



Episode 1,153: Why the Race for Libertarian Party Chair Is So Contentious

Guest: Joshua Smith

WOODS: You know, I don't do a whole lot of political stuff on the show, but once in a while there's an episode that's just crying out to be made. And I heard those cries and I said: doggone it, we're doing this episode. So let's start off with your background. Who is Joshua Smith?

SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. So you know I served in the United States Navy. I got out some time around 2005. And I really saw the wasteful spending and the loss of innocent human lives, and at the time I didn't know what libertarianism was. I didn't know about non-interventionism; I didn't know about the nonaggression principle. But I knew that I didn't like that, and it really opened my mind to this kind of anti-state movement.

And then I got really into Ron Paul, and I campaigned behind Ron Paul in 2008 because he was speaking the way that I felt. He was talking about ending the war on drugs and auditing or abolishing the Federal Reserve and ending foreign interventionism, and it was just beautiful for me. It really started to make a lot of logical sense to me that people shouldn't be coerced into things and we shouldn't be killing people overseas and we shouldn't be stealing people's stuff. So I really got heavily entrenched into it there and then started getting into the philosophy. I came by way of Ron Paul and Murray Rothbard and F.A. Hayek and great economists such as those guys.

And then I found — I think it was Adam Kokesh, to be honest with you. He really ramped up my activism. I found him — I want to say it was 2008, 2009, and here's this also Iraq War veteran who's going out and getting arrested at the Jefferson Monument for dancing and really showing that the state has a lot of overreach power. And so he really ramped me up in the activism.

Then I found the Libertarian Party sometime around 2010. Joined the party for the first time then, and then never really found an outlet for my activism. I joined in California. I didn't know there was a state and local affiliate; I just knew that I had joined the national party and I was ready to fight for their causes. But then no one ever contacted me. I couldn't get ahold of anybody, and so it really soured me on the political process again. I think I donated for about three months and left the party and continued my own brand of activism.

A couple years back, I got into the publication side of things and just a little over a year ago, we decided to start Think Liberty, if you're familiar with the website and publication Think Liberty. It's been very successful. We push libertarian ideals. We have fun. We do memes. We do opinion pieces, all that good stuff.

And I joined the party again sometime about two years ago here in Washington State. I moved to the Pacific Northwest about six years ago. And I got involved here, and I found an outlet for my activism. I found a state party that was really rocking and working hard and going down and lobbying at the state capitol and fighting for causes that meant a lot to me. And so I joined the party. I became a region rep here, and I took over a region that had five counties but only one county affiliate. Since then, I've gone out trying to recruit people, and I've built two new affiliates, working on another one, and found one that was overlooked by the prior region rep, so we're getting them back into the fold. So my entire time with the party has just been activism locally, obviously, and I think to the Libertarian Party that should be what's most important.

And so I guess it's been about a year ago — well, September, I saw a national leadership team that wasn't reflecting this ground-level activism and these grassroots activists that we have in the party. We have some of the best in the country. And so I decided to issue an intent-to-run statement as kind of a challenge to Nick Sarwark that I would be running for chair. I was relatively unknown, but since then, I've been able to put together this real grassroots movement. I have tons of supporters all over the country. I've been able to raise over \$8,000. I've been to 15 states in the last 17 weeks for state conventions and the like. I've been to an LNC meeting where me and Michael Heist, who you've had on before from the Mises Caucus, we were able to get a blockchain committee instituted into the Libertarian Party, so now we're the first national political party that is fighting for blockchain solutions and cryptocurrency causes. So yeah, it's been an awesome road, and that's what's led me here and that's where we're at today.

WOODS: Do you consider yourself part of the Mises Caucus?

SMITH: I do. I am actually the Washington State rep for the Mises Caucus, and I was the first person that they endorsed for any position, and I've tried to help out as much as I can. I think it's a very noble cause. Obviously I'm an Austrian school guy, big Ron Paul fan. So yeah, absolutely, I consider myself a part of it and I'm proud to be a part and proud to be chosen to help lead the movement.

WOODS: Well, of course, we want to make distinct what it is that you want to do and what the purpose of the Mises Caucus is, even though no doubt there's a lot of overlap there. Can you take a minute in case people didn't listen to that earlier episode, to explain what the purpose of the Mises Caucus of the Libertarian Party is?

SMITH: Yeah. I think the purpose is — honestly, the purpose that I've seen is to reinvigorate the Ron Paul revolution. We have all of these libertarians out there that aren't a part of the Libertarian Party, and they're not because they don't feel like they're represented by the Libertarian Party. And so we're trying to bring that movement home and try to fight for libertarian causes as a united front, and so I think the caucus has been doing a really good job of that. They've signed up hundreds and hundreds of people to the national and their local and state parties and they're rocking. And like I said, I think it's a very noble cause.

WOODS: So you are now running for chair of the party — I guess Libertarian National Committee chair? What's the official title?

SMITH: Yeah, it's the chair of the Libertarian National Committee.

WOODS: Okay. Now, that has just got to be thankless, because I am pretty certain people are going to be hurling abuse at you. They're probably accusing you of things you don't believe, have never believed, would never in a million years believe, have in fact devoted your life to opposing, and yet you're the poster child for those that – can I just take a wild guess that that's happened?

SMITH: [laughing] Yeah, absolutely. I mean, people are –

WOODS: How did I know? How did I know? It's almost like –

SMITH: – just like slinging all these insults at me [laughing].

WOODS: It's unbelievable. It's almost like that's happened to me too. I don't even recognize myself in the things these people say. And it's so funny, because you go around and you speak a lot and people follow you, and I put out an episode every weekday and I have a lot of people who listen every single day, and they know us so well that when somebody comes along and says these unbelievable things about us, it makes people think: these people must be mentally ill if they think this about Woods and Joshua Smith. I mean, seriously, what other explanation is there? Either they're mentally ill or they're just trying to destroy you.

SMITH: Yeah.

WOODS: Now, I kind of wish they were mentally ill, because then there'd be an excuse for it.

SMITH: Right, it's funny –

WOODS: By the way, some of them I think are mentally ill. I don't want to rule that out.

SMITH: Some maybe, absolutely. Well, here's the thing: I've been to 15 states in the last 17 weeks. If I had not been able to finance this state convention tour, there'd be a large swath of the movement that might think I'm white nationalist or whatever other things they're throwing at me, you know? But yeah, the information's out there. If people want to know about me, they can come to me and ask me any question they want at any time, and I'll let them know. This is just how politics works, unfortunately, and I just grin and bear it and keep going. And I've got a mission and a goal to achieve, and I'm not going to let them bring me down.

WOODS: Well, tell me what the mission and goal is, and do it in a way that contrasts you with the direction that you think the party has been heading in, I don't know, the past ten years or so.

SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. Well, a big thing that's kind of taken over our party recently is identity politics. Obviously you know about that; I know about that. We've had these insults thrown at us that are nowhere near true. So I'd like to kind of get the party away from that, start focusing on the grassroots activism. Again, like I said, I want to focus really on state and local races. I think we have some really good, viable candidates out there that don't get any help from the national party whatsoever. I've talked pretty extensively about wanting to upgrade our technology for the party because, you know, they're running ten years behind the DNC and the RNC as far as technology. I think we can start doing a national podcast

spotlighting our candidates all over the country. We're bringing people to the party in droves right now, but we need to get them into positions to help effect change and kill bad legislation and start fighting some of this governmental overreach.

And if we continue to start playing identity politics in our own party and continue to keep fighting amongst ourselves and not focusing on these races that we have all over the country — we're running 800 candidates right now across the country for 2018. And the goal was 2,000, which I think is a little too big for us, but we really need to start focusing on those local and state elections. And I think we have the tools to do that.

We've really got to focus on fundraising, something that I've talked about a lot. I've raised more crypto donations for my campaign in the last five months than the national party has in the last year, and I think we raised \$2.2 million in 2016 during a campaign year. And to contrast that, the DNC raised \$400 million. So I've really been a big proponent of reaching out to the crypto community, bringing them into the party. They're already fighting for a very libertarian cause, a decentralized currency that's going to circumvent the federal government. There's billions of dollars wrapped up there. There's millions of potential activists. And so I really want to reach out to them as opposed to just yelling and screaming at them to give us donations like the national party has been doing for the last year.

So I mean, that's just a small portion of what I want to do, but those are the things — I've seen the LNC. They're not great at fundraising. I have a proposal that we put together a fundraising team with some of our best fundraisers throughout the movement. We have Boomer Shannon down in California that's raised over \$250,000 for a county candidate, Jeff Hewitt there. We have people like Jane Gray and Jess Mears, who have raised thousands and thousands of dollars for Larry Sharpe. You know, Larry Sharpe's raised about \$200,000 or so in New York. And these are great assets, but we're not treating them like they're part of the process and bringing them together and figuring out what kind of ideas we can come up with together, what kind of viral marketing campaigns can we put together. So there's a lot of work to be done, and I could go on about this all day, but those are just some of the smaller things that I want to start right away after I win.

WOODS: I've been pretty friendly with Larry Sharpe, and he came on the show also. Generally when I deal with people who are in politics in one way or another or are running for office, I have to know them personally before I'll have them on the show, because I know that some people may wind up donating to them and I don't want them to give unless I can vet them and say: look, to the extent that anyone can know another person's heart, I can tell you that this is a good guy. So I did that with Larry Sharpe. But I know that there's been some — I don't know what it's about, but I don't know if Larry feels like there's just too much drama coming out of the national party or what, but he seems to have been distancing himself from that. Am I imagining that?

SMITH: Well, he was an alternate rep for his region for the LNC, and he stepped down because of the constant in-fighting caused by Arvin Vohra and some of the really bad messaging coming out of Nick and Arvin. So yeah, he stepped away from that. He still is part of the party and he's doing his thing on the East Coast, but yeah, he stepped away from leadership as a national region rep.

WOODS: Let me ask you this. Let me just come right out and ask you something like this. Let's suppose something occurs that is not a complete impossibility, that Bill Weld gets the

nomination, the presidential nomination for the LP. How do you respond to that? I mean, you're the party chair, and if the party chooses this guy, you've got to throw your influence and support behind him. Is that a problem?

SMITH: I mean, Bill Weld's not my first choice, Tom [laughing]. As chair, obviously I would be bound by the delegates to help support our presidential nominee, but I think that the delegates will pull a trick out of their sleeve and hopefully find us a better candidate. That's my goal, is to find us better candidates to run for the presidential nomination in the Libertarian Party. I know Michael Heise came on here and proposed that to you once, Tom.

WOODS: Yeah, well, we're not going to talk about that. This is my show. We're going to talk about what I want to.

SMITH: [laughing]

WOODS: Now, on that Weld point, it's funny; sometimes I get sucked into Facebook threads that I shouldn't, and there was one where there was somebody who doesn't like you — I mean, it's hard to believe that genial guys like you and me would have enemies, period. My kids cannot fathom this, by the way. "There are people who don't like you?" they say to me. Well, yeah, apparently there are. But there was a thread where somebody was saying: oh, I can't wait to see — if Joshua Smith were elected, I can't wait to see his response and his face and what he would do if Bill Weld got the nomination. And I thought: well, those are weird priorities.

SMITH: Right.

WOODS: So you're more excited about seeing if Joshua Smith would be uncomfortable than you are upset about the prospect of a Bill Weld. How weird. You're more gleeful that Joshua Smith might be uncomfortable than you are upset that a guy like Bill Weld, who I think is a very much status-quo kind of guy — I mean, you think anything's going to change with the Fed under Bill Weld? You think anything's going to change with the empire under Bill Weld? And to me, the Fed and the empire, these are two major things.

And you know, another thing about all this. People like you and I — or I don't want to drag you into this, but I certainly am accused of being somebody who is unnecessarily divisive, and, *We're trying to reach out to the left and people like Woods are causing problems.* No. First of all, you try to reach out to the left, they bite your hand off no matter who you are as soon as they find out you don't favor universal health care. That ain't Tom Woods' fault. But secondly, the issues I focus on, which are the Fed and the empire, are excellent entry points if there were some prospect of cooperating with the left. Those are the points. Or the drug war. Now, sometimes the lefties are — you know, left-libertarians are okay on the drug war, but by and large, this is what it's all about. And yet they're bored to death with those. *That's embarrassing. We don't want to talk about the Fed. We don't want to talk about the empire. Let's talk about, I don't know, some wonkish bit of nothingness.* Not my style.

SMITH: Right, yeah, and I absolutely agree. I think ending foreign interventionism is probably — I mean, that's the number-one pinnacle of my preferred policy. And yeah, I've had success reaching out to the left with that, so I never understand why libertarians don't want to talk

about ending the Fed and foreign interventionism and the drug war, because those are the things we can see eye to eye with lots of Americans across the country on.

WOODS: Now, Joshua, I don't want to spend the whole time, or at least a good chunk of the time, just talking about in-fighting and stuff like that. By the way, there's in-fighting everywhere. I reject the idea that libertarians are uniquely prone to in-fighting. The Democrats can't stand each other either. The Republicans can't stand each other. The Marxists can't stand each other. I mean, you find this everywhere, so it's not like there's something wrong with our brains as libertarians that makes us prone to this. It is everywhere.

But it is an issue. It is a problem. Now, the current leadership is saying that we need to attack certain people because we need to clarify who we are and what we stand for as libertarians. Now, if you were chair, wouldn't there be a situation in which you would feel it necessary to clarify: such-and-such person either is not a libertarian or needs to be scolded in some way? So would your complaint be that the current leadership is scolding the wrong people? Or is your complaint about scolding in general, or it's just, of all possible things you could spend your time doing, it seems like a weird thing to do? Where are you coming from on this?

SMITH: Yeah, I don't think we need to go out of our way to purposely scold people. When I first put out my initial platform, it kind of sounded like I wanted to purge left-libertarians to some people, and that wasn't my goal. That was never my goal. My goal was to have candidates who are going to put our principles at the forefront of their campaigns. I think that's really important.

And so my newest platform that I just released this morning, by the way, it comes from a place where, as a national party, we have resources to help our candidates, and if our candidates aren't going to spout the most basic ideals, such as property rights and the nonaggression principle, then they just won't get our support. We can't run around supporting communists in the Libertarian Party. I think that's a really terrible idea. But I'm not going to go out of my way to scold them when we have more important things to focus on, and that's kind of going to be up to their state and local parties if they want to get rid of them or not.

WOODS: What is the role of the national party vis-a-vis state and local chapters of the party?

SMITH: So some of it's left up to imagination, you could say. Really, it should be there to build a base for our candidates, help our candidates get elected, help our candidates figure out how to run campaigns, figure out how to door-knock and fundraise and get volunteers. And that's something that they're not doing right now at all. The national party has dropped the ball so many times on some of these big campaigns.

Like we had Ron Bishop running down there in Alabama against Roy Moore, and the entire nation's media had descended on Alabama, and Ron Bishop got a record number of write-in votes. The state turned blue for the first time ever in maybe history, and we put out a meme and a reminder to vote. That's about what we did for his entire campaign. That campaign could have gotten Alabama ballot access, you know? So instead, we'll dump \$100,000 in another state to work on ballot access petitions as opposed to, I don't know, going to Alabama, getting on the steps of the capitol, being loud, letting the people of Alabama know that they have a third option.

So we drop the ball in that aspect a lot, so I don't think — currently, I think the LNC does a lot of arguing over what color towels they need to have at the national headquarters as opposed to what we can do for our candidates, and I propose that our LNC meetings need to consist of just that: sit down; if you like to have a beer, crack a beer; let's go over the email list; let's do the committee reports; and now let's figure out what we're going to do for the next three months for our candidates at grassroots level.

WOODS: All right, here's a fundamental question for anybody who's going to be in some way involved in libertarian strategy, political strategy. You have a country that, when you poll them, is not libertarian. And I don't think it's that they really are libertarian; they just don't know it yet. I wish that were the case. And there are some people that's true of, by the way, that I used to reach when I would teach. I wasn't even trying to propagandize them, but they figured things out, and then they started to read things on their own, and they said: you know, I am a libertarian. I don't think that's true of most Americans. How do you forge ahead given that situation, that reality?

SMITH: Right, well, the battle against statism is always going to be hard for the Libertarian Party. We just did a poll — well, it wasn't a poll. We were looking over some numbers, and with the current trajectory we're on right now, we won't be in the majority until 2074, and I know I won't be running in 2074. So I think we really need to keep a consistent, principled message. I think we need to reach out — when we're reaching out across the aisles, we need to find things that we do see eye to eye on. Like we spoke about just earlier, we need to talk about foreign interventionism. We need to be loud about foreign interventionism. We need to let people know that their tax money is going to kill brown people overseas. I think that's really, really important.

This consistent, principled message is what we need. We don't need to be super inflammatory. I'm not a big fan of Arvin Vohra and his inflammatory messages, even if I agree with some of his principles. And we don't need to be like the two old parties. There's 60% of the population right now in the United States that's not voting. They're just not voting, and it's because they don't see a home on the political left or right, and so if we can find — or not even political left or right, but the Republicans and the Democrats. So if we can keep that consistent messaging from national, if we can show people that we're not like the two old parties but we're not trying to push them away from our causes and we can work on the causes that we see eye to eye on together, build coalitions, I think we can really make a difference and start bringing some of those people over and making them radicalized activists for the party.

WOODS: I was keynoting the Illinois Libertarian Party convention maybe four years ago. I had one of my daughters with me. She met Mary Ruwart, and Lee Wrights was there, who has since died, but he was a great guy. And I was saying that — and people were telling me I should run for president of the LP, and it just can't happen, unfortunately, but it's very sweet of people to say.

But I was saying, in the messaging and in the ads, it should be made to seem ridiculous that you're still in one of the old parties. It should be portrayed as like in the old days we had three TV channels and two newspapers and that was it. And in the old days, we had two political parties. And each one should be represented by some silver-haired person in a — not that I have anything — I'm becoming silver-haired myself. No problem with that. But a silver-haired person in a Buick. A blue one, a blue Buick and a red Buick. And that would represent

that traditional parties. And then say: come on, now. Your parents are wonderful people and you're going to learn a lot of important things from them, but nobody says you have to vote in the same boring parties they voted for, because look what the result has been. Are you happy? That's where that's gotten you.

I mean, I would do it that way. I wouldn't make it seem like, well, what we've done is we've taken the best ideas from the Republicans and married them together with the best ideas from the Democrats. Why would I do that? Because first of all, that's not even true. We're not doing that, so that's not even correct. But that kind of messaging just puts you to sleep. I mean, I might not be able to stay awake for the rest of this thing because of how exhausting it is.

SMITH: [laughing] Yeah, it's absolutely true. We don't need to pander to the two old parties. We're not just socially liberal and economically conservative. We go much deeper than that. We are a logical ideology, and we're one of the only parties that has an ideology. So yeah, we need to really bring that to the forefront and let people know that those two old parties, they're dying. They're dead. They don't serve our causes anymore. And so yeah, I totally agree with you, absolutely.

WOODS: All right, so let's say you're making a pitch for yourself right now in front of a group of people, one-third of whom are big fans of yours, one-third hate your guts, and the other third are willing to listen, and you've got about a minute. What do you say to them?

SMITH: Yeah, absolutely. So I just would talk about my platform. My platform consists of grassroots activism, getting our local and state candidates the resources and the help they need to win elections and start pushing public policy into a more free direction. Upgrading our technology, we need to be able to compete with these two old parties, and we can't do it if we continue to stay out of the technological age. I really want to do a media hit squad. I want to have four people in four corners of the country that are ready to descend on all these media opportunities, much like I talked about in Alabama earlier. We need to start getting into the media. They don't have a vested interest in us or our ideologies, and so we need to start going to them. And I definitely want to do candidate education and start getting our candidates the information that they need to run a solid campaign. I think we've had a lot of issues with that in the past. And then I talk a lot about my coalition-building with the crypto community. I think that's a really libertarian cause. I think they're already fighting for the stuff that we would like to see happen, and so we need to bring them into the party. We need to show them that we're willing to fight for their causes, and I think that's going to bring us a ton of new activists and financial stability that we've never been used to.

WOODS: Joshua, if people want to find out more about this race and your role in it, where online can they go?

SMITH: Yeah, absolutely, so my Facebook page is Joshua Smith for LNC Chair 2018. You can check me out there. I do a lot of posts there. I also have a Steemit. You can follow me at Steemit. If you're not familiar with Steemit, it's a great platform for libertarians because you get paid for your content in crypto. And my Steemit name is @thislifeishard, all one word. It's a really old moniker, so don't worry about it. And then I also have a small landing website at JoshuaSmith4LNC.com.

WOODS: Okay, and I think you're on Twitter, right?

SMITH: I am also on Twitter, yes. I'm still learning the ins and outs of Twitter, so let me see if I can find that handle for you guys. I think that is also @JoshuaSmith4LNC —

WOODS: It's @SmithChair.

SMITH: Yeah, @SmithChair, there you go.

WOODS: [laughing]

SMITH: Listen, I didn't make the Twitter. I'm still learning how to use it. It's not something that I ever used in the past, and it basically just seems like a bunch of flame wars all the time. People are always going at each other's necks there. Is that true for you, Tom?

WOODS: You make it sound like that's a bad thing.

SMITH: [laughing] I have no problem with it. It's okay. It's okay.

WOODS: [laughing] Yeah, yeah, yeah, it's fun, but man, you've really got to manage your time with it or you can spend all day long on it. But it generates a lot of email topics for me, though, because somebody will say something inane and, you know, you can write two or three emails about that. So it's a good source. But yeah, look, we'll give you — you'll have plenty of opportunity to learn the ins and outs of Twitter, and you can hire somebody, have people help you, volunteers once you are the party chair.

Could you just say something about, before I let you go, who else is in the running? You don't necessarily have to put them down or praise them or anything, but just who are they?

SMITH: Currently there's Nicholas Sarwark. He's the incumbent, obviously. Been there for four years and he's running for reelection. There's Alicia Dearn, who is a trial lawyer out of Southern California. I think she lives in Missouri now. She ran for 2016 vice presidential nomination and ended up stepping down and endorsing Bill Weld to the behest of many people in the crowd. There's also two different Matthews. There's Matthew Schutter from Pennsylvania. He's a very loud activist that's been in Pennsylvania for many years, a farmer out there. He's been arrested for the cause several times. And then there is the open communist from Michigan, Matthew Kuehnel, who has stated that libertarianism is communism and he would like to spread socialism through the party. Please don't vote for him.

WOODS: Okay, fair enough. I appreciate your restraint in some cases, but some things just need to be said, I suppose. So what I'm going to do is I will take all these different things that you just said, and I will link to them at TomWoods.com/1153, which is our show notes page for today, so people who want to follow you or wish you well or support you in one way or another can have one single place to go to find all those links. So TomWoods.com/1153. Joshua, best of luck to you. I suppose I will probably be seeing you at the end of June, because I'll be at least briefly at the convention.

SMITH: Yeah, I heard we're putting together a pretty awesome event there that you might be a part of.

WOODS: It's going to be a tremendous event, so now that they've — are we allowed to mention this now?

SMITH: Yeah, we can totally talk about it. Yeah, actually.

WOODS: Yeah, let's do that. Let's do that, because June 30th — this is 2018, because I have people who are months behind on the episodes, so if they're listening in 2020, I don't want them to be disappointed. This is 2018. We've got some fantastic people. I mean, just top-notch, super successful people who are going to be there at this, I don't know, a rally or something, let's say.

SMITH: Yeah, so we're putting on an event that's about a half a mile down from the LNC. I believe it's on day one of the Libertarian National Committee in New Orleans. We're putting on an event where it looks like we're going to have maybe a Tom Woods keynote speaker and possibly Jeff Deist. I know Backwordz will be playing. I'll be speaking. Alex Merced, my vice chair, will be speaking. He's a big Austrian economics guy. So yeah, it's going to be a really big blast. I think there are some other speakers that are still possibly going to come and speak, but it's going to be a really good time and I think you guys should all definitely check it out.

WOODS: Well, I know a few others who I'm pretty sure will definitely be there, and I'm just going to say: you want to be there. And this is in New Orleans, right?

SMITH: Yeah, so just like a half a mile down from the hotel that the national convention will be at.

WOODS: So if you can get there, you should get there because this is going to be epic. It's going to be some of the folks you would most enjoy getting to meet. Funny, sweet, wonderful, brilliant people, which is the great thing about our side is that we have no shortage of such people: smart, funny, brilliant, wonderful people to get to know, great family people. Just normal people, right? Normal people, who, by the way, would not be in the situation where they have to defend themselves and attack people all the time if it hadn't been started by other people. I don't sit around and say: let me go on the attack today against the following 27 people. It never even occurs to me. But when I find myself on the receiving end of this stuff, when I have actually made some contributions here, I feel like that should at least be acknowledged. Like, *Look, he's done some good things, but* — I can't even get that? So yeah, I fight back, but actually, as I say, as my kids can attest, I'm just a nice guy. I'm a dad of five girls, I like to travel; I'm just a regular person. But it's just unbelievable how demonized you get in this movement.

SMITH: I spend a lot of time sticking up for you too, Tom, and if anybody knows how to stick up, it's me.

WOODS: [laughing] Appreciate that. And man, do I come roaring back when anybody like — I mean, Scott Horton is just top notch when it comes to foreign policy, so anybody who has a problem with Scott Horton is going to have a problem with me. I do come back hard when my friends are attacked. Or Dave Smith, I'm so glad he's being so successful, and now he's on CNN regularly. And then Eric July, they all hate Eric July, but Eric July is such a great example of somebody who instead of just being some loser with a webcam and the mic that's built into

his computer, this guy actually went out and accomplished something. He got an album at number five on the hard rock charts of *Billboard*. Yeah, he actually went and did something.

We have so many libertarian Facebook groups run by people who have never accomplished anything about anything. They have never done a thing. But boy, they certainly know who the bad people are, they're going to spend all their time — You know what? You spend your time doing that, and the rest of us will actually produce. Because that seems to be the division of labor in the movement these days.

SMITH: Absolutely.

WOODS: All right, I'm getting off on a tangent here [laughing] —

SMITH: No, I've got one question for you, Tom, actually, because I'm glad that you brought up Scott Horton. I met Scott Horton in Pennsylvania at the Pennsylvania state convention there. Great guy. He's one of my favorites. He's definitely like an idol of mine. Told me to my face that if I won national chair, he would consider joining the party and advising on foreign policy for candidates and the likes. What would it take to get you to do the same, Tom?

WOODS: Oh, geez, wouldn't that rally them all against you if the prospect of that happening were dangled?

SMITH: Well, it would certainly bring the people that I want in the party to the party.

WOODS: Oh, I appreciate that, but you know what? Honestly, with Scott, he's got all this detailed knowledge about a hyper-specific area — well, not super specific, but foreign policy. And he knows everything there is to know about — you name a country, he knows the names, the regions, the battles, the ideological fault lines. He knows everything. He knows all of it.

SMITH: Down to the date, yeah.

WOODS: It's astonishing, and it's scandalous that he hasn't been tapped as a resource up to now. Why would you not? Here he is a guy who just through his own efforts, he just learns and learns and reads and works. His book on Afghanistan, by the way, *Fool's Errand*, the endorsements for that are from super-duper specialists everywhere saying: yeah, if I were training, well, people in the military, people in intelligence, I would want them to read Scott Horton's book. He just did that. He had no think-tank behind him. He had no billionaire donor. He had no chic libertarian people who are well-liked. He's just a guy, and he did all this himself.

So you may say: Woods, are you just trying to distract attention from the fact that you haven't answered my question? Well, partly yes, but what I was trying to get at was I'm not sure — I mean, what I would say to do is just do the libertarian thing. Whatever the thing is, whatever the less-government solution is, generally it's the right thing to do. I mean, once in a while you get into these tricky things: well, if the government owns something, what would be our position on how they should administer it? Well, there isn't really a libertarian position on that, so you'd have to just figure out practically what to do. But I'm not so sure that I have as unique a contribution to make as Scott does from foreign policy, but I appreciate the offer all the same.

SMITH: Well, you and many of your followers are definitely welcome in the party once I take the helm.

WOODS: [laughing] If that happens, we'll all go out and get drunk together. And if it doesn't happen, we'll all go out and get drunk together anyway.

SMITH: I like it. I like it. I'll be in New Orleans. They've got some of the best hurricanes in the world, right?

WOODS: We'll have some fun. Joshua, best of luck to you.

SMITH: Yeah, you as well. Thank you so much, Tom. I really appreciate you having me on.