



Episode 1,226: Michael Malice on Healing Libertarian Rifts

Guest: Michael Malice

WOODS: All right, we're doing an episode about an episode today. This is an episode of your program, *Your Welcome*, with Michael Malice over on the Gas.DigitalNetwork.com. I'm linking to the episode at TomWoods.com/1226, and I urge people to watch it. It's very good, the content is good, the way you interviewed us and moderated I thought was just pitch perfect. And well, the feedback we've gotten has been outstanding. Really great, really great. I mean, I think we all feel good about how it went. I do want to have permission – and I don't know if you can grant me this, or you have to ask Gas Digital, but I'd like to reproduce at least a clip of that to talk about – you know, there's a certain person I mentioned in there at some length, and I'd like to play that for my audience at some point in this episode. Do you think they're going to be okay with that?

MALICE: Yeah, because they pulled that clip and put it out already.

WOODS: It's public. That's right. Yeah, it's public. All right, so at some point in our conversation, we'll pause and listen to that bit.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: And then I want to comment on that a little bit. So anyway, I don't know. Where should we start here? I mean, this was your idea.

MALICE: Yeah, I guess it was my idea. I mean, I like getting people upset who deserve it. But I like even – I was just watching last night as I was going to bed – I go to bed at two in the morning, as you know, and as some of your listeners know. And you know how you fall down a rabbit hole on YouTube? And I was watching a clip of Trump, your favorite president. I don't mean you, Tom. I mean, that's how he identifies himself.

WOODS: Yeah, "me" in his tweet. I love that.

MALICE: Yeah, yeah, just him tearing into Rosie O'Donnell. I'll give you the clip and you could put it up. It was just – it's kind of weird to watch on many levels, and interesting and terrible and all these other qualities. And one of the things he said is, you know, that Rose is a failure, she's a total disaster, obviously, and all this other stuff, and that he likes it when bad people fail and it makes him gloat. And sure, I like making people upset, but I like it when good people succeed and good people can get along and good people can talk to each other. I mean, this idea that like everyone should be able to be civil, sure, but I think we could do better than civility. I think we could have cordiality, and I don't think that's usually that much

to ask. And this is me speaking, who is a little bit less than cordial, oftentimes, on Twitter as some of the listeners know.

WOODS: So in this case, it was a matter of you knew the both of us, you've been friendly with the both of us for a long time, and you genuinely couldn't get what — your view was there's no reason there should be an issue here between you two guys.

MALICE: No, there are reasons for there to be issues, but there's no reason for there to be an inability to communicate.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MALICE: Especially because I knew, knowing you both well — I know you better than Matt, but I know him well enough — there would be no possibility that, if you sat down, it would go down — and I'm not trying to open up a whole other can of worms — like Nick Gillespie and Walter Block at the Soho Forum, which some listener forwarded to me, which got very, very nasty and heated. So I knew it's like, you know what? These guys, if they sat down, it would be, I don't know about fine, but it certainly wouldn't not be awful.

WOODS: Right. And indeed, it was not.

MALICE: And I wouldn't let it get awful.

WOODS: No, you wouldn't.

MALICE: Like that was the thing. I knew I was there to be like, all right, if things get heated, I'm going to pull back on that brake.

WOODS: But we're both — I mean, I'm excitable sometimes under certain conditions, but we, I think, managed to have a good, productive conversation. And I laid some things out on the table, I laid out some grievances, and I loved your Festivus remark. It's Festivus every day with you; it was great.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: And I thought it was handled reasonable. And he was willing to make concessions, and not really concessions, but he was willing to say, *Look, I think the way such and such person handled such and such situation was not good and that's certainly not how I would have handled it.* And I was willing to make a concession about the merits of, you know, those people out there who were making small, incremental changes. I'm all in favor of incremental changes. I don't want that as my philosophical lodestar, but when incremental changes are made in the right direction, of course I'm happy about that. So anyway, it was a productive conversation, and —

MALICE: Well, it's not, of course. I mean, a lot of times when you talk to people — I don't mean you personally, but a lot of people who think that, like, you miss the forest for the trees by focusing on small things — it's like, how can you care about someone getting fined for braiding hair without a license when we're at war and killing people? It's like, well, you can care about both, you know? And I think a lot of times, there's something to that. You know?

which is worse? Well, obviously war is much worse, and if you're in a country where the worst thing you can say about their government is people get fines for braiding hair without a license, you have it pretty good. So it's important — like a lot of times, people have their very, especially, I think — I want to say, especially within libertarianism, but I'm sure it's the same in every single subculture or sub-political ideology. There's the issue of perspective and focus.

WOODS: And not to mention, it's important to realize that, yes, it's true that a fine for braiding hair is not the end of the world, but that is that is a person's life.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: And that is a person's aspirations, and that's still matters. And we can't live our lives as if, because there's one person somewhere in the world living in a mud hut, none of my grievances are legitimate. We can't live that way. And also, I think there's starting to get to be an annoying habit among libertarians, because they know they've got a trump card with Yemen. *Why is everybody so up in arms about X when they don't even talk about what's going on in Yemen?* I agree. I've talked about Yemen, and we should talk about it more, and it's terrible what's happening there. But to say something like, *This woman was killed by an illegal immigrant and everybody's all upset about that, and they don't care about Yemen*, that's just tone deaf. Like that's not the time to have that conversation.

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: And as you say, it's quite possible to be upset about this woman and Yemen. You know, I have a compendiously broad capacity for outrage. I have no shortage of ability to do that. All right —

MALICE: Yeah, and it's also just bizarre that a movement that's ostensibly rooted in individualism — I shouldn't say ostensibly. It's certainly rooted in individualism and regards value as subjective and as the basis of economics — is going to be baffled that other people have different priorities and different perspectives. And not only baffled, but just being insistent that those priorities and values are wrong.

WOODS: Let me ask you, since we've talked about it a little bit, but as the host of the program, your perspective on our kind of — our summit. You know, in a way, it was kind of like a little bit of a summit meeting. What did you walk away from it thinking?

MALICE: Oh, that's a good question. I walked away thinking in a very, very, very, very small sense, this was historic, because, again, as you and I discussed and we discussed with Matt, this has been a let's say — let's be nice and say rivalry — for a very long time. I looked it up. It's pronounced either schism or schism; both are acceptable. It's a word no one ever says out loud. They only see it written. I think there's reasons for these things. But I mean, Tom, you and I talked about this also. I think this is one of the things that happened — you know, when libertarianism started and you had Rand and Rothbard and everyone's feuding with each other, it's unfortunate. And perhaps it's understandable, because if you're starting a new worldview, you want to get it right from the beginning, right? You want to get it correct from the beginning.

But after that, it's kind of like, all right, it's been around for a while. Let's see if we can take some of the heat off, because no one — my big point is: neither approach has worked. And we're not in a free country or anywhere near as free as it could be. So to cast aspersions, *Oh, you don't know what you're doing, you don't know what you're doing*, neither approaches — you know what I mean? So at the end of day, it could be that both are necessary. It could be neither are correct. I'm just happy to talk to anyone who I think is a decent person, who is bright, and who genuinely regards what the state does with more than a measure of concern, with just absolute revulsion in many cases, which Matt does from his experiences in Eastern Europe.

WOODS: All right, before we go on, though, I probably should fill in some blanks here. I kind of set the stage in the opening bit here, but not everybody follows libertarian drama. And as I said, this libertarian drama week is coming to an end. I did a World War I week back in 2014, because it was the centenary the beginning of the war, and so I did five episodes in a row on different aspects of the war. And I'll probably do it in 2018 as we get to, you know, the ending of the war.

But anyway, this week has turned out to be like one episode after another that in some way touches on internal libertarian squabbling. But I think that's not just entertaining — that is entertaining, frankly. I mean, let's be honest, it can be entertaining. But it is important, because if we can get to the root of what's causing it, and if maybe even we can minimize it to some degree, how is that not a step forward? So that's why I definitely want to do it.

So just to — I mean, it's not probably valuable to go into a whole lot of detail. But just to say that there are certainly fault lines, it's safe to say, within the community of people calling themselves libertarians. And those fault lines kind of can be drawn around the Mises Institute, let's say, and the folks associated with them, and people more associated with *Reason* magazine and the Cato Institute and folks like that. And then there are people who aren't really in either orbit and who sometimes they're in both orbits. And I consider you, Michael, to be an example of the latter category, perfectly friendly, and you move smoothly and without issue among all these people. And that's a great thing for you. I'm glad about that. I wish we had more people like that.

But we've had this rivalry. I've talked a little bit about it on the program. I'm going to link to an episode or two about it. Now, some of this has to do with just personalities, no doubt. Some of it is based in history and in incidents that occurred many years ago, and bitterness perhaps, but there's certainly an ideological component. There's a just a posture of the attitude toward the state, or is the state just a bunch of jokers who make mistakes, or is it wicked or whatever? I mean, there are things like that. But also there are disagreements about, well, some of the decisions made by like Murray Rothbard, for instance, whose legacy I think should be celebrated, but some people dispute that. And so there's a lot of lot of stuff going on here. And certainly, you know, there's been some criticism back and forth just about current events and the way different wings of libertarianism interpret the news or —

Look, to some degree, it's hard to explain, because to an outsider, they would look at all of us and say, *Well, I see mostly similarities here*. That's what an outsider would say. But as an insider, I see a lot of differences. I mean, for example, I think in general, people on my side of the fence, let's say, are more favorable toward decentralization, and I think on the other side — that's not universally true on either side. I think on the other side, there's more a sense that, eh, decentralization, maybe it'd be more plausible to have a court in a centralized

regime that would just enforce individual rights rather than try to hope for some kind of equilibrium between states or something like that.

MALICE: And also, decentralization is incrementalism.

WOODS: Yeah, it is, because you're not getting the whole pie anyway.

MALICE: Yea.

WOODS: Right, yeah. So anyway, but then there's also some nasty accusations that have been thrown around about different people on different sides of things and this and that. And then Austrian economics is a stumbling point, because the Mises Institute is a highly Misesian Austrian economics institute, whereas a lot of these other folks are more eclectic. So one thing after another. And then also their attitude toward Ron Paul is quite different. And so this has led to you know a lot of problems.

And yet you are living proof and Robert Higgs is living proof that it's quite possible to navigate these waters without becoming engrossed in them, without taking sides, and just saying that there's value all around. So that's the best I can do. I could probably do better if I had a few drinks, explaining what the heck has happened here. But it's really been — I personally think there's been a lot of nastiness that's come toward my side of things and pettiness.

Like for instance, I'll just give you a simple example. I see Dan Mitchell featured on the Mises blog fairly regularly. He's at the Cato Institute. He's been on the *Mises Weekends* podcast with Jeff Deist. He's been on the *Contra Krugman* podcast at least once with Bob and me. And that's been great. There is no reciprocity on that. And in fact, when I spoke at the Cato Institute once, I spoke there because I had won a book prize, and they had agreed in advance that all the book prize winners would come speak at the Cato Institute. Well, they didn't know it was going to be me. So they have me there — and I'll never forget Ed Stringham and I were shocked at this. They listed everybody's name on the program and their institutional affiliation except mine. They could not mention Mises Institute. They had to just say, "Tom Woods, author" and then the book that I won the prize for. And I thought, that's just juvenile. The Mises Institute would never have done that. If we had somebody from the Cato Institute, we'd put — for crying out loud, we'd put "Cato Institute" under the name. So it just goes to show there's just crazy pettiness on all sides.

So for Matt and for me to sit down face to face and talk is —

MALICE: But hold on. Tom, let's also make —

WOODS: — a big deal.

MALICE: But hold on, hold on, hold on. You've got to make clear to people: Matt has nothing to do with Cato.

WOODS: Oh, that is very important to make clear. Yes, I'm saying that, if I were to just try to outline who the sides are, then I would say it's this group and that group. But they're not — right. That's true. But at the same time, I think it's safe to say that they have a fairly friendly relationship with each other.

MALICE: Yeah, you could — fine. You can't — wait. We're not going to judge people by who their friends are and how their friends act and, I mean —

WOODS: No, no, no, absolutely not. And that's right, and that was why it was very helpful to have this conversation, because then Matt was able to say, *Look, this isn't the way I operate and nor do I endorse when other people operate that way.*

MALICE: And then when he talked about you on the *Reason* blog, I'm sure he linked to whatever — you know, there was no pretending Mises doesn't exist. Brian Doherty, who writes for *Reason* for a long time, as Matt pointed out in the interview, not only did he write a book called *Radicals for Capitalism* — which very much features Ron Paul, Ludwig von Mises himself, and Murray Rothbard — he also wrote a book about Ron Paul's presidential campaign.

WOODS: That's right, and I had him on the show to talk about that book.

MALICE: Yeah, so there's no — I mean, I think it gets — we're all tribalists, and we all kind of lump people together. But let's put it this way, in a way that you and I would agree with also: Mitt Romney is not John McCain. So even though in one sense, they're the same phenomenon, they're really not the same person, and there are discrete differences between them, and we wouldn't necessarily expect them to always act the same in the same situation. As a good example, when John McCain kind of I think spitefully, which I admired him for, refused to be the deciding vote on that Obamacare repeal earlier in this year, I don't know that Mitt Romney would have done that. I think Romney would have been more of a team player. Look, I could be wrong. What I'm saying is it's not a guarantee.

WOODS: Yeah, and I agree with that.

MALICE: Yeah, it's very clear that we need to make clear to people that even though, yeah, they're both Washington kind of organizations, that doesn't necessarily even imply — and maybe they have a similar approach — that doesn't necessarily imply that they would behave the same way, nor does it imply that everyone at Cato or at *Reason* would behave the same way. I don't know who made that decision with your book prize, but that doesn't mean it was universally agreed to.

WOODS: No, I suppose it doesn't, but as I say, there wouldn't be some lone wolf at the Mises Institute who would get away with something like that, because there's a vetting process, and they'd say, *Wait a minute, what's going on here? Why aren't we listing the guy's institution?* I mean, again, I'm not saying that's the end of the world. I'm just saying it reveals a fissure within the movement.

MALICE: Sure, sure.

WOODS: So what I'd like to do now is, let me play that clip, and this is a clip that should make you want to listen to the whole episode. And you should be listening to *Your Welcome* with Michael Malice, or watching, because it's great. It's a great program, and Michael's really great at this. You ask good questions. You're not just throwing softballs at people. You're interesting. You react to the conversation. You're not — geez, I mean, gosh, there are so many podcasts out there. It's like they've written down a list of questions beforehand, and

then the person answers, and then they run to the next question [laughing]. All right, anyway, let's play the clip.

[Clip plays]

WOODS: But the thing is, you go to the Mises website, you go to any of the events — like I was just at the Mises University program;. That's where I learned Austrian economics. That's where Bob Murphy learned it. That's where Ben Powell, Ed Stringham —

MALICE: Judge Napolitano spoke; Ed Stringham, who, Matt, I'm sure you're a fan of.

WOODS: All these young up-and-comers. Bryan Caplan went to Mises University. Even though he's not an Austrian, he still respects those people. So anyway, I went there, and you look at the program, and it's things like the division of labor, money, monopoly theory, price theory. It's all technical economics. It's not any of the stuff people would — or every year, there's the Austrian Economics Research Conference. You look at what are the topics being covered. They're all highly technical economic papers. This is not the impression that you would get of the Mises Institute from the comments sections of a lot of libertarian websites, from a lot of libertarian commentary — from David Boaz, for that matter, who by the way, what a creep. When I met him the one — one time I met him was out at Freedom Fest. We were both on a public television program, one after the other —

MALICE: What kind of anarchist goes on public television? Where's your integrity?

WOODS: Yeah, I mean, I was on with Doug Casey. I mean, I'm not turned in that down. I'll throw all my principles in the trash to be on with Doug Casey.

MALICE: [laughing]

WOODS: But when we met each other, he clearly knew who I was. He couldn't even look at me. I looked him right in the face and shook his hand. I mean, this is just silly, silly stupidity. Like we can't even be civil to each other? The other thing about Boaz is the other day he attacked the Mises Caucus. And he just strongly implying the Mises Caucus is alt-right and all that, and you as a journalist know full well that's not true. If you read their platform, they could not be clearer about this. There is no connection between the alt-right and the Mises Caucus. The Mises Caucus just wants a radical Libertarian Party that places emphasis on certain Austrian themes like central banking. That's what the Mises Caucus is all about. And he attacked them, just a whole thing about, *Oh, I can't believe the good name of Mises is being besmirched by* — what? By idealistic young kids who want to promote the ideas of Mises? So Michael Heise, who's the founder of the Mises Caucus said, *Look, why don't you talk — here's my phone number. Call me. There's no reason for there to be this kind of division.* You know what? Take a wild guess if Boaz called. Do you think he wants to know the truth?

I do not believe Boaz is an honorable person. In this case, he clearly has an agenda. These people are outside his orbit. He's extremely territorial, so it doesn't mean anything that he's going to smear those people's names and engage in guilt by association with people who aren't associated with anything they should feel guilty about. That is just not acceptable. But there he is doing it. He has not taken it back. It's demonstrably false, *demonstrably* false. That's how he is. And this is why these sorts of things anger me. It's not fair that — these are young,

idealistic kids. They have no hidden agenda. They earn nothing. They are spending their own money to facilitate all this good work. And what do they get in return? They get this kind of abuse that is based in nothing from a guy like Boaz, who apparently just does not — I mean, he attacked Jacob Hornberger from the Future of Freedom Foundation, who is also outside his orbit. Steve Horwitz just jumped in on this recently, because Hornberger in a fundraising letter said, *You know, in the 1800s, we had a lot of liberties that we don't have today.* [gasps] *Doesn't he know about slavery?* I mean what IQ level are you at if you are going to do that to Jacob Hornberger?

MATT WELCH: See? He just brought up IQ.

MALICE: 115. It's 115. Those are the dangerous ones.

WOODS: [laughing] Yeah, the midwits. Yeah, yeah. So anyway, I'm sorry to be taking the whole thing over —

MALICE: Yeah, please.

WOODS: But this makes me — Jacob Hornberger was extremely sound on foreign policy, even on 9/12/01, even if it meant — fundraising — no, and hang on a minute.

MALICE: You mean like when Ron Paul voted to allow George W. Bush —

WOODS: That's a separate question.

MALICE: [laughing]

WOODS: The point is that even if it meant fundraising dried up, even if it meant he was more isolated than ever, of all the people in the world to go after when he said a thing that you obviously know what he means — you obviously know what he means — that's just evil territorialism that that Hornberger himself would never engage. If you look through Future of Freedom Foundation for attacks on the Cato Institute, I'm pretty sure it'll come up like this.

MALICE: I feel bad because David's not here to defend himself, you know what I mean?

WOODS: Yeah, boo hoo.

MALICE: No, I mean, I think it's important to —

WOODS: There is no defense to this.

MATT WELCH: That's false.

WOODS: All right, then, you know what, David Boaz? I'm going to just say it right now. What you said about the Mises Caucus is false. Here's your opportunity to fix it. If you don't, then we'll know you're a loser, okay? There it is.

MALICE: Okay, I did not expect to get this heated, to be honest.

WOODS: [laughing] Sorry.

MALICE: I'm glad that you guys aren't getting heat at each other.

WOODS: No, no, but this has been — but I mean, I stand here representing a lot of people who have been hurt by those people.

MALICE: Let me push back, because he does not have an obligation to respond. You're not going to say he has an obligation to respond. Nicholas Sarwark demanded that you sign a letter like saying, "I denounce fascism," and you're like, *Are you kidding me?* Like, literally every —

WOODS: All right —

MALICE: Hold on, let me finish, please. This isn't your show.

WOODS: All right.

MALICE: He's like, literally, every episode I have is denouncing the state and government, and fascism is the government and its worse. I'm not signing an extra piece of paper just because you snap your fingers. So he does not, in all fairness, owe you a response.

WOODS: Well, that's true, but difference is that he started this one.

MALICE: No, no —

WOODS: He started it.

MALICE: What I'm saying is, by him not engaging in this, it doesn't mean that he accepts your characterization of him. That's all I'm saying.

WOODS: But it means that he now knows —

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: — that he was wrong.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: And that he has smeared people, and he's not going to correct that. That's a bad person. How else would you define that kind of behavior?

MALICE: I —

WOODS: Admirable?

MALICE: I would not —

WOODS: He should not have said that. He should have said that.

MALICE: Let me hear what Matt has to say.

MATT WELCH: I —

MALICE: My point, let me just say — you asked me a question. What I've said to you, what I've said to you, and I've said publicly probably many times, I'm a big-ten person. We do not have a free country, as free as it could be, and in my view, anyone who's fighting, trying to get in that direction, whether *Reason* or *Mises*, is my friend, and I don't go after them. So I would not do what he did, period.

WOODS: Right, right.

MALICE: And my entire career has been testament to that. And there's only been one libertarian who's gone after me publicly, and he will be dead to me forever. Because I think that's so grotesque and gratuitous.

[Clip ends]

All right now, there's a very tiny clip, under 30 seconds, that I want to play. And let me make sure and clarify in case people don't know. The person we're talking about is executive vice president of the Cato Institute. So if you're wondering who he is, that's who he is. And here we go.

[Clip plays]

WOODS: But what it's other people, when it's people I like, when it's the Judge being attacked by Jon Stewart, or like whatever it is, that is what sort of makes me crazy. So I get animated these days, when I'm defending myself, not so much. Not so much. It's, oh, come on, for heaven's sake, look at all the stuff I've done, and if that's not good enough for you, okay. Go on to some other libertarian. But if it's people, especially people who don't have the platform I have, who are just kids, you know, and they can't reach tens of thousands of people by just pressing the Submit button on a podcast episode, then that does bother me, because when somebody who's in a position of authority, with a big mailing list and a big following, when that person smears somebody who has no chance to respond, that's what gets me animated.

[Clip ends]

Okay, so only here do I want to take issue with something you said, only in this part. The rest of it I have no objection. But in this thing, you were saying: well, I'm sorry David Boaz can't be here to defend himself, and then you were saying that he's not of course under any obligation to reply to me, because, look, you yourself, Woods, did not feel like you were under some obligation to reply to Sarwark's demand that she was sign some statement about fascism. But here, there's just a clear difference between the two situations, because there I was just put upon out of the blue for — I mean, all of a sudden I get this demand from this guy out of nowhere, whereas — for example, it wasn't like I had lied and said, hey, these people are toxic and terrible and should be shunned. Then I should be called on that.

Well, what Boaz did was he went out and said something that was — so he started the thing. He went out and said something that was flatly false about honorable people. He's trying to smear the Mises Caucus of the Libertarian Party. He's a big Weld guy. When Bill Weld was named to the LP vice presidential candidate in 2016, Boaz went out and tweeted — I was embarrassed for him. He tweeted out an image of the back cover of one of his books from the 1990s featuring a blurb from Bill Weld, and I thought that's just a sad man. So he did that, because he's in the Weld camp. So he wants to smear the Mises people by saying — it had nothing to do — they have no connection to the Mises Institute, by the way; it's just they both have the name Mises. The Mises Caucus is something I've promoted here on the show, and so he's saying that those kids who started —

MALICE: Wait, wait, wait. Hold on. Hold on. No, no, no, you said something incorrect.

WOODS: What did I say?

MALICE: You said that they have nothing to do with the Mises Institute —

WOODS: That's right.

MALICE: — and they just have the same name —

WOODS: The Mises Institute is non-political.

MALICE: Hold on. Hold on. Ludwig von Mises was not an ancap, correct? And they're all ancaps. So I am quite sure, and correct me from wrong, that that name is an allusion in some way to the Mises Institute.

WOODS: See, I just don't think so. I think what they want — I mean, they like the Mises Institute, but what they —

MALICE: But they're ancaps.

WOODS: I don't think all of them are. I mean we could take a poll. I don't think all of them are.

MALICE: You want to make a bet?

WOODS: Well, I don't know what the percentage is, but I would say — I mean, maybe majority are, but what does that matter? I don't understand. Why does that matter?

MALICE: No, because —

WOODS: So in other words, you're saying if they take the name Mises but they're ancaps, then the only reason they could be taking the name Mises is because of the association with the Mises Institute?

MALICE: To some extent, yeah.

WOODS: I think they take the name Mises because of his prominence as an economist and, secondly, because he doesn't have the — because everybody claims to like Mises. If they took the name Rothbard, then people saw, "Ugh, Rothbard, oh, I don't like this and that about him."

MALICE: Sure, but my —

WOODS: But everybody at least pretends like Mises.

MALICE: Sure, but, well, Cato, as I mentioned on the show, has a photo Rothbard hanging in their libertarian hall of fame, as well, so you know there's — and as you also know, and as everyone else probably should know, Rothbard cofounded the Cato Institute. In fact, when I had Jeff Deist reveal me as the mystery speaker at this year's Mises University, one of the things I made him read in that letter was the sentence that said, "It's a huge honor to speak here at the institute that was cofounded by Murray Rothbard. No, not the Cato Institute; the other one."

WOODS: [laughing] Which got a big laugh.

MALICE: Yeah. I think it's — the point is I'm not here to defend David, but I'm just saying that I don't know his thinking. He wasn't in that room, and I think it's important, because a lot of times, even if someone is wrong, they might be wrong not for the reasons that you're ascribing to them. That's all I'm saying.

WOODS: But when it comes to other people's names and what you're doing to them, when they have no way to defend themselves because they're not one of the top people in a major think-tank —

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: — and you're going to call them names and right-wing extremists and whatever, when you look at their platform, they're just radical libertarians. That is it.

MALICE: Hold on a second. So you're saying —

WOODS: So you're saying I shouldn't stand up for these kids?

MALICE: No, I'm saying you're saying they're not right-wing extremists; they're radical libertarians. I mean those are synonymous.

WOODS: Oh, not so, because right-wing extremist could mean, and in this context does mean, white nationalism.

MALICE: And radical libertarian can mean communist.

WOODS: Not to 99% of the public. I mean "liberal" could mean Mises.

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: But this is 2018, and except in the minds of three of us, it doesn't.

MALICE: It's current here. But look, here's my point with David and why I said in the episode and I'll say it again — and I'm not defending David. I'm just defending the — which maybe he didn't give these people the right to reply, either. I think it's very dangerous, and you and I have both experienced it, to ascribe motives and explanations to people when they haven't done so themselves.

WOODS: Okay, but —

MALICE: I would always prefer to give someone the benefit of the doubt.

WOODS: I get it. But in this case, I don't even care what his motive is.

MALICE: That's fine.

WOODS: His motive could be envy, his motive could be institutional rivalry, his motive could be "I don't control these people and I don't like people who are outside my orbit." I don't even care. Who knows what the motive is, right?

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: But the point is, he went out of his way to attack young kids who genuinely, genuinely love Mises and want to see his ideas get more exposure. And he went after them. And after the head of the thing said, *Look, I'm just a kid, here's my phone number. Let's talk this through. I assure you, if you listen to me, you're going to love what we're doing* — and I mean, if you did that to somebody and you basically said things about them that make them toxic in society, and they reach out to you and say, *Hey, come on, man, that's really not fair. Here's what we're really about*, and then you just stay mute, I don't see how you can defend that. I don't.

MALICE: Oh, I can and that easily. If I made a statement that made a congressional candidate toxic in society, I would not take their call. My work would have been done.

WOODS: These kids are not congressional candidates. Now you're just reaching.

MALICE: I'm not reaching in the slightest. If he regards them as a threat to what he regards as a way to say — and I don't know why you are putting me in a position to defend David Boaz, because the whole episode was about Matt and you. But let's talk about broader principles. If he regards the Mises Caucus as a threat to the LP, which I'm not a member of as you know, then it perfectly suits his needs to stigmatize them. There are certain people that you would say —

WOODS: But to lie?

MALICE: Hold on. Do you think he — this is my point: I would never call someone in this case a liar. I don't know where he's coming from. And I don't care.

WOODS: Okay, but with me, I feel like I have something invested in this, because I like these guys, I respect what they're doing, they're exhausting themselves putting their own personal time and effort and treasure into something they believe in. And then this happens to them. They respond and nothing. I mean, it's what — yeah, look, there parts of the Libertarian Party that I don't totally care for either, and I would absolutely criticize them and say, yes, I think you're doing things that are going to make the party's fortunes worse. But I wouldn't say something that if, it were shown to me was false, I wouldn't take back.

I mean, just for example, in this stupid Twitter battle I had with that rap guy, I've actually been taken to task for apologizing. I shouldn't have, they say, because it turns out that I was wrong in one of the claims I made about him. So I came out and said, hey, you know what? I was wrong. I still think you're a danger to society because of your terrible left-wing views, but I was wrong about that and I own up to it. That's all I'm asking for. I just find it weird that — I mean, nobody cares what this rapper says about me, but in the libertarian world, if somebody of his stature says that about these kids and then won't take it back when he's shown to be in the wrong, I just don't see how that can be admired.

But my real point is not to make you defend him, but to say that it is not the same situation that I faced with Sarwark. It was not like I had said Sarwark's a Nazi, and then he says, Hey, Woods, you take that back." Sarwark started the whole thing with me. This was Boaz just, again, out of the blue, not quite calling them Nazis, but kind of suggesting that, you know, they kind of hang out with these people. That's not right. And it's true, he's not strictly in a legal sense obligated to reply to me, but now that he knows that he's said something that is extremely damaging — he knew it would be damaging — but also false —

MALICE: You don't get to say what he knows. That's my point.

WOODS: So you don't think calling somebody a Nazi sympathizer might damage them? How dumb is this guy?

MALICE: I'm not saying that. Of course calling someone Nazi sympathizer is damaging to them. However, there are times — I'm not saying the Mises Caucus. Let me be clear. There are people who I've interacted with on Twitter who are Nazi sympathizers.

WOODS: Yeah, irrelevant to this conversation, though. I'm only talking about one group and one person.

MALICE: It's not irrelevant, because I'm talking about principles, okay? So I don't care about David Boaz in this instance. Let me explain my broader point. My broader point is it's very dangerous to say what someone knows and what someone doesn't know. Because — and I've learned this from coauthoring books with people. Until you've walked in their shoes, you don't always understand how their mind works and what their context is and how they think. So to say, like, *Well, you know, this, this and that*, Tom, you're saying that's never happened to you? That people were like, *Oh, you know, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. You know, anarchism will never work*, or such and such?

WOODS: It sounds to me like you're giving David Boaz some excellent advice about how to proceed in the future.

MALICE: Well, I should and I hope I've —

WOODS: He doesn't know what's going on in these people's heads. Why doesn't he reach out to them?

MALICE: I don't know, Tom. That's my point.

WOODS: Okay —

MALICE: But the point is: neither do you.

WOODS: I don't absolutely know what's in his head, that's true. But if I were to say something that could kind of destroy people's reputations, and I was just going on what my gut told me, I would stop myself.

MALICE: Again, you're saying he's going on his gut

WOODS: But if he doesn't have — he obviously doesn't have knowledge, because there is no such knowledge, because it's false.

MALICE: Knowledge is never obvious —

WOODS: So it has to be. What else could it be?

MALICE: Knowledge is never obvious.

WOODS: All right, I'm not going to make progress here. It's too bad, because on this one, I mean, this is like Hamilton here. I'm so right.

MALICE: You can say you're right all the time, and you might be right. I'm not saying you're wrong. I'm just saying that it is important to allow for a little bit of a dose of skepticism internally and be like, I don't know where this person is coming from or why they did what they did. And even if they did the wrong thing, they might have done it for the right reasons.

WOODS: I am willing to accept that general principle. And I'm sure you are also willing to accept the general principle that other people should accept that general principle, because that's certainly —

MALICE: I'm not saying that, no. I'm not saying — I don't believe —

WOODS: That certainly has not been extended to me. Everything I've done, you know, in my whole life, going all the way back to graduate school has been viewed under the most uncharitable lens possible.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: They have not abided by that principle.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: And so it's a pattern.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: It seems to be a pattern with these folks, that they will go out of their way to be as uncharitable toward people on the other side. Now, am I saying that nobody on my side has ever been uncharitable to them? No.

MALICE: Stop. You're saying, "these folks," and you also are talking about times where people from Cato have gone on your show, so to say that they've been as uncharitable as possible, that contradicts itself.

WOODS: I don't mean every single — yeah, that's right. So what I'm trying to do is disaggregate and say 00

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: — as I've always said, there are decent people over there, and I'm glad to talk to and be friends with those people. But there are also highly toxic individuals over there, and a lot of the good people know that these people are toxic and there's just nothing they can do about it.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: [sighs]

MALICE: I'm just never comfortable saying what someone else knows.

WOODS: Okay, but at this point in 2018, August 2018, I know what Boaz knows, because I know he listened to our — there's no way — and yes, I know, Michael. I don't know that he clicked Play. You got me. I don't know. But you know, having been on this earth 46 years and knowing psychology, he clicked Play. I think so.

MALICE: Okay. I'm not here to be on Team Boaz. I'm here to be on Team Conciliatory and Team Rodney King.

WOODS: Right.

MALICE: Like, can't we all get along?

WOODS: And that's what I want, too. I guess my point is that that kind of behavior is an example of why this took so long to happen.

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: Your episode with the three of us took so long to happen, because there's so much of this bomb-throwing going on. It's hard to say I'm convinced that this person is a good-hearted person who has the best of intentions. I think there are people that I don't even know yet, you

know, that I just read their articles who I think are good-hearted people. And I would have no problem with them whatsoever. And I would like to get to know more of those people.

MALICE: I just, I can't imagine a circumstance where someone who is — no, I should take that back. I'm just saying I get how you're protective of these kids. I get it.

WOODS: And by the way. I'm sorry to keep calling them kids; it's just that the organizers are so young. But it is a diverse array of folks, but so I hope they don't take that as disparaging. But I do think of them as people I want to protect against defamation.

MALICE: Sure. But I mean, the point is, he said what he said. You said, *No, you're wrong. Here's X, Y, and Z.* And he could have changed his mind or he could not have changed his mind. We're going to assume he hasn't. I think it's premature where, if someone has a different point of view, and you say, *Here's my point of view; here's the data. If you now don't see things my way You're a liar,* I would never do that. Especially because the human mind is so good at convincing itself of its own truth.

WOODS: Okay, I can't even accept that. Okay. So the word "liar," we might have some dispute about whether that applies.

MALICE: That's a big one. That's a big one, Tom.

WOODS: Okay, then I would just substitute "extraordinarily and recklessly careless in how you throw around career-destroying words." I'll take that.

MALICE: But careless and liar are very different things. And careless is fair, because it's saying, *Hey, you're not thinking about the consequences of what you're doing,* right? Whereas liar is really nasty.

WOODS: Yeah, I still feel like he's a liar.

MALICE: You're entitled to your feelings, as he's entitled to his own. My point is I just would not feel comfortable calling someone a liar if there are other possibilities that are conceivable or even plausible.

WOODS: Yeah, I just feel like, given everything else I know, I just consider it to be an impossibility that this was an innocent mistake. If so, it fits into the narrative so perfectly. It's like the final puzzle piece. It just seems implausible that it just happened at random, like that final puzzle piece would just happen to be that shape. I think it was made that shape to fit into the puzzle. So anyway, but as I've said, we definitely —

MALICE: So wait, who's the prime mover here vis a vis Cato? Is it Rothbard? Who's making this puzzle? What?

WOODS: Well, my point is that it just — anyway, I let this go too much into this one guy, and I shouldn't have.

MALICE: How is it that in this conversation, you're the irascible one and I'm the Pollyanna?

WOODS: But that's generally true, isn't it? I mean, you get along with everybody.

MALICE: But I'm a — you know, the cover of *Ego and Hubris* has Harvey pointing at me saying, "Michael Malice is a piece of work."

MALICE: No, that's true.

MALICE: The whole book's about me, you know, being nasty.

WOODS: But you get along with bright people who are anti-state, in general.

MALICE: And bright people who are pro-state.

WOODS: Oh, that's true. That's true, too. Yeah, y your nastiness generally comes not toward people who, you know, have three deviations from libertarianism or even ten. I think you direct that and the trolling toward a completely different category of people.

MALICE: That's true. That's fair.

WOODS: And I wish I could be half as good at it as you are, really. I mean, I would also pay it was a consultant to help me out at times.

MALICE: Well, don't call people liars, if you have any anticipation of having interaction with them in the future.

WOODS: Yeah, but I feel like I'm already living by that principle.

MALICE: But the point is, it's now impossible for him to respond in the way you want.

WOODS: Because, what? Because he would have to eat crow instead of just saying, "Look, I made an honest mistake?"

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: Was there a chance do you think that he would have said, "I made an honest mistake. It turns out these are good guys, and I talked to them on the phone?"

MALICE: No, but there was a chance he'd, "You know what? I use too strong of a term. These people aren't my cup of tea, but okay, that was a bridge too far." I don't think that's impossible.

WOODS: But you know what? I had this guy with a million Twitter followers say to me horrible things about what a terrible person I was, and yet I was still able to admit that I was wrong.

MALICE: But he's not you. What relevance —

WOODS: Too bad, because if he were, he'd apologize. I just blazed a trail in that on Twitter. It's public. I said I was wrong in the face of a guy who uses that against me every single day. *Look, he admitted he was wrong.*

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: It can be done, Michael. You can rise above and do the right thing, regardless of what it means for yourself. That's what makes you a good person.

MALICE: I know. I've apologized many times when I've done wrong. I even talked about how to apologize correctly at Mises.

WOODS: That was beautiful, by the way. That's why I wish I could get that talk out there. That thing about how to apologize was beautiful.

MALICE: I think it's very important, if you — look, if someone's dead to you, they're dead to you. That's fine. But if someone's dead to you, there's no point in kicking the corpse. And if someone's not dead to you, I personally would like to give them — and I'm not talking about David here — every mechanism possible, or opportunity, rather, to make it right. Or if at least not make it right, at least make it better.

WOODS: I agree with that. And if I do things that make it more difficult for somebody to do the right thing, then I would accept responsibility for that.

MALICE: But you did.

WOODS: And maybe in theory, you're right about that. It's just that in this particular case, I've got such a history with these folks and this particular person, I'm just not buying that my comment is what's stopping him from doing the right thing. Not buying it.

MALICE: Tom, on behalf of David, I accept your apology.

WOODS: [laughing]