

## The Not-Saint Timothy

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Some people believe that aggression is physical force *and nothing else*. From this they derive the notion that only physical violence should be prosecuted — or, more generally, retaliated against *with force*.

But it is obvious that some invasions of private property or personal space, with malice and anger and alarming unhingedness, are aggressive.

And should be prosecuted in law.

Take the current case of Timothy Trybus, who is testing a further point of law that especially

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concerns those of us strongly motivated to focus on initiated force.\*

"It is pretty clear," writes Jacob Sullum in *Reason*, that the man "broke the law when he harassed Mia Irizarry for wearing a T-shirt featuring the Puerto Rican flag at a park in Chicago last month."

Mr. Trybus was drunk, and he "got in her face,"



so to speak, challenging her in a not-unusual nationalistic/pseudo-patriotic/jingoistic fashion that seems old-fashioned and up-to-date Trumpian:

- "Why are you wearing that?"
- "This is America!"
- "If you're an American citizen, you should not be wearing that shirt in America."

Puerto Rico may not be a state, but . . . the proper reaction might have been to challenge the not-Saint Timothy to a bit of patriotic one-upmanship: "How can you be so un-American as to object to an American commonwealth flag?"

He's now being prosecuted for a hate crime as well as assault. Though he may never have touched the woman, his aggressiveness is legally regarded as a threat of force.

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This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

*\* Which, I confess, I like to think of as "all civilized people." But I may be optimistic. Reducing violence is an almost universal desire, and the question of who started violence is nearly universal. But the focus is, well, in our times called "libertarian."*