to live isolated from those who loved him. Given that visiting him required long flights, car rentals, and hotel stays, his visits were few and far between. Yet while at these supposed superior medical facilities, my father received virtually no medical care at all, not even for the cataracts that left him legally blind, until the skin cancer on his head had spread to just about every organ in his body.

At the time of his diagnosis in early August of this year, he was given four to six months to live. We tried to get him out of prison on compassionate release so that he could live out the final months of his life with his family, spending some precious moments with the grandchildren he had barely known. But he did not live long enough for the bureaucratic process to be completed. Two months after the process began, despite the combined help of a sitting Democratic U.S. congresswoman and a Republican U.S. senator, his petition was still sitting on someone's desk waiting for yet another signature, even though everyone at the prison actually wanted him released. Even as my father lay dying in intensive care, a phone call came in from a lawyer and the Bureau of Prisons in Washington asking the prison medical representatives for more proof of the serious nature of my father's condition.

As the cancer consumed him his voice changed, and the prison phone system no longer recognized it, so he could not even talk with family members on the phone during his finale month of life. When his condition deteriorated to the point where he needed to be hospitalized, government employees blindly following orders kept him shackled to his bed. This despite the fact that escape was impossible for an 87 year old terminally ill, legally blind patient who could barley breathe, let alone walk.

Whether or not you agree with my father's views on the Federal Income Tax, or the manner by which it is collected, it's hard to condone the way he was treated by our government. He held his convictions so sincerely and so passionately that he continued to espouse them until his dying breath. Like William Wallace in the final scene of Braveheart, an oppressive government may have

succeeded in killing him, but they did not break his spirit. And that spirit will live on in his books, his videos, and in his children and grandchildren. Hopefully his legacy will one day help restore the lost freedoms he died trying to protect, finally allowing him to rest in peace.