



Episode 1,081: How to Jolt People Out of Conventional Thinking (and Push Them in Our Direction?)

Guest: Mance Rayder

WOODS: Just told people about your clever book. Very clever idea, very nice endorsement by Scott Horton, and people who listen to this show are by and large huge fans of Scott Horton. Let's start with your background. You sound like a young guy, but I don't know anything about you. How'd you get into all this?

RAYDER: It's a boring tale. It's been told many times: the 2007 debates with Ron Paul. I went to work the morning after the Giuliani event, the Giuliani showdown, and people were talking about it, and the environment that I worked in at the time was very, very right-wing, and I would say that I was probably more right-wing than anything at that time. But when I heard Ron Paul say that they hate us because we're over there, basically things that I had been thinking about for years just clicked and I was on the Ron Paul train from that moment on for 2007-2008.

WOODS: How does the Ron Paul train specifically take you to some of the fairly radical conclusions that I find in your book?

RAYDER: Well, it's funny. I heard some people talking recently about why Ron Paul didn't do better in 2012, and I think what happened in 2007-2008 was a lot of people, they learned about the Mises Institute, they learned that Ron Paul was a fan of Murray Rothbard and people like that, and they started reading those books. And I think a lot of them went down the road of voluntarism, anarchism, anarchocapitalism that it caused a lot of people to abandon the political process. And I mean, I think a lot of the people that I've talked to, when they were following Ron Paul in 2007-2008, they were on board with everything he had to say, and if they didn't abandon it after it came down to we knew it was either going to be McCain or Obama, I think the ones that didn't just jump off the train started reading more, and my reading took me down — I read your book *Meltdown*; I read — Probably the book that sent me over the top was Lew Rockwell's *The Left, the Right, and the State*.

WOODS: Yeah, that's a great book. Very underrated. Great book.

RAYDER: Oh, yeah, that book is insane. I mean, go buy that book. Just, after I read that book, it was like, I abandoned everything politically and I started studying more, anything that I could get my hands on that was anarchocapitalist or voluntarist.

WOODS: What's the idea behind your book? What are you trying to do here?

RAYDER: The idea is to take somebody who's either a beginning libertarian or somebody who's asking questions and to be able to hand them a book that is very easy to read. One of the books that sent me down the path was *Anatomy of the State* by Rothbard. It's only 60 pages. It's very easy to read. But a lot of people these days, they don't seem like they have the time to even read a book like that, so me handing off *Human Action* to somebody, I think they're just going to use it as a door stop.

So I wanted to come up with something that people could read on a daily basis, something that they could take five minutes, even less than five minutes out of their time where they can look at a meme on one side of the page – try to make the meme as possible and try not to make it to straw man-y – and then have on the other side a commentary basically on the meme. And what I'm trying to do, the purpose of it is, if somebody used this for 31 days, because it's designed to be read over to a 31-day period, that by the end of that 31-day period I want them to understand that, no matter what the culture looks like, the state is the problem. And if you look at the culture and you say, *Wow, look at what's happening*, realize that the people in the culture who are causing problems right now – your Antifas, your leftists, this craziness on college campuses – it would not be happening if the state wasn't there to empower it or to let it happen.

WOODS: I could pick really any of these at random for us to talk about, but the idea then is that it's a month project that you could – I mean, obviously you could read this whole thing in one sitting, but you've organized it so that every day you introduce some meme that is really very radical for most people, but it's radical in a way that nags at them, that gets them thinking, that maybe they don't accept it right away but as they walk around through the day, it's in the back of their minds and they think, *I can't accept this but I'm not sure why*. And we're good at that. We're experts at that. That's the kind of thing we do very well.

How about day number 10? I don't know if you have it in front of you, but day number 10 is the rights double standard. So what you've got is a chart, and on one side a list of terms that we use for different things that government does and when government does it we call them these various things, but when anybody else does it, we call them these various things. And it kind of shows there's a double standard at work here. Talk to us about that.

RAYDER: Well, that's a theme that I use on various days, and I try to spread it out and I want to come back to that theme constantly because it's very important. I think it's important for people to realize that – philosophically, I believe that if I possess a right, I can pass that right on to somebody else. So if I have the right to protect myself, I can ask somebody else to protect me. But if I don't have the right to break into my neighbor's house with a gun because I think he may be cooking meth or something like that, if I can't ask another neighbor to do it, how can we vote people to do that? Or basically bring it back to this: how can we give a class of people rights that we don't possess? How can we tell government, *Yes, I want you to be able to take 30% of the income of everybody within this society*, if I don't have the right to go to my neighbor and demand 30% of his income every week?

And it's inconsistent to believe that, just because – and I think it's all out of fear. I think that the reason why we give government and especially police – because police, they're closer to us. We encounter them when we leave the house. We see them. To be able to pass along rights to them that we don't possess ourselves, to be able to stop a car because they have a tail light out – how do they know they have a tail light out? If they have an older car, their dash isn't telling them that they have a tail light out, and unless somebody else tells you, how

do you know? And to pass a law — and to say, *Okay, what I want you to do is I want you to pull this person over, I want you to extort money from them, and if they give you any lip about it, you can escalate that to kidnapping them and putting them in a cage or possibly killing them*, that to me, that's not logical. It's not logical that we can pass along that kind of right to somebody else.

And especially when you take into consideration the many things that people are arrested for that it turns out that they were innocent, yet they have been taken and put in a cage and it could be six months to a year. This is something that we don't think about because we live in fear of other people. We live in fear of the world around us. And so we think that we have to give other people this supreme power to do something about it, and especially preemptively. And one of the main themes running through my whole book is trying to get people to understand that, if you're going to have people to protect you, they shouldn't have any other right than a right that you possess.

WOODS: Fair enough. Now, there's another one on day 11, which is not the most significant one by any means and it's unlike the others in that it's not taking a deep-seeded statist misconception of the world and correcting it, but it still is one that irritates the heck out of me. And that's the one where the person says, *Ha ha ha, I thought you libertarians believed in free markets, and I just saw one of you guys criticizing the way somebody runs his business or criticizing his employment practices or his practices about speech on his property or whatever. And that goes to show you're not consistent.* Does it?

RAYDER: When I saw that meme, the only thing I could think of was the whole Google situation.

WOODS: Right.

RAYDER: That, well, you don't truly believe in a free market unless you believe that they have the right to fire James Damore and they can run their business any way they want. Well, it comes back to free speech. I mean, that's what I think. And it also comes back to the market. Okay, if somebody is doing something in their business that you think is wrong, even if you believe that they have the right to do it, you should be able to criticize it. Imagine if you have a platform to criticize it, and the company hears it and they actually take it into account, implement what you're suggesting, and it changes their business and their business grows. Well, that's a good thing. And then there's the other side of it, where imagine a whole bunch of people heard about this and decided that they didn't want to do business with this company any more. Well, that's the way the market works.

To say that I don't have a right — and I would expect this even more from the government. I mean, the government does so much to protect these corporations. I mean, the 2008 bailouts and everything. And Google has so much power that, how can you not have an opinion when you see a company doing something, even if you believe they have the right to do it? It's just a way to try to get people to shut down, and it really has nothing to do with the argument. I mean, it could be used — It's the same as bringing up race in argument and throwing out straw men. It's just remarkable.

WOODS: Well, it's like — you could see them making the same argument like this. They could say, *Well, you're libertarians and you believe that we should all be free and the government shouldn't tell us what to do, and then on the other hand, I see you turn around*

and criticize somebody for being late all the time or for lying or for screaming obscenities at passersby. And why? I thought you believed in freedom. Yeah, okay, but I also have the freedom to yell at people, and secondly, I never said everybody's going to do things I like. I never said that. I just said that if they don't physically hurt anybody they should be able to do it, but it doesn't mean they should be immune from criticism. So of course it's like a deliberate misunderstanding or you're dealing with a not very bright person. All right, we've got more of these fun things to come after we thank our sponsor.

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We're going to skip ahead to day 31, the last day of this process. And the meme I'm looking at has Rod Serling from *The Twilight Zone*, and it says, "Imagine, if you will, a world where people are so brainwashed by the media that they actually think they are in control of their own lives." Now, I'm going to have you comment on that, but is that not — Well, let me put it this way. Isn't this hyperbole? I mean, it's true that the government is in control of a lot, but I've chosen my own occupation. I've chosen where I want to live. I built this house more or less according to my own specifications. I make decisions about where my kids go to school. I mean, I'm just trying to give you a devil's-advocate argument. So yeah, it's true that they say things that aren't true and there are some regulations here and there, but I've managed to eke out a fairly comfortable existence. So what's the big problem?

RAYDER: I agree with you. For the most part, we can make choices. When I make a choice, I want to take everything into consideration and I want to have all the information that I can, and I want that information to be true. The media right now, I don't even have words for it, how for three days now — how the news cycle has just collapsed, where they're outraged about one thing for two days, and then it switches and the world's going to end here, the world's going to end with this thing. In the last six months, I've died four times from having tax cuts and net neutrality and now the government shutdown, I mean, it just absolutely killed me. I can't believe I'm still alive.

When I'm making a decision, I want to have all the information. And say I'm making a decision about making a big move, moving to another state. And the press is just — Think about this. Last year, would anybody in the world would have wanted to move to Charlottesville, Virginia? The press took this thing that happened there and they stayed on it for weeks. And they made it sound like there was 100,000 people there, and by all accounts — I think Michael Malice said he was there and it seemed like there was less than 500 people there. Yet they reported on this and they reported on — and something tragic happened that we never got the full story on that. We never got the full story on this. And then we got stories that, when these people were released from jail, they were released right into the middle of a protesting mob. The press is making the world out to seem like it is a lot worse than it is.

Sure, there's — I mean, there's danger out there. There's a reason I don't live in New York anymore, because I want to be able to take responsibility for myself and protect myself, and by doing that, I want to be able to arm myself. And I think that's on day 5, I talk about that in my book, is arm yourself. Be your own police, because they show up less than 5% of the time to stop a crime.

The press just seems to exacerbate problems. They seem to just make problems bigger than they are. And on a day-to-day basis, if you think that the world is as bad as they make it out to be whenever you turn on the news, it can affect your life choices. And it won't affect my

life choices because I happen to think I'm smart and I can see through it, but I talk to people all the time who are just like, *I'm just skating by because things are just getting so bad. Everything's going to go to crap soon.* And a lot of the blame has to go to them, because there are a lot of people who still look to them as the authority.

WOODS: All right, totally agreed there. No problem. Let's just for fun — just for fun, let's visit day 25. We've got a top and a bottom picture. Top picture: "Oh boy, time to make a friendly joke on my favorite libertarian page." Bottom: "Oops, everyone is cursing at each other." What are you trying to say there?

RAYDER: [laughing] Well, we are a funny bunch, aren't we? I know that I've been following you back to when you were very active with a free Facebook group, and I'm on a lot of libertarian pages now on Facebook, and obviously I'm way more active on Twitter. But I just think it's really funny that, I think most libertarians can agree on 90 to 95%, but how much we're just willing to die on the hill that is that other 5 and 10%. And it could just be something that is a very harmless joke, and everybody being different and everybody being individuals, they're going to jump all over it and somebody's going to say something, and it's going to escalate. And I think that day 25 was more for like a break. Because I'm being so serious throughout the whole book, I just wanted to point out that, yeah, we're a funny bunch. And if people want to learn more about libertarianism, then social media, there are many groups out there that are great for it. And yeah, just realize that we're awesome at in-fighting. I don't know if anyone can do it better.

WOODS: You know, I always push back on this, because I think people are not watching the left closely on this if they think libertarians are the champions of this. I mean, bear in mind you had the Women's March and then you had some black women saying there aren't enough black women here. We're not talking enough about black women, so we have to have a black women part of it, and so then they're fighting over that. You have some feminists who are opposed to the transgender movement, and you have the transgender people who are opposed to that kind of feminist, even if they agree on 98% of other things. But bigger than that would be — I mean, of course the Marxists will have arguments with each other over .0001% deviations. So there's all kinds of stuff like that. And the case where Charlie Rose was accused of sexual harassment. We had a black employee who argued that she was not sexually harassed and the fact that she wasn't sexually harassed was a racist insult. So you know, you can't — these people —

RAYDER: You can't win.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I would rather be a libertarian 8 million times over. And not only that, but if I look at political parties like the Republicans and the Democrats, I bet inside those parties people are fighting over nothing. They're fighting over turf wars. They're not even — at least we're purporting to fight over principles and ideas. These people are fighting over who gets what appropriation and who sits on what committee and who gets what honor. I'll take our in-fighting any day.

RAYDER: One of my favorites from last year — and I just did a section on it in the next book that I'm writing — is cultural appropriation. There was a video last year. I think it was at Berkeley. And a black student was yelling at a white student because the white student had dreadlocks, and she was screaming that he was culturally appropriating I would assume black culture, maybe more specifically Jamaican culture. And all I kept thinking looking at these

two was they probably agree on 99% of everything because they look like they went right down the same road. But this became a public spectacle. I mean, it was all over Facebook. It was all over social media. And all I'm thinking was: you are showing that you're eating yourselves. You're going to eventually just eat yourselves and you're going to become irrelevant.

So yeah, no, I agree. I just enjoy watching the libertarian in-fighting sometimes just because I believe that there are some great minds and that great minds tend to – libertarianism attracts great minds, and some of the arguing is actually – you can actually learn a lot from it. So I enjoy it, but I don't think there's – I hope that we never get to the point that it divides us so that we go our separate ways.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I know. And of course a lot of it is stupid. I get that. But I just mean we're not uniquely guilty of it. The book is *Freedom Through Memedom*. I'm linking to it at TomWoods.com/1081. If people want to follow you, how do they do that? Tell us what you're up to.

RAYDER: I'm on Twitter. I spend a lot of time on Twitter @mnrothbard. So that tells you about some of my influences right there. And the account is called Mance Rayder. Also on Facebook, if you look up "Mance Rayder," you'll see me, same profile pic that I use on Twitter. And the book's on Amazon. It is available for Kindle as well. And if you have Kindle Unlimited, I have it set up so that it's a free download. And very soon, I would say within the next couple of months, I will have my next book coming out. This one is going to concentrate all on the culture of the left.

WOODS: All right, so we're going to link on the show notes page to your website, FreeManBeyondTheWall.com, where you can also find your podcast of the same name. So lots of great stuff you're doing, and we sure appreciate it. Thanks so much.

RAYDER: Thank you very much for having me on, Tom. I appreciate it.