



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 2, 2015

## Imprisoned Evangelist, on Trial Again, Blasts Persecution

Imprisoned evangelist Kent Hovind (shown), a well-known advocate of biblical creationism who has [been behind bars for 100 months on tax and “structuring” charges](#), is on trial once again today, with the federal government now pushing to have him locked up for life on charges of “mail fraud” and “contempt of court.” In a telephone interview with *The New American* magazine from prison in the Florida panhandle over the weekend, Dr. Hovind argued, as his large and vocal group of supporters does, that he is being persecuted for his faith and his preaching — that the government and his detractors are essentially “shooting the messenger” because they do not like the message he preaches from the Bible. Anti-Hovind activists and the government argue there is no persecution going on.



Hovind, a former high-school science teacher who went into full-time ministry teaching audiences nationwide about creation, dinosaurs, evolution, and the Gospel, is now facing between 20 and 100 years in prison if convicted. That would essentially be a life sentence. To understand the charges and the background, Hovind pointed to two websites with all of the information on his case, [www.freekenthovind.com](http://www.freekenthovind.com) and [www.2peter3.com](http://www.2peter3.com). “I think they are the lawbreakers,” Hovind said in the interview, referring to those involved in his ongoing prosecution — or persecution, according to Hovind and his supporters. “This case is a classic example of some major problems in our judicial system.”

Hovind and his defenders also want Congress to get involved. “I’ve asked people to demand that Congress do a full, open investigation and have me come testify,” he said. “I have nothing to hide.” He also encouraged people to contact their lawmakers and urge them to repeal [the “structuring” law](#), one of the federal statutes used to send him to prison for 10 years. Essentially, the statute [makes it a crime to withdraw certain amounts of one’s own money](#) if the withdrawal amount is intended to avoid creating a government-mandated record used to spy on Americans. It was originally created to go after drug dealers and terrorists, but its enforcement has expanded far beyond that.

In fact, the IRS chief recently apologized to lawmakers for abusing the statute and going after innocent people with it after Congress got involved in the issue. However, due to a motion filed by the prosecutor and accepted by the judge, Hovind and his public defender will not be able to mention the ongoing IRS scandals during the trial so as not to “confuse” the jury. Other facts, [including the ability of juries to “nullify” unconstitutional or misapplied laws by voting to free defendants](#), are also on the list of prohibited statements. Hovind supporters [argue that the “gag orders”](#) are in place to help secure a conviction.



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In the phone interview, Hovind cited the book [Three Felonies a Day: How the Feds Target the Innocent](#), to illustrate how fast-growing mountains of unknowable federal statutes and regulations can be [and are used to target virtually anyone the government feels like targeting](#). “There are so many laws passed now that the average American commits three felonies every day, and they don’t even know it,” Hovind said. “In Russia, they’ve been doing this for years: You pass so many convoluted, complex, and contradictory laws that everybody is a criminal, and all they have to do is go arrest you for something.”

Hovind also gave a brief summary of the charges against him and the timeline of his case, focusing specifically on, among other elements, what was done to his wife by the SWAT team sent to his home. She was dragged out of bed with no chance to get dressed and taken to jail, Hovind said, describing it as “evil” and “malicious.” He also pointed out that one of the U.S. attorneys involved in his prosecution and seizing his ministry’s assets, shortly after the trial, was arrested for attempting to rape a five-year-old child. The prosecutor hanged himself in jail. Anti-Hovind activists claim it is all irrelevant and the defense is prohibited from mentioning it, but Hovind supporters say it illustrates some important points.

Hovind’s current case, with the trial beginning March 2, revolves around his efforts to warn potential buyers of his ministry’s seized assets that litigation was ongoing surrounding the property. After what is described as “notice” on the property was filed via mail, prosecutors charged Hovind with “mail fraud.” If convicted, he could spend the rest of his life behind bars in federal prison. “I would encourage folks to become very knowledgeable about it,” said Hovind, known affectionately as “Dr. Dino” by supporters. “The only weapons Gideon had were light and noise — shine the light and make a lot of noise.... That’s exactly what I want.”

Hovind thinks authorities “probably will win” the current case against him, too, “but not without the world knowing what happened.” He said in the interview that he wants people to understand that “they are the criminals, not me.” Hovind added that he “did not commit a crime.” A whole team of anti-Hovind activists who spend their days attacking Hovind and his supporters disagree, regularly referring to Hovind as a “criminal.” Dr. Dino also spoke about those who hate him in the interview, saying he hopes they will “get saved” and find Christ.

When asked whether his supporters are correct in viewing his legal troubles as persecution for being an effective preacher of the Gospel and the scripture, Hovind wholeheartedly agreed. “The government will never say that or admit that, but if you look down through history, people were always persecuted for something other than the real truth,” he said. “Look at Jesus; what was he arrested for?” He said he “definitely” agrees that “what is going on now is persecution because of my Christian beliefs.” For years, Hovind ably debated evolutionist professors at universities, drawing outrage among proponents of the evolution theory but widespread praise among Christians and creationists.

In 1996, Hovind said, the IRS began sending him letters, but he did not know of anything he did wrong. Critics of the prosecution have argued that the tax charges were politically motivated. Many point out that even if he were guilty of the charges, the average sentences for such issues are barely over a year. Meanwhile, Hovind supporters also note that myriad alleged tax code violators — Al Sharpton, former Obama Treasury Secretary Timothy “TurboTax” Geithner, Rep. Charles Rangel, and hundreds of thousands of federal employees — remain free and influential.

*Forbes* tax-issues analyst Peter Reilly, who openly ridicules creationists but has followed the case closely for years, has suggested that Hovind followed bad advice from a “tax protester.” While Hovind himself still maintains that he paid every tax he owed and has always rejected the contention that he is a “tax resister” or “tax protester,” many anti-Hovind activists argue that he did indeed willfully violate



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the tax code and that he “shopped around” to hire the attorneys and experts who would agree with him. Some anti-Hovind activists have even accused the evangelist of being a “sovereign citizen” (somebody who believes the government is illegitimate), though Hovind and his supporters also vehemently reject those claims.

Of course, authorities involved in the case have denied that the creationist is being persecuted for his teachings. Now, however, even some of Hovind’s supporters say that they, too, are being targeted for speaking out on his behalf. Multiple pastors who have spoken out for Hovind, for example, say they have been hit with new tax bills and audits by the IRS. National radio host Pete Santilli, meanwhile, had a team of U.S. Marshals dispatched to his previous home to speak with him, his family, and his neighbors after calling the judge’s office and demanding that she recuse herself over the [anti-Christian bias she has already allegedly exhibited](#) or “face the wrath of the American people.” Apparently they were concerned his on-air comments may have been some sort of obscure threat.

“During the call, I spoke to Judge Rodger’s assistant to relay a message that We The People were concerned about Judge Rodgers stating in the court room and on the record that Pastor Kent Hovind was a worse criminal than a rapist, and that the formal court reporter’s transcripts omitted her remarks,” Santilli said in a letter to his attorney, citing eight affidavits filed about the judge’s alleged bias-revealing comments. “During my call to the judge’s office, I demanded that she recuse herself from the trial, I also demanded that she do what is right and within her authority to release Pastor Hovind because he is being unfairly persecuted, and I also told her assistant that We The People would hold the judge accountable to the law if she in fact had her remarks deleted from the court record.”

Santilli contends that the “federal goons” were sent to “intimidate and silence me.” “The only thing I have done in this matter is what I have felt an obligation to do,” he added. “As a citizen, I was demanding that the Judge be held accountable for her inappropriate actions and remarks, and also in defending Pastor Kent Hovind who I believe is being persecuted and retaliated against for his religious beliefs. I absolutely refuse to submit to the U.S. Marshals line of questioning if they have not heard my remarks made to Judge Roger’s office live on the air. It is 100% clear that my comments were not threatening, nor were they even intended to threaten harm to her in any way.” He also urged the marshals to tune in to his show if they have concerns about his intentions.

As for Hovind, he told *The New American* that he just wants to go home to his family and get back to preaching and teaching. “I take the position that the Bible is literally true and scientifically accurate,” Hovind explained in the interview, adding that he believes the Creation story outlined in Genesis should be understood as written and that the evolution theory is “stupid” and “dangerous.” Hovind also spoke about his new book describing prison conditions, as well as his ideas on what biblical prophecy means for the future.

A group of Hovind supporters is gathered in Pensacola, Florida, to support Hovind in his latest trial. They also parked a “Free Kent Hovind” truck across from the court house plastered with images and statements calling for the evangelist to be released. For more information on Hovind’s views and his legal situation, listen to the interview below or check the websites dedicated to following his case. His seminars and debates on creation vs. evolution are widely available on YouTube.

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