



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 28, 2010

Milwaukee Man Fined for Cursing on Bus

According to a local news station, a Milwaukee man named Terry Duncan received a \$500 fine last week for cursing on a public bus. While the Milwaukee County sheriff's deputies assert that the man's behavior was rude, Duncan himself views the fine as a violation of free speech.



On Tuesday afternoon, December 21, Duncan received a fine for "disorderly conduct" after publicly articulating two curse words, beginning with an "f" and an "s." He was immediately ordered by an undercover deputy to exit the No. 80 bus and handed the ticket.

Duncan, who recently relocated to Milwaukee from Gary, Indiana, was unaware that it was illegal to use foul language on the bus. He contends that he was not cursing at anyone, but was engaged in a conversation when he let the expletives slip.

According to Duncan, he questioned the officer for the issuance of the ticket.

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"I said, 'What do I get this for? What did I do wrong?' The officer reportedly responded, 'You were on the bus and using profane language. You were cursing on the bus.'"

"Cursing on the bus?" retorted Duncan. "Are you serious?"

WISN reports, "Sheriff David Clarke wasn't available Thursday, but his spokeswoman told 12 News that he's warned the public about his zero-tolerance for disorderly conduct on the buses, calling it a quality of life issue." Clarke began putting undercover deputies on local buses two years ago after an increase in crimes against passengers and bus drivers.

The department statement indicates, "People should be able to ride the bus without feeling intimidated by someone's language or behavior."

Local residents applaud the law and assert that it is a well-known one. Milwaukee resident Tiffany Cook observed, "People should not get on the bus having to hear disruptive conversations. You can get a fine for that. It's the law. You can't do that."

Similarly, passenger Jean Jones remarked, "I think he should have got it. Kids be on the bus, families be on the bus. Nobody wants to hear that kind of language."

Resident Ebony Jett said, "You can't swear. A lot of people don't like all the 'f' words and 's' words around their kids, and there's a lot of elderly people on the bus, and you have to respect your elders, so that's what he gets. Next time, he'll know, no swearing on the bus."

The issuance of the ticket, like the recent controversy pertaining to [Wikileaks](#) and the [FCC's overreaching regulations](#), highlights the debate over free speech and what is permissible under the First Amendment.



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At least in the case of the ticket and the FCC, the crux of the matter relates to what may be perceived as offensive material.

As noted by conservative pundit [Glenn Beck](#), however, “You don’t have a right to *not* be offended.”

Duncan indicates that he will be contesting the ticket in court.



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