

Wanna-be “journalist” drives around NY, CT looking for cops to incite – then begging audience for money (op-ed)

Sgt. A. Merica
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CONNECTICUT- Some people are just punks. Such is the case of a self-important creep who masquerades as a “journalist,” inserting himself into situations so that he can act like a hero and “expose” police who violate his “first amendment rights.”

Almost unbelievably, this guy has over 49,000 subscribers to his YouTube channel, where he regularly posts videos of himself being “oppressed” by the man...aka police officers. Oh, and asks people to send him money.

Long Island’s version of Clark Kent, Sean Paul Reyes (clearly no relation to our national spokesman) has nothing better to do with his time than to drive around the northeastern United States finding ways to incite police into confronting him. He’s also a typical obnoxious Yankees fan (with apologies to our NYPD brethren).

Last month, he decided to go to the public library in Danbury, Connecticut where he goaded security guards and police, then filed complaints that his First and Fourth Amendment rights were violated.

As a result of the incident at the library, the Danbury police department has launched an internal investigation into the officers’ response to the incident, where Reyes was recording inside the library despite a policy banning filming without permission.

The only possible reason Reyes found himself at the library was he researched, found the policy, and decided to play a modern-day version of Geraldo Rivera in his prime. He likely knew of the policy yet wanted to make a scene and see what he could goad the police and security officers into.

He posted a second video he filmed at Danbury City Hall, where he refused to give his name to a security guard. That incident isn't part of the internal probe, Chief Patrick Ridenhour said.

According to the chief, the five officers from the library incident, which included a sergeant are still on duty. Reyes has said he intends to sue the officers, the city and probably anyone else with deep pockets. The chief said he didn't believe it was "necessary to put anyone on leave," in an email to the News Times.

The chief declined to comment on the case further, citing the ongoing investigation. Hearst Connecticut Media requested records of the officers, as well as body camera footage.

Danbury's mayor Joe Cava told the outlet he needed to see all sides of the incident prior to commenting.

"I only see one side of the story, Cavo said. "Until I get all the facts, I'm going to reserve my comment and see what happens with the rest of the information and how things proceed."

Cavo noted the city is going to keep its current building policies in place, although they plan to review the incidents.

"First Amendment law is very complicated," the mayor said. "Fourth Amendment law is very complicated. We're trying to sort out how that relates to our responsibilities here as a public agency, and we're working out those details now within inside counsel and outside counsel."

Reyes, who apparently is auditioning for a role with Inside Edition or maybe a reality show on some left-wing anti-police network, is part of a social media group known as "First Amendment Audits" where people with too much time on their hands record inside public buildings such as libraries, city halls, etc., in an attempt to shed light on how officials abide by the U.S. Constitution and the First Amendment.

According to Allied Universal, who employs the security guards at the library, a spokeswoman there said the company trains its staff on how to respond to the auditor busybodies.

She noted that guards are required to take a specific training module on these audits when they join Allied. The module, she said, includes “appropriate practices for how to handle these situations,” spokeswoman Vanessa Showalter said.

Guards are tipped off if auditors are in the area and get some additional advice if that is the case. She said Allied Universal has seen these so-called “auditors” primarily in the state of California.

“Their whole goal is to provoke on-site security professionals in order to elicit a negative response,” she said. “The reason why they do this is so they can get a lot of likes on their Facebook and their social sites in order to get money. That is their whole goal.”

Reyes inferred to Hearst Connecticut Media that he is a “teacher” and wants to “educate” police through his videos and he is merely trying to “exercise his rights.” To the excitement of people far and wide, Reyes says he wants to start an “outreach program” in Connecticut so he can brainwash, er “shed light” on rights violations and is thinking of starting a YouTube channel to instruct kids about these issues.

Maybe he can hook up with Ibram X. Kendi and Robin D’Angelo and they can do a joint critical race theory/how to provoke the cops program.

Reyes indicated he is a self-taught constitutional scholar, learning all he knows through YouTube and other online sources. Because we all know there are some stone-cold geniuses on YouTube, like people who eat Tide Pods and do the Skullbreaker Challenge.

“I’m a big believer of knowing your rights,” Reyes said.

The ACLU to the surprise of nobody, which has been missing in action as state governments across the country have trod on civil liberties left and right, is down with what Reyes is doing.

“Heck, if it does nothing other than make government employees aware that we the people have the right to observe that which is observable by the naked eye, it can’t be a bad thing from where we sit,” said Dan Barrett, legal director with the ACLU Connecticut.

Cavo said he’d prefer a more collaborative approach.

“I see what this guy’s doing and he has the right to do that,” Cavo said. “For me, I don’t know. I think in this world we need to figure out how to work together instead of instigate.”

Barrett claims individuals have the right to film in and from public places.

“Anywhere that you are allowed to be as a member of the public and anything you can see with your own eyes, it’s fair game,” he said.

He did note that things get a bit more complicated in places that could be considered more “sensitive,” noting that libraries can be places where people research or conduct private activities, such as researching health-related information. The next location on the list could definitely be construed as a “sensitive” location.

The next incident our hero engaged in occurred at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, CT. The airport is located about eight miles northwest of Hartford, Connecticut’s capital. So giving our hero the benefit of the doubt, he drove around 2 to 2-1/2 hours from Long Island to Bradley...all for the purposes of goading the Connecticut State Police, charged with security at the airport.

Prior to starting his show, Reyes referred to Connecticut as “Corrupticut” and informed viewers that he didn’t believe he’d have much luck ensuring “our public servants respect and honor that right” to go into publicly accessible areas.

He also referred to himself as a “tyrant magnet” and said “exposing tyrants is what I do, it’s what I love to do.” So clearly, Reyes is looking for a problem.

Reyes then sent inside the airport and stood next to the TSA checkpoint in the public area of the airport filming the TSA screening process. Clearly, he had no official business in the airport other than to make a spectacle of himself.

He was approached by a TSA agent who asked him what he was doing and why he was recording the security operation. She asked him if he was traveling, and he refused to answer the question.

“I’m not going to answer any of your questions,” Reyes said.

At this point, the officer called for a supervisor. The officer asked him to stop recording, and he said he wasn’t going to comply. “I’m working on a story, and

I don't want to divulge it right now." Reyes refused to speak to the officer further.

A supervisor then arrived at the location standing on the secure side of the airport, and advised him he did have the right to film as long as he didn't film the detailed screening operation.

Trooper Lavoie from the Connecticut State Police bike unit arrived, at which point Reyes tried to "educate" the officer about all he knew about Connecticut law and the Constitution.

Reyes was asked for his ID which he refused to provide. The trooper told him he was causing alarm in the airport, and when Reyes refused to cooperate, the trooper asked him to put his hands behind his back, at which point he ostensibly was detained or handcuffed for officer safety purposes.

The video stopped for a brief period of time, then Reyes started filming again, and it appeared another CSP trooper had shown up. Reyes was whining he was "unlawfully detained" by the state troopers, "put in cuffs by a tyrant officer, a rogue officer who thought he knew his job, but he didn't."

"We've got a bootlicker over here," he said of a civilian who interceded on the troopers' behalf.

Reyes was left to go on his way but followed one of the troopers to get his identification.

Reyes then said he was going to file a "professional standards" complaint, and said he was looking for the trooper he was initially involved with, saying he wasn't "doing his job looking for actual criminals, tucked his tail and ran away."

Our hero was referred to professional standards by the CSP sergeant on duty at the airport, but still railed because he "refused to do his job," then babbled on about the "thin blue line" and the "brother code," whatever that is.

The obsessive Reyes then drove some 30 miles to Middletown, Connecticut to file his "complaint" with the Professional Standards Division of the Connecticut State Police and wanted to "speak to internal affairs." A trooper at the door provided him with a complaint form, then before speaking to him got his own body camera (smart move).

Reyes then began to tell his tale of woe to the trooper, who was extremely patient with this self-absorbed windbag. The trooper then went and got a supervisor, Sgt. Brian Fahey who works with the Firearms Compliance Unit with the CSP. It should be noted that professional standards does not work out of the Middletown CSP facility.

Fahey explained to Reyes, who apparently has a problem understanding English, despite Fahey telling him that professional standards was not in the building he was at but was the next town over in the town of Meriden. Reyes insisted he wanted to make his complaint with Fahey because he is a supervisor.

The sergeant was clear that the CSP wanted to entertain his complaint, but Reyes continued to incite the sergeant, while just standing there with his cellphone recording.

The sergeant asked him if he was done, since he had given him the address and information with which to enter his complaint. Reyes continued acting like a little punk, finally asking the sergeant, "I thought you were busy? I thought you were a busy man? So you should get to work." Total smartass.

At this point the sergeant approached Reyes, who was clearly inciting an issue, and the video then ended, after some type of altercation occurred.

After the video ended, our hero comes back on to explain what happened at CSP headquarters, all the while Reyes continues to talk about "probable cause" and "reasonable and articulable suspicion" For our hero's edification, here is the governing case law for "reasonable suspicion.

In *Terry v Ohio* (392 U.S. 1), the Supreme Court held that a police officer can conduct an investigative stop of a citizen without a warrant based on reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is afoot. Under that standard, an officer if they believe that citizen may be armed can conduct a "pat-down" frisk of the citizen's outer clothing.

Given the fact that the TSA and airport police officers have an inherent duty to prevent armed incidents or terrorist attacks involving aircraft, the fact that someone was filming TSA screening, was uncooperative, and acting like a jerk, as a totality of circumstances could lead a "reasonable and prudent officer" to believe the person may be armed.

Terry also allows an officer to ask a person for their identification and they may be detained for a brief period of time to take additional steps to further investigate (*United States v. Hensley*, 469 U.S. 221, 229).

A request for identification has “an immediate relation to the *Terry* stop’s purpose, rationale and practical demands,” according to Justia.

While Reyes may well not have been violating TSA requirements or guidelines by filming the screening activities, the fact that he had no legitimate purposes for being in the airport, was uncooperative, and acting in a suspicious manner taken in totality rightly got the attention of the state police.

On Reyes’ YouTube channel page, he is basically begging people to financially support him, with information for PayPal, Venmo, CashApp, and GoFundMe. In other words, he appears to be a scam artist.

We’ll continue to follow the adventures of our “un-caped crusader” as he fights for truth, justice and the opportunity to make himself look like an ignorant clown.