When Civility Isn't Enough

Some years ago I had a retail store. One thing I hated about having a business was having to deal with agents of the State. Sometimes, I just said "*No*" to them and refused further cooperation or communication.

One guy would stand on the front steps and call his supervisor to see what to do when I refused to comply. Nothing ever came of that. I tried to make sure it wasn't something they were willing to shut me down over, though.

Sometimes, in the case of things they *would* have shut me down over, I gave them what appeared to be what they were demanding. Especially in the case of helping my customers rat themselves out.

There was one particular issue I couldn't find a good monkeywrench for: I despised being forced to be a "tax" collector against my customers. Yes, I minimized the theft where I could.

But, I collected the money and sent it to government because otherwise I would have been murdered.

However, me being me, I did make my point.

But, I was still civil.

On the memo line of every check I sent to the various "revenue" gangs, I wrote "extortion payment" beside my account number. The State of Colorado never seemed to notice, but the woman in the city "revenue" office noticed, and it really bothered her. She repeatedly called me to complain or get an explanation. A time or two she even came into my store to confront me face to face. I was nice. I was polite. I was civil. But I stood my ground.

"Taxation" *IS* theft.

She would object "*But that's how we pay the **police**!*" I said "*I don't need or want police. I want to opt out.*"
"*You can't do that!*"

She would say "*But don't you want good streets?*" I would say "*Not if I have to steal from my customers to pay for them.*"
"*But, but, but...!*"

Her response was always one of complete exasperation. She would sigh loudly and hang up. And then call again in a few months.

I don't know why it bothered her so much. I was paying what she demanded. If there was nothing wrong with what she was doing, why not just let it go? Why make an issue?