



THE 2026 EDITION

THE LIBERTARIAN "RED PILL" LIST

BY AUSTIN PETERSEN

Free books. Sharp essays. Great videos.
A better map for the liberty rabbit hole.

Updated links and recommendations - August 2026

A NOTE FROM AUSTIN

Read something dangerous to bad ideas.

The original version of this list was created by Mark Meranta and me in 2008 while we were working together at the Libertarian Party's national committee office. I was a volunteer coordinator then, and little did I know I was only eight years away from my first run for president.

I've stayed true to my principles of liberty despite switching parties in 2017, and I have kept doing my best to spread the message of economic freedom and personal liberty to anyone who will listen. The 2008 list was shared and consumed by hundreds of thousands of people. This 2026 edition keeps the books and arguments that still bite, repairs dead links, and adds more free video, documentary, and primary-source rabbit holes.

Most of these resources are free. A few fiction and film recommendations may require a library card, rental, or purchase. Availability moves around, so this edition links to stable author, library, educational, and official-channel pages whenever possible instead of pretending a movie will live on the same streaming service forever.

How to use this list: do not try to agree with every author. Follow one trail, argue with it, check its sources, then send the best item to somebody who will argue back. Liberty needs curious people more than it needs a catechism.

[KEEP UP WITH 4LIBERTY NETWORK](#)

THE SEVEN-DAY RED PILL

Day 1	Read I, Pencil. Look at an ordinary object differently.
Day 2	Read The Law. Ask when law protects rights and when it becomes plunder.
Day 3	Watch The Philosophy of Liberty. Test every proposition.
Day 4	Watch Free to Choose: The Power of the Market.
Day 5	Read Common Sense beside the Declaration of Independence.
Day 6	Pick a civil-liberties trail: speech, privacy, police encounters, or due process.
Day 7	Choose the book that annoyed or intrigued you most and go deeper.

START HERE

Short, free, and capable of changing the argument.

If you only open seven links in this packet, make them these. They cover spontaneous order, rights, revolution, markets, and constitutional liberty without demanding a semester of homework.

FREE

I, Pencil

Leonard E. Read

A ten-page lesson in dispersed knowledge and voluntary cooperation, narrated by an ordinary pencil.

[READ FREE AT FEE](#)

FREE

The Law

Frederic Bastiat

Bastiat's compact attack on legal plunder and his case for law as the defense of life, liberty, and property.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

Economics in One Lesson

Henry Hazlitt

The classic habit of looking beyond the visible short-run effect to every group and the longer run.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

Common Sense

Thomas Paine

The revolutionary pamphlet that made independence an argument ordinary people could carry into the street.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Philosophy of Liberty

Ken Schoolland

An eight-minute animated introduction to self-ownership, peaceful action, and the limits of force.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

Free to Choose: The Power of the Market

Milton Friedman / Free To Choose Network

Episode one of the landmark series on voluntary exchange, prices, and economic freedom.

[WATCH THE FULL EPISODE FREE](#)

FREE

The Bill of Rights

National Constitution Center

A deep free course with dozens of short videos on speech, arms, privacy, due process, and more.

[OPEN THE FREE COURSE](#)

THE BOOKSHELF

Foundational books - from pamphlet length to doorstep.

The original Red Pill List leaned heavily on books. Good. Ideas that survive a century deserve more than a clip. These links favor legal free editions and author or institutional archives.

FREE

Anatomy of the State

Murray N. Rothbard

A short dissection of how states obtain revenue, legitimacy, and obedience.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

For a New Liberty

Murray N. Rothbard

A systematic libertarian manifesto applied to war, education, welfare, streets, and more.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Ethics of Liberty

Murray N. Rothbard

Rothbard's philosophical defense of natural rights, property, and a free society.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

What Has Government Done to Our Money?

Murray N. Rothbard

A clear route into money, inflation, central banking, and monetary intervention.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

Human Action

Ludwig von Mises

The major treatise behind modern Austrian economics. Start with the introduction and take your time.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

Liberalism

Ludwig von Mises

A concise classical-liberal case for private property, peace, toleration, and limited government.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

No Treason: The Constitution of No Authority

Lysander Spooner

A radical challenge to consent, political obligation, and the binding power of constitutions.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Market for Liberty

Linda and Morris Tannehill

A practical anarcho-capitalist exploration of law, security, and social cooperation without a state.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Machinery of Freedom

David D. Friedman

A consequentialist tour of how law and public services might work through markets.

[OPEN THE AUTHOR'S FREE DOWNLOADS](#)

FREE

The Conscience of an Anarchist

Gary Chartier

A left-libertarian argument for peaceful cooperation and a society beyond state privilege.

[DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

On Liberty

John Stuart Mill

The enduring defense of individuality and the harm principle, paired here with a scholarly free edition.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Federalist Papers

Hamilton, Madison, and Jay

The strongest original case for the Constitution - best read beside its Anti-Federalist critics.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

ESSAYS AND DOCUMENTS

The arguments you can finish before the coffee gets cold.

Some of the best liberty writing is compact enough to share in a group chat. This section also adds the primary documents and practical civil-liberties resources the older list needed.

FREE

The Use of Knowledge in Society

F. A. Hayek

Why the information needed to coordinate society is scattered among millions of people and carried by prices.

[READ FREE AT ECONLIB](#)

FREE

That Which Is Seen and That Which Is Not Seen

Frederic Bastiat

The broken-window lesson in full: count opportunity costs, not just visible activity.

[READ FREE AT OLL](#)

FREE

Civil Disobedience

Henry David Thoreau

A foundational argument about conscience, noncooperation, and the individual's relationship to the state.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

The Declaration of Independence

Continental Congress

Read the charges, not just the opening lines. The National Archives provides a transcript and high-resolution scans.

[READ THE PRIMARY SOURCE](#)

FREE

The Constitution and Bill of Rights

National Archives

Full transcripts and scans of America's charter and its first ten amendments.

[OPEN THE FOUNDING DOCUMENTS](#)

FREE

Know Your Rights

ACLU

Practical guides for protests, police encounters, students, immigrants, photographers, and more.

[OPEN THE FREE GUIDES](#)

FREE

Introduction to Libertarianism

Jason Kuznicki / Libertarianism.org

A readable map of the philosophy, its history, and its internal disagreements.

[READ FREE](#)

FREE

What Is Libertarianism?

David Boaz / Cato Institute

A compact statement of limited government, individual rights, peace, and free markets.

[READ FREE](#)

FREE

Economics for Beginners

Mises Institute

A modular course linking approachable readings, podcasts, videos, and books for new students.

[OPEN THE FREE COURSE](#)

FREE

Interactive Constitution

National Constitution Center

Clause-by-clause explanations that distinguish areas of scholarly agreement from live constitutional debate.

[EXPLORE FREE](#)**WATCH THIS FIRST**

Short videos that earn the click.

The older list included good videos but several titles and URLs no longer matched. These are direct links to the item or an official educational page.

FREE

What Is Libertarianism?

Learn Liberty

A quick animated orientation to political freedom and individual choice.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

The Philosophy of Liberty

Ken Schoolland

The compact self-ownership argument that has introduced millions to libertarian ideas.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

Milton Friedman Explains I, Pencil

FEE

Two minutes on why no central planner knows enough to make even a common pencil alone.

[WATCH FREE AT FEE](#)

FREE

Fear the Boom and Bust

EconStories

Keynes and Hayek turn competing explanations of the business cycle into an economics rap battle.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

The Case for Free Trade

Milton Friedman

A classic defense of voluntary exchange across borders and the costs of protectionism.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

What Are Civil Liberties?

Crash Course Government

A brisk overview of the Bill of Rights, incorporation, due process, and privacy.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

Your Rights During a Police Encounter

Flex Your Rights

Practical, non-confrontational guidance on silence, consent to searches, and staying safe.

[WATCH FREE ON YOUTUBE](#)

FREE

Constitution 101

National Constitution Center

A free, structured video curriculum on text, history, interpretation, and landmark cases.

[OPEN THE FREE COURSE](#)

LONG-FORM RABBIT HOLES

Full documentaries, lectures, and series - free to watch.

Streaming catalogs move; official full-video links age better. These films and series give the ideas room to breathe.

FREE

The Power of Choice: The Life and Ideas of Milton Friedman

Free To Choose Network

A 90-minute documentary on Friedman's life, influence, and stubborn defense of freedom.

[WATCH THE FULL DOCUMENTARY](#)

FREE

Thomas Sowell: Common Sense in a Senseless World

Free To Choose Network

A one-hour biography and intellectual portrait hosted by Jason Riley.

[WATCH THE FULL DOCUMENTARY](#)

FREE

Free to Choose: The Power of the Market

Milton Friedman

The series opener explains prices and voluntary exchange, then brings critics into the studio for a real debate.

[WATCH THE FULL EPISODE](#)

FREE

Free to Choose: Who Protects the Consumer?

Milton Friedman

A documentary and panel debate on regulation, competition, capture, and consumer protection.

[WATCH THE FULL EPISODE](#)

FREE

Free To Choose Network

Official YouTube channel

The deepest free documentary archive on markets, political economy, and the people behind the ideas.

[BROWSE FULL VIDEOS](#)

FREE

Milton Friedman Speaks

Free To Choose Network

Long lectures and Q-and-A sessions on inflation, money, equality, freedom, and public policy.

[BROWSE THE SERIES](#)

FREE

Mises University Lectures

Mises Institute

Hundreds of lectures on Austrian economics, money, history, law, and political philosophy.

[BROWSE FREE LECTURES](#)

FREE

Cato Institute Events and Debates

Cato Institute

Policy forums and debates from a broad classical-liberal institution.

[BROWSE FREE EVENTS](#)

FICTION AND FILM

Stories can smuggle an argument past the guards.

The original list included a strong shelf of libertarian fiction and dystopian film. We keep the best trailheads, but we no longer print streaming-service claims that may be wrong by next Tuesday.

FREE

For the Win

Cory Doctorow

A networked labor and freedom story released by the author under a Creative Commons license.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

FREE

Little Brother

Cory Doctorow

A young-adult surveillance-state thriller about security theater, privacy, and resistance.

[READ OR DOWNLOAD FREE](#)

LIBRARY

Atlas Shrugged

Ayn Rand

Big, melodramatic, influential, and impossible to ignore in the history of modern individualism.

[FIND IT AT A LIBRARY](#)

LIBRARY

The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress

Robert A. Heinlein

Lunar revolt, voluntary order, political strategy, and a self-aware computer with opinions.

[FIND IT AT A LIBRARY](#)

LIBRARY

The Probability Broach

L. Neil Smith

An alternate America built around radical individual liberty and distrust of centralized power.

[FIND IT AT A LIBRARY](#)

FILM

The Lives of Others

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

A devastating drama about surveillance, conformity, conscience, and the East German secret police.

[CHECK LEGAL AVAILABILITY](#)

FILM

Brazil

Terry Gilliam

A darkly funny bureaucratic nightmare where paperwork becomes a weapon and escape becomes rebellion.

[CHECK LEGAL AVAILABILITY](#)

FILM

Minority Report

Steven Spielberg

A propulsive argument about prediction, pre-crime, due process, and whether the state may punish a future act.

[CHECK LEGAL AVAILABILITY](#)

Also worth the argument: The Fountainhead, V for Vendetta, Serenity, The Giver, Equilibrium, They Live, The Hunger Games, and South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut. Borrow, rent, or buy them legally; the lesson is the discussion afterward, not a stale list of streaming apps.

KEEP GOING

Channels, libraries, and shows worth subscribing to.

A list should lead somewhere. These sources publish enough free material to keep the trail alive after this PDF goes stale.

FREE

ReasonTV

News, documentaries, interviews, and commentary

A wide-ranging libertarian video newsroom with a deep archive.

[VISIT THE CHANNEL](#)

FREE

Learn Liberty

Short courses and explainers

Approachable lessons in economics, philosophy, law, and political thought.

[VISIT THE CHANNEL](#)

FREE

Foundation for Economic Education

Articles, courses, and video

Markets, entrepreneurship, history, and the freedom philosophy for new audiences.

[EXPLORE FEE](#)

FREE

Online Library of Liberty

Free scholarly editions

A huge, searchable library of primary texts in political philosophy, law, and economics.

[OPEN THE LIBRARY](#)

FREE

Libertarianism.org

Essays, podcasts, and intellectual history

A broad introduction to the tradition and its arguments across centuries.

[EXPLORE THE LIBRARY](#)

FREE

Mises Institute

Books, lectures, podcasts, and courses

The largest free archive centered on Austrian economics and radical liberalism.

[OPEN THE LIBRARY](#)

FREE

Cato Institute

Policy, civil liberties, and debates

Research and commentary across economics, law, foreign policy, technology, and rights.

[EXPLORE CATO](#)

FREE

National Constitution Center

Nonpartisan constitutional education

Primary texts, scholar debates, live classes, and free video courses.

[EXPLORE THE CONSTITUTION](#)

FREE

John Stossel

Video commentary and reporting

Fast, skeptical reporting on regulation, markets, speech, and government failure.

[VISIT THE CHANNEL](#)

FREE

TomWoodsTV

History, economics, and decentralization

Talks and interviews from a prolific libertarian historian and podcaster.

[VISIT THE CHANNEL](#)

FREE

Wake Up America

Austin Petersen and the 4Liberty Network

Daily news, interviews, argument, and the occasional well-aimed rhetorical cannonball.

[WATCH AND SUBSCRIBE](#)

FREE

The Daily Volley

4Liberty Network

The stories worth knowing, the receipts behind them, and a straight path to the full report.

[READ THE LATEST VOLLEY](#)

SHARE THE LIST. START THE ARGUMENT. KEEP YOUR POWDER DRY.

[4LIBERTYNETWORK.COM](https://4libertynetwork.com)

Editorial note: inclusion means a resource is useful for understanding or debating liberty; it is not an endorsement of every claim, institution, or person linked. Links were reviewed for the August 2026 edition. Report a dead link at the advertising or contact page on 4LibertyNetwork.com.