



Episode 1,212: Michael Malice on Social Media, Alex Jones, and What's Coming Next

Guest: Michael Malice

WOODS: All right, we could be talking about my really, really enjoyable appearance on *Your Welcome* on GasDigitalNetwork.com, where you have your program these days, and we had Matt Welch with us, and we had a great, great — I was going to say it was like an episode in which walls came tumbling down. I'm not sure that wall analogy can be used these days, but it was a great conversation, and I'm really indebted to you for it. But we'll talk about that another time.

Right now, everybody's talking about social media, Alex Jones, what censorship means in the 21st century, stuff like that. So that's what I want to get into, but just before we started recording, you were telling me about something that Vox is now arguing — not Vox Day, the website Vox. But before you get to that, back in April, there was an article I believe on there saying that Joe Rogan needs to be punished, because he's platforming, so-called, a lot of people who are out of the mainstream, so we have to go after Joe Rogan. So the idea that, well, this'll just be Alex Jones because he's sort of a weirdo, so don't anybody worry and we can all just dance on his grave is a little bit shortsighted. So what are they saying today?

MALICE: Well, today, they had a list of all these extremists, and of course the definition of an extremist is someone who I don't approve of. They had Lauren Southern and Molyneux, who's been on this show several times. Lauren has, as well, now that I think about it.

WOODS: Yep.

MALICE: But they also had people like Candace Owens on this list. The idea that Candace Owens, who's pretty much a partisan Republican, is somehow an extremist is demented. And Vox I think is pretty much the worst of the lot. They're in many ways taking the place of the old Gawker, where they're just really ultra-tribalist, very much intellectually disingenuous. And we have to remember, the head of Vox, Ezra Klein, he was caught red-handed as part of a secret mailing list designed to coordinate messaging from various leftist journalists. It was called JournoList. And there have been no consequences for this for him, so I think it's just very telling how they operate. And even when a conspiracy, a quite literal conspiracy, is exposed, it's just like, eh, we're just going to pretend nothing had happened.

WOODS: So my question to you is: what was your reaction to the whole Alex Jones thing? I mean, I'm sure you're like me. You don't listen to Alex Jones. You've been on Alex Jones, as I have. He's not really my cup of tea. He is right on some things, but when he's wrong, he's spectacularly wrong in a bizarre fashion, like you'd have to be trying to be that wrong. And so

everybody responding to this has to start off with, "Well, I don't approve of Alex Jones, but..." Okay, fair enough. But what do you think about what happened to him?

MALICE: Well, I had Cernovich on my show last week, and he predicted it and I didn't disagree whatsoever, because how it works is they'll put the trial balloons out there and see if it's safe to attack a person and see if there's pushback. And sure enough, there was very little pushback to defend Alex Jones for the simple reason — it's just weird to me how people try to pigeonhole Alex Jones as a conservative. I mean, in a broad sense, he's right-wing, but when he's talking about interdimensional aliens launching pedophile rings, this is not exactly the Rick Santorum platform. So we all saw it coming, or a lot of people saw it coming. What was disturbing to me was how it was coordinated among several different organizations. It was Facebook, it was Spotify, Google, and a few others. And what I think happens — there's two scenarios. One is they all have their bat phone to each other and they're calling each other. Or, which I think is more likely, corporate America is very, very unprincipled. They are very risk averse, and as soon as one person steps out or one organization, in this case, and pulls the plug, then everyone else has to make that choice. They either have to follow suit, or they have to be the hold out, in this case as Twitter is, to maintain Jones on their platform. It's a herd mentality.

WOODS: Well, that was my thought, that this is some kind of trial balloon. And by an interesting coincidence, that was also a day when there were some high-profile suspensions on Twitter that I talked about an episode or two ago on this show. So it combined to give the impression to some people that things are really accelerating, that a few years ago, we may have thought, eh, this could happen, but it's like the division in the country gets more intense all the time. And then we got this tweet from this Chris Murphy, this senator from Connecticut, saying that it's not enough to just get rid of this one website, he says, these companies need to do a lot more. Which makes me wonder about what's it going to look like when the Democrats get back in power. Are they going to push harder for stuff like this? What do you think about that?

MALICE: What was interesting is the day Alex Jones got pulled from all these sites, *The Daily Beast* ran an article clutching at pearls, saying I think 40% of Republican want Trump to be able to shut down bad actors in the press and how horrible this is. And the shamelessness that this is done the very day Alex Jones is being pulled from all these different organizations and there's discussion about other people being pulled down shows, I think, the brazenness and the shamelessness. And I think there is a brazenness, because if you are only talking to people who think like you and it's a given that those who disagree with you are literally Hitler and literally Nazis, there's no reason to kind of modulate your perspective, or moderate it, rather.

But here's the other thing: this isn't a surprise in the sense, how long has it been that the left has been freaking out that Fox News exists? Fox News isn't exactly Alex Jones. They're not even One American News Network or Newsmax. They have leftists on all the time. They have moderate Republicans on all the time. I mean, the furthest-right person there I guess is Tucker Carlson, but he's hardly a Mises Institute guy or a Randian. So it drives them existentially crazy, the fact that there are other choices out there, because in their worldview, we need some kind of national unanimity both ideologically, but also economically.

I read this book called *Looking Backward* by Edward Bellamy, which was written over a hundred years ago. And the premise was this guy was a time traveler to, I don't remember what year it was, maybe 2000, and how it was this socialist utopian America. And it was explained how it was happening, and basically the idea was, yeah, in a proper country, everyone's going to think the same and want to work hard for their nation. It's this very disturbing perspective. And they really do have that totalitarian mindset, and when anyone goes against that, it doesn't add up to their worldview and that person must be wiped out of existence, if not literally in extreme cases, at least technically.

WOODS: Well, let's go back to Jones specifically, because what some people could say is: well, he was a purveyor of so-called fake news. Now, that interestingly, is not the grounds on which he was being punished these days. They're saying that it was hate speech. And what I was saying on my show is, I'll grant you I don't listen to Alex Jones, but when I was more familiar with his activities, I wouldn't have thought hate speech would be the thing they'd come at him for, because I don't really think of him as somebody who deals in that, but rather that he promotes conspiracy theories and stuff. So the hate speech thing and then no specifics seemed a little bit odd. But what they could say is: didn't he say that he would kill the special counsel, and plus, isn't he in some way or his listeners harassing the Sandy Hook families? Those are the two things that come up the most.

MALICE: Well, again, Sandy Hook was many years ago, so if they wanted to go after him for Sandy Hook, they could have done so at the time, and I think that's obviously disingenuous. What was shocking to me is that Alex Jones might be the only person on the right who hasn't really been called racist. The first time I saw someone call — I mean, they've called him a loon, understandably, and so on and so forth. The first time I saw him called a racist was Comedy Central, or Communist Central, having a tweet with a screenshot of Jones being banned and saying, Oh, now racists only have Fox News, Twitter, and such and such and such. I've got to tell you, I've got to give Jones credit. Alex Jones might be the only conspiracy theorist on earth who doesn't traffic in racist dog whistles and imagery. Those two things have historically gone hand in hand, so he's kind of an outlier in that regard.

So I don't know — see, it's easy to take one data point and extrapolate it. You remember, they also took out Milo. They also took out Chris Cantwell, and those were spread out fairly far apart. So I don't know that this is — I mean, if they had their druthers, of course, everyone would be banned and silenced. But I do think there is an enormous sense of market pushback, and the great thing about social media, in my view, is they're being called on their BS in real time. And this was also interesting to contrast with Sarah Jeong, who was hired by *The New York Times*, where she had years, literally years — Nick Monroe on Twitter found them all — of anti-white tweets, just blatantly anti-white tweets.

And the head of Quillette — what's her name? Her last name's Lemon; I'm blanking on her first name. She tweeted out how it's interesting that the left has gone from defending their motte-bailey motte position to their bailey position, or whichever one is which. Here's the argument how it usually goes. It goes like this: *do you believe that racism exists?* Absolutely, it's a problem. *Therefore, minorities can't be racists.* Wait, wait, wait, hold on. I didn't say that. *Well, you agreed that racism exists.* So they were explicitly saying — there were articles from *The Daily Dot* saying you can't be racist against white people. And this is just an Orwellian technique to manipulate language in order to force an outcome that you approve of. It's mind-boggling.

So to have these two things happen within a week of each other and to have so many people calling it out I think is very healthy, because they're always going to try — totalitarians of any stripe, they're always going to try to implement their vision. The question is: are there mechanisms to stop them, and are there mechanisms to point out what they're doing? And once people realize what it is that they're doing, having the argument becomes superfluous. Then it just becomes defeating their tactics.

WOODS: There's been a lot of talk these days about maybe the big social media companies ought to be regulated like public utilities or antitrust — in fact, Jones himself was saying that antitrust suits ought to be launched against these big companies. And even some of my own listeners, who are just so fed up by this, have tried to argue that they're not fully private companies, that there's some kind of cronyism in these companies that would justify the state stepping in. And they say, look, you would be helping millions and millions of ordinary people who are having their voices taken away, and all you'd be hurting is a few fat cats who are terrible people, so what's the harm? What's your opinion on that?

MALICE: Well, I agree that they should be regulated like utilities, which is not at all. If you ask me, you know how I read my *Atlas Shrugged*, if I had to choose between millions of people and the fat cats, I'm going to choose the fat cats.

And we've already had this, and we don't have to theorize how this would work out. We know how it would work out, because there was something called the fairness doctrine. The fairness doctrine regulated what was going on the air, on the airwaves, and any time the government tells you something is fair, run for the hills. And basically, what ended up happening was you had this milquetoast Overton window discussion, where you had center-right to center and then center to center-left, and anything outside of that, i.e., where all innovation takes place, was effectively silenced because they weren't representative of a larger audience. Well, how do you build a large audience if you're starting from nothing? You can't. And when that got repealed, you saw the rise of talk radio, Rush Limbaugh, and the rise of a resurgent right wing in a healthy sense and not this kind of Mitt Romney sense.

So yeah, if you wanted to regulate these things, I mean, these organizations would love to be regulated. I just finished reading Rothbard's book on the Progressive Era. Facebook, Google, Twitter, they're all for net neutrality. That's regulating these kind of industries and access to the Internet. So just ask them if they want to be regulated and then wonder what the consequence will be. They will tell you with a straight face, all these organizations, that they're "for free speech, but..." And as I've tweeted before, whenever you're talking politics, anything preceding the word "but" can be safely ignored. "I'm for free speech, but..." I'm not a racist, but..." "I don't like war, but..." You know what's coming after that. It's the absolute contradiction of the first half, and this is the way the person can maintain two contradictory ideas in their own mind, or they're just being blatantly disingenuous.

WOODS: So do you think we're going to reach a point where there's a limit to this kind of behavior on the part of the social media giants, where it's going to affect their bottom line enough that they'll say, all right, look, Newt Gingrich can stay on, and anybody to the left of him can stay on? Do you think there's a stopping point? But man, between here and that stopping point, it seems like there could be a lot of carnage.

MALICE: Well, I think we've reached a stopping point in this sense. I think that — the metaphor I used was dating sites. Back in the day, there used to be OkCupid and eHarmony,

just two. Now, how many dating apps there are, I can't even count, and the dating apps are things like Jdate or Christian Mingle or, you know, I don't know the other ones, which are just for specific segments of the population. The idea that there needs to be a Facebook for everyone, whereas half the people on Facebook are trying not to hear the other half of people on Facebook because they're upset by their politics, the natural progression isn't going to be like Myspace, Friendster, Facebook; it's going to be Myspace, Friendster, Facebook, 100 different Facebooks.

And we're going to socially organize ourselves not simply by all our friends in the broad sense, just like I have to be in the same state as my neighbor just because we're geographically proximate to each other. It's going to be segregation based on ideology, or you'll have a Facebook for people who play chess or a Facebook for this and for that.

And that's going to be decentralization, which is very much organic to the Internet. You don't need to have centralization on the Internet. I think that that's going to be the way it's going to go, and I think just the same thing with networks. You had three major networks and they still exist, but back in the day, the *MASH* finale would get like 60% of America's audience, and now, it would be a huge accomplishment for any show to get like 30% of the nation's audience. They're still there, but you also have HBO and you also have FX, which has great shows, and things like this.

So I am very, very hopeful, and I think things are going in the right direction, and I would remind people that Alex Jones, Milo, and Chris Cantwell are three data points. And 70 years ago, 30 years ago, they could silence entire classes of people. Now, if they're picking off people one by one to the point where you can name who these people are, that is a huge loss of ability.

WOODS: It's so interesting to hear you say that, because right in my notes here, I had written down, "Huge experiment, maybe it doesn't work," thinking about Facebook, because there's never in history been a platform — or first of all, there haven't really been that many platforms in history, but there certainly hasn't been one where people of all different ideological backgrounds from all over the world are all there together and screaming at each other. And I think we have this — and I fall into this trap, too. We have this tendency to think, well, this should work if we could just get everybody to calm down and listen to what each other is saying. This is not going to work. This is not going to get better. It's actually made things a lot worse. It's made people depressed. It's made them frustrated. It's made them more closed off to other ideas. So maybe they're trying —

MALICE: Good.

WOODS: So my point is, maybe this whole thing is a fool's errand to start with, this whole project. I mean, that's an interesting point of view.

MALICE: I'm not interested in holding other idea — like, Rand had this point when she was on Donahue. She goes, "I'm interested in my ideas." And she elsewhere made the point: "I'm not interested in honest disagreement; I'm interested in honest agreement." I have many more leftist friends than you do, and I enjoy their company. We talk politics all the time. But the idea that I or you or anyone else needs to be open to anyone's idea ever is crazy, because if a crazy person on the street in New York stops me and gets in my face, I'm not interested in what they have to say, even if what they're saying is true.

So the idea that this kind of Rousseauist democracy for all and that we're all going to get together and yell and reach a consensus is something I'm opposed to on a fundamental level. I don't think everyone has things worth listening to. Even if they did, I don't have the time nor the interest. So I think this is a great mechanism to show that democracy can't, doesn't, and shouldn't work in practice, and it's going to encourage people to ideologically self-segregate, which is where harmony comes from.

I'm just giving one further point. Oftentimes on Twitter where, as you know, I'm very active, people will tell me that's not funny or I don't like when you do this or that, and it's like, that's an extremely valid opinion. Not everyone's going to see things like I do or like you do or whoever else does. Not everyone's going to see things that I find funny or that you find funny. It's a big world. Go. Go live your life and listen to somebody else, and I don't begrudge you that. There's how many billions of people to listen to. So the idea that everything has to be for everyone, inclusion, is one of the bases of leftism, and it's a basis I don't agree with on any level.

WOODS: Let me go back to something you said just before that. I think the response on the part of some people and, to be honest with you, partly myself, would be: I get that we're all basically — I mean, there's nothing I'm going to read on Facebook that's going to convince me libertarianism is wrong at this point. I've read too much. I've thought about it too much. That's just not going to happen. It might make me rethink one little aspect here and there. Like for instance, when Kinsella comes along and talks about IP, that does make me go back and rethink things, but I would have found out about that with or without Facebook.

But I'm thinking about people who don't have really strong ideological commitments, but who if their friend recommends an article, well, they might give it a fair chance, and the more we segregate on having our own separate kind of social media, the fewer opportunities there are for that. And given that we have a minority point of view and we just need to get our ideas — you know, I'd like to have more people at least have a chance to hear what they are, isn't there going to be less of that if we're all in echo chambers?

MALICE: I don't think that's necessarily true, because I think of it as kind of the distribution curve, right? So let's suppose politically I'm at an M, which is the middle letter of the alphabet, and I'm listening to people from, let's say, H to P. So I'm going to have a certain range, and I don't think most people are capable of dealing with radical ideologies outside their range. If someone comes at me and they're the letter W, I won't know what to make of it. And in fact, whenever I talk to people and say I'm an anarchist, I explain to them immediately that there's no way to have a radical ideology without sounding like a lunatic or moron. You can't discuss it for three minutes and have the person be able to wrap their head around it in context.

But there's two different kinds of ideological segregation. There's the ideological segregation of I'm going to segregate with people who are agreeable, and we may disagree on politics, but we agree on the principle of having discussions — which is fine. But there's also the ideology of everyone has to think like me, this kind of leftist or right wing, with the patriots, ideology, like, I don't want to hear anything from the other side. So the beauty of the Internet and having chosen associations is you can segregate on either or on both. It's up to you which values you find more important: free discussion or free-to-a-point discussion, or you want that echo chamber because you have this kind of fundamentalist view of politics and you're sure you're right. So the second group are never going to be really receptive. The first group

are not going to be blocking people who disagree. Like I said earlier, I have a lot of leftie friends, and they often ask me questions about what this means and to explain it to them. So with any kind of population, whether it's libertarian or conservative or liberal, you're going to have these two worldviews, which is either I'm not hearing it or I will hear it from people I like. And you've experienced this yourself. We both have experienced it. Many times on Twitter, when we've talked about this on a previous episode, as soon as someone says what Facebook's doing with Alex Jones or that YouTube was incorrect, they go, "It's a private company."

WOODS: Oh my gosh.

MALICE: "They can do what they want."

WOODS: I know.

MALICE: And it's like, first of all, do you think this is information I previously was not aware of?

WOODS: [laughing] I know. I know.

MALICE: Do think I was of the belief that Mark Zuckerberg is somehow a senator and as if, if he were a senator, he's therefore not answerable to the population? But yeah, again —

WOODS: Yeah, I thought it was Facebook.gov. I guess I've been typing it in wrong.

MALICE: Right. So the thing is, it's like, yeah, just because something's a private company and they can do whatever they want, yes, in a literal sense, I can go up to people who I'm friends with and tell them horribly insulting things, which I do and actually find it funny. But for somebody else, yeah, you can do that, but you are still allowed to be criticized for it. So the premise for capitalism that you should never criticize any company because that's the market at work, well, we are the market. Sometimes the invisible hand has to be a visible backhand where you tell the person, "Hey, knock it off. This is a problem."

WOODS: Let's talk just a minute about a couple of alternatives. People will mention Steemit or Gab or Minds.com, and I've had the creators of Gab and Minds.com on the show, and I like them. And the resistance that you get, particularly with Gab, is that, well, it's going to be only people of one particular point of view and then I'm closed off and I can't spread my ideas as effectively as I might have been able to do on Twitter or Facebook. But if what you're saying is correct, that's not necessarily a bug in the system and —

MALICE: I think Gab is trying to be Twitter junior, right? So Gab is modeled very much after Twitter. Gab is not "we are Twitter for Christians," you know what I mean? So that's why I don't think Gab really works as well as Twitter does.

WOODS: Ah, okay. Well, the thing is it doesn't expressly portray itself as having — it portrays itself as being a place where people can freely talk and they're not going to be censored, and that's the selling point. But in practice, the sort of people who find that attractive and the sort of people who wound up congregating there tend to be of a particular ideological flavor, in practice.

MALICE: Or it's certainly —

WOODS: But they're not billing it that way.

MALICE: Right. It's certainly going to be out of proportion to the population of Twitter. And again, you're going to have much less of a conversation there. I wish them well. I have no problem with them. I'm verified on Gab also, and I've got a certain number of followers, but I never look at it because, for me still, Twitter is still functional. And at the same time, let me remind everyone, Twitter hasn't banned Alex Jones. And all those libertarians you mentioned, my understanding — and please do correct me — they were temporarily suspended like for a day. It's not like they were kicked off the site, correct?

WOODS: Except Peter van Buren. In his case, he's a former State Department guy, wrote a great book on the Iraq War, and he got into an argument with some, I don't know, third tier author, and he said, "I hope a MAGA guy eats your face." And the idea was that they'd been talking about the — the argument was that people who are MAGA hats are zombies. So he was riffing off the idea that zombies eat human flesh, so it was — yeah, it's a little gruesome, but it was just from the zombie theme. There are obviously vastly worse things if I were to sort of look at Twitter at random right now that are said to people. So what a bizarre thing. And then the other people who got the temporary suspensions were just defending him.

MALICE: Well, I don't think it's that bizarre, even if you disagree, to say, like, "I wish harm on you," should not be allowed on Twitter, because that happens a lot with people, where journalists, who I'm obviously no fan of and so on and so forth, people feel free to — this is why Pax Dickinson got banned from Twitter, because he was saying, "Okay, when Trump takes over, how are we going to execute various members of the press?" ironically. And he went through them name by name. Now, he wasn't actually saying, "I'm going to kill you," but they thought, all right, this is something we're not comfortable with. So when you're wishing harm on someone, again, values subjective, I don't think that that's a crazy line for Twitter to draw.

WOODS: I think in this particular case, though, if you look at the context, it's not — look, it's not something I would have said, but it was obviously just a silly comment. Your point about —

MALICE: No, but it's a silly comment of a serious point, meaning, "I hope something bad happens to you."

WOODS: Yeah, I get that, but all the same — if they're going to systematically apply that, that's one thing.

MALICE: Okay. Neither of us are in — Twitter has to figure out what works for itself, right? That's the one case where I will say it's a private company; they can do what they want. So there are rules that are objective and understandable and you can wrap your head around it. Even if the rule is like no whatever, I can't even think of one off the top of my head, but something like this, maybe you and I would not implement it if this were our company. I don't think this is at all some kind of extreme rule for them to have: do not wish harm unto other people.

WOODS: I get that. If that's going to be their rule, then it's got to be non-arbitrarily enforced. Yeah. So I agree with what you —

MALICE: Correct. But it's a rule that's easy to understand and objective.

WOODS: Yeah, at least that is, whereas the stuff from Apple about Alex Jones' hate speech when they won't even give me an example of what they're talking about —

MALICE: Correct.

WOODS: And by the way, there's a creepy aspect of this whole Twitter thing. Apparently, if you have an offending tweet — I don't think — you've never been suspended from Twitter, right?

MALICE: Oh, no, I know how to do the dance.

WOODS: So what happens is you log into your account and they say you're suspended, and the offending tweet comes before you, and before you can be readmitted, you must delete it. It's like a weird Orwellian ceremony. They could easily just delete the tweet. If they think it's objectionable, they can just delete it and say —

MALICE: I don't agree with you, because they're —

WOODS: They put it right in front of you and say, "Now, you do it." No, it's like they're treating you like you're seven.

MALICE: No, they're treating you like you have volition. So they are telling you, instead of being like, *You're banned for no reason. You have to guess*, they're giving you: *This specific thing is the problem and now you have a choice. You can either delete it and be reinstated to Twitter, or you could not delete and stay banned. The choice is in your hands.* The idea that everyone has a right to access to Twitter is something I don't agree with.

WOODS: Okay, I don't agree everybody has a right to access Twitter, obviously, and I actually —

MALICE: I'm sorry, I think it would be unconscionable. It would bother me enormously if Twitter was deleting tweets that I put up, because it makes it seem like I deleted it out of shame.

WOODS: That is how Facebook operates.

MALICE: Okay, I — Facebook deletes posts?

WOODS: Well, I guess like in a group, sometimes people will report something and then the admin can decide whether or not to get rid of it. But if something violates Facebook's community standards, you get a ban and that post is gone.

MALICE: See, these are two different approaches to dealing with objectionable posts.

WOODS: Right, and there's no objective standard for evaluating which one's better. I just feel like the this tweet is hovering before my eyes that I — and given that, half the time, it's dumb and it's mainly because a whole bunch of people ganged up to report my tweet; it's not because objectively my tweet is worse than the billions of other tweets.

MALICE: That's not true. That's not how it works. Because it doesn't matter how many times it's reported; I've gotten emails where tweets of mine have been reported and I get the email that says, "This tweet has been reported, but we see nothing wrong with it." It's not a function of numbers. So I think it's perfectly appropriate if there's a tweet that somehow got flagged as inappropriate to tell the person and have them make the decision that's right for them. How is giving the user choice a problem?

WOODS: But in this case, of course, it's not a choice. If they want to say —

MALICE: It is a choice.

WOODS: If they want to say you can either continue on Twitter without this tweet or you can leave tweet, that's a choice.

MALICE: That is what they're saying. That's literally what they're saying.

WOODS: Yeah, but, eh, I think we've hit a dead end on this one. We're just not going to — this is just a matter of taste. I just find it creepy.

MALICE: No, no, hold on. Wait, wait. You're saying taste is not subjective and how companies run their companies is not subjective?

WOODS: I just said there is no objective standard to decide between how Facebook and Twitter handle them; I just feel like this aspect of the Twitter thing, I don't know, it just gives me the creeps. But —

MALICE: How would you do it if this were your company?

WOODS: I would yank the — I would say you violated our terms of service, so that thing is gone, and if you're not okay with that, there's the door.

MALICE: Okay. I don't feel comfortable deleting someone else's work.

WOODS: Okay, fair enough. But nobody cares what you and I think about the small details of this. I want to know — you're saying that today —

MALICE: But how are you to tell me no one cares? If I care, at least some people care.

WOODS: All right, all right —

MALICE: I'm not even trying to be a jerk. I'm just — I mean, you see what you're doing?

WOODS: [sighs] My point is that I think we're spending way too much time on this small detail, that's all.

MALICE: No, but Tom, this is the whole point. This is exactly my point. There's this narrative that all these organizations operate in exactly the same way, which, in the Alex Jones case but with the major exception of Twitter, is true. But my broader point is this is actually the market working and trying to refine rules that would be more conducive toward a free discussion of ideas, and they're trying different alternatives.

WOODS: Yeah, that's true. I guess it would be easier for me to see that in a case like this if I didn't feel like it was done so tendentiously and with such an open bias.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: If I didn't have the sense that it's: *You don't think the right way, so here's the button and we want you to move your mouse over to the* — blech. You know what? No. No. Don't treat me like that. I get that Twitter doesn't like me, but that — *All we want you to do is* — ugh, nah.

MALICE: But when you get a parking ticket, you have to sign for it, right?

WOODS: Yeah, actually, it's funny that you say that. I did get a parking ticket when I was at Mises U. and I totally forgot all about it. I just drove out of the state. Can they still get me, actually? It's a \$10 ticket?

MALICE: [laughing] Tom, I promise you I will send you many copies of *Atlas Shrugged* when you're in the hoosegow.

WOODS: [laughing] All right, all right. Yeah, I get that, but I mean, we know the state is creepy. We know the state is creepy.

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: But from the point of view of Twitter, or rather the point of view of Michael Malice, I know you don't use Facebook that much anymore, and I kind of don't either, partly because, all of a sudden — I mean, it had been happening gradually, but then all of a sudden, there was a massive decline in the reach of pages.

MALICE: Yes.

WOODS: And I have a page, and it's just stagnated for a while. I mean, I do post to it, but it doesn't get nearly the engagement or the reach of even my profile — my profile has 5,000 friends on it, my page has 80,000, and it's stayed there for like a year and a half. I can't get it to grow for some reason. I don't know why. It's a good page. I can't get people to get on it. But anyway, with 80,000 to 5,000, I still get probably more engagement on the 5,000. It's —

MALICE: Well, let me say, here's something else that I find extremely creepy, much more creepy than the Twitter example you used, which is that Facebook explicitly said, rather than giving you all the posts from all your friends in reverse chronological order, which we all want, we're going to somehow have an algorithm that says which posts are important and which ones aren't. The other ones are going to be invisible and they're not even going to be in order. And that's why I left Facebook. It's like, if people are posting things, I want to be able

to see all of them. So this site has lost completely its functionality for me, whereas Twitter does shadow ban, but it's a far smaller percentage. And I can't believe I'm being driven to defend Twitter here, but it's a far smaller percentage than what Facebook is doing explicitly, because, at the very least, Twitter's in chronological order.

WOODS: Right, right, right. And it means that Twitter can be a little — if you're following a lot of people, it can be a little bit unwieldy, but then you can tweak it. You can silence people. you can make lists where you can just click on the list and then you'll see just the tweets from those people. it's very easy, it seems to me, and Scott was even saying: why couldn't we make our own algorithm on Facebook? Why does there have to have a mysterious, never-totally-acknowledged Facebook algorithm for everybody? Why couldn't I make my own algorithm and say I'd like to hear from this, this, and this; I'd like to do this; I'd like that; I don't want that. And there you go. Problem solved.

MALICE: Yeah, there's a clothing site I visit all the time to get clothes, right? And they have the new releases for men's clothing, and there's four ways to sort it: by what's new, priced highest to lowest, priced lowest to highest, and then "our favorites." What does that mean? Like, obviously it's not literally someone sitting down with a numerical score saying, well, this shirt's a seven, this shirt's a two, right? And even if it is, he's not shopping for me. So it's a very bizarre thing, but that's what Facebook is doing without giving you the vaguest explanation of what they're doing. I think they're pretty explicit they're doing it to hide things that they find are undesirable and so on and so forth. Well, I don't care what you find undesirable, Facebook. It's what matters what I find desirable. And if you're not going to give me that, I'm not going to use your site. And again, I only use Facebook to post information about shows I'm doing or interviews I've done. I never look at the feed anymore, because it's frustrating. I'm not seeing things and they explicitly are telling me I'm not seeing things, so I'm not going to look.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, that's gotten extremely frustrating. But as you say about Twitter, I know there are people out there who say, on principle, now I'm not going to use this service or that service. But I wouldn't do that, because my general principle is I just want to reach an audience. I want to reach my folks and people who are potentially my folks, and I'm going to use whatever channel is open to me to do that. I'm not going to shoot — why would I shoot myself in the foot, what, to make some point? But no one's going to know that I made the point, so why would I bother doing it?

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: And it's the same reason, by the way, that I would appear on Alex Jones, even while I don't like some of the things that he says. If you're going to let me talk to a million people, why would I say no to that? That's just dumb.

MALICE: Yeah, I've gotten that heat before. People are like, "Oh my God, you've been on Infowars." I'm like, yeah, I will talk to someone about North Korea, and I will do it again in a heartbeat, and if you don't like it, I don't care.

WOODS: I've been on Iranian television a couple of times [laughing], on so-called PressTV to talk about U.S. history. Well, why not? Why would I not want to speak to those people? What reason? They're people. They probably don't know that much U.S. history. They probably know more than Americans do. But why would I not do that?

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: So you know, I just want to talk to people. So I'm still going to be on Twitter, and I have fun on Twitter. But maybe I will look into these other ones a little bit more than I have been. It's just a matter of time to make them all work, and I don't — But at the same time, geez, I wish I had your self-discipline when it comes to the Facebook feed. When I'm sitting around, like I'm waiting in line or something, I've got nothing to do, I do go through my Facebook feed just for something to read, and that winds up getting me in discussions and threads that I shouldn't be, and geez, I should be doing — almost anything else would be better than that.

MALICE: But Tom, this is why you and I have the supporting listeners groups for ourselves, because —

WOODS: Yeah, that's true.

MALICE: You know what I mean? That's where you should spend the time, because people will be sane, relatively, and will be able to have subjects of interest and come from the similar context as you.

WOODS: Yeah, that group for me has been really, really great. I've gotten a lot of topics for the show, topics for emails, just good conversations. There's some contentiousness in there —

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: — but it's generally all in a spirit of respect. Now, you have your own group. Do you want to tell people how they can get in?

MALICE: Oh, they can just contribute to my Patreon, and anyone who's a Gas Digital subscriber gets free access. But yeah, it's been a great resource for me and for you for exactly those reasons and for getting feedback about the show.

WOODS: Well, mine is at SupportingListeners.com, and for Patreon for you, it's Patreon.com/MichaelMalice.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: And look, it's a great thing to support Michael Malice. I don't need to sell Michael Malice to you guys. If you're still listening, if you hadn't pressed "stop," then you guys know the value of Michael Malice, so definitely check out his Patreon and chip in a few smackers. All right, I think that more or less does it. If you had to summarize here's what they just did to Alex Jones and what's the future going to look like, what would y u say in 30 seconds?

MALICE: I would just use that quote — is it Martin Luther King who says, in the long run, the arc bends towards freedom? I think it's very dangerous to look at one data point and extrapolate from it. As another example is that House seat in Ohio that it looks like the Republicans are holding onto, and if they hadn't held onto it, it would have been like, look, this is proof that the Democrats are going to steal Congress, and if it's the other thing,

everyone's just crickets. So again, one data point is not a huge deal. Again, this can go in several different directions, and I don't think it's time to get frantic yet.

WOODS: All right, fair enough. Well, we'll keep watching. And speaking of watching, you folks should watch or listen to *Your Welcome* with Michael Malice, and you can get that over at GasDigitalNetwork.com, or you can just subscribe to the podcast on whatever podcatcher you like to use. Michael, thanks as always.

MALICE: Thank you, Tom.