



**Episode 1,752: Freedom Cells: Finally, Something Practical Libertarians Can Do to Live Freer**

**Guest: John Bush**

**WOODS:** All right, we've got some interesting and important stuff to talk about. First, I want to introduce you to folks again. You've been on the program before, but I've known you since probably 2007 from the first Ron Paul campaign. You were like, I don't know, 12? I don't know, you were a young guy, let's just say, in those days. But man, did you have the energy of youth. I mean, just everywhere I looked, there was John Bush up to something. And in recent months, you've returned to – you know, you got involved with kratom and we're going to talk about that for a few minutes right here, and that was why I had you on the last time. But you've been very successful with that, and the success has given you the freedom to do some of the things you love again, which is activism on behalf of freedom. And so we're going to talk about all this stuff in one episode. But if you had to just introduce yourself to my folks super briefly, what would you tell them?

**BUSH:** Well, I would tell them that I am someone that's super enthusiastic about freedom in all different ways, whether it's financial freedom or political freedom or spiritual freedom or health freedom, especially. And I'm really interested and focused on how we can achieve greater freedom in our lives. I appreciate the philosophy. I appreciate the discussion. But really, I'm focused on the practical, where the rubber meets the road, how can we get from here to there.

**WOODS:** And on this episode, we're going to have some discussion of exactly that with a strategy that John's been cooking up. So let's talk about kratom. And by the way, there's some controversy and division over how to pronounce it. I couldn't care less. I pronounce it phonetically. That's just the way – I'm that kind of guy. But talk to us about what it is, what it can do, why it matters, all that stuff.

**BUSH:** Yeah, well, you had me on your program, I think it was last April or May, and I really appreciate that we had a whole hour to hash out kratom and its benefits and why the government wants to keep it out of the hands of Americans. And I've got to tell you, we had a really big explosion of orders and interest and new clients, and some of them had some pretty profound effects. I'd love to just start by reading this testimonial so people can kind of grasp how it's not just a normal supplement. It really helps people get their lives back in a variety of ways. So if you don't mind I'd like to just read this one here real quick.

**WOODS:** Yeah, sure.

**BUSH:** Okay, so this was from one of your listeners, and he sent me an email. He says:

*I know we don't formally know each other, but I just wanted to let you know that the work you do is part of the reason I'm still alive today. I found out about kratom listening to the interview you did with Tom Woods last year. The day I heard that interview, I bought some kratom from you, and it was a catalyst in helping me begin my journey on the path to healing. There were days when create them was the only thing keeping the negative thoughts away and giving me a reason to even get out of bed. It helped me reach a headspace where I could make healthier choices and start to heal my own body.*

*The work you do is literally saving lives. I just wanted you to know that in case you ever feel like it gets too difficult to fight the good fight. Last year, my doctor told me I would probably be on antidepressants for the rest of my life, and he didn't understand why that was so upsetting to me. This month, I'm three months clean off my antidepressants, and that's largely due to kratom and micro-dosing psychedelics, two things government would like to make illegal. I feel better than I have in seven years. Thank you. I know there are others out there like me that are living a better life because of you.*

**WOODS:** Wow, that's awesome to get an email like that.

**BUSH:** Yeah, it's super powerful. And it's amazing because all it is is a plant. It's literally just the dried-up, powdered leaves of the kratom evergreen tree, and it's been used for centuries in Southeast Asia as kind of a folk remedy. And for the past couple decades, it's become more popular here in the West. There's a few different types. The red varieties a lot of people take for chronic pain, relaxation, help with sleep, and a lot of people take them instead of prescription pain medicine, which has all sorts of negative side effects. Then the white variety is a little more energetic, uplifting, good focus, motivation, I take it as an entrepreneur to kind of give me an extra edge and help when my brain's getting a little cloudy. Then the green varieties are kind of in the middle, although they're more like the white. They're really good for taking the edge off and for stress and anxiety.

And so not only are people taking kratom instead of the chronic pain opioids, which of course are just massive opioid epidemic with death and addiction, but people are taking in instead of drinking alcohol, for example. We've had so many clients that used to drink every day. Now they just drink kratom instead, because it's similar in taking the edge off, relaxing, unwinding. My girlfriend, for example, she had a nasty Adderall habit, and in turn, she would drink to kind of come down because Adderall is like legalized meth essentially. She quit that entirely and quit drinking, and she takes kratom regularly to help with focus and when she's feeling overwhelmed. So it's super-duper rewarding work, and it's especially rewarding as a libertarian, because the government really doesn't like it.

**WOODS:** Right, right, right. Well, very interesting stuff, and I'm glad to welcome you as a sponsor of the show, which is great. Just who knew when we were both young pups that we would continue to have this fruitful relationship all these years later?

Let's talk about your current project, Freedom Cells. People can find out about this at FreedomCells.com. And this is not freedom "sells," like freedom really sells. We're talking about cells, like cells in your body, with a C. What is this all about?

**BUSH:** That's right, it's FreedomCells.org, just want to throw that out there.

**WOODS:** Did I say .com?

**BUSH:** You did? Yeah, that URL –

**WOODS:** Oh, that kills me. I almost want to send you a photo. I am looking at it. I have it written on the page. I have it right there on the notes. It is sitting there so that I would not say that, and I said it anyway [laughing]. All right, FreedomCells.org. All right, go ahead.

**BUSH:** So Freedom Cells are essentially a mutual aid society, where people work together in a decentralized, peer-to-peer way in order to achieve common goals and in order to secure their sovereignty. It's really exciting. Essentially, the bigger picture of what we're trying to do is create our own free society, our own alternative social organization while the state crumbles all around us. It's super proactive. We're not about politics or complaining or arguing on social media, although there's still plenty of that that goes on. It's really about building something, criticize through creation. The Buckminster Fuller quote comes to mind that you never defeat something – in order to replace something and defeat it, you need to make a new model so the old model becomes obsolete. And that's exactly what we're trying to do with Freedom Cells.

**WOODS:** All right, so explain to me if I were to – because you've been saying to me I should go sign up and be part of it, and it's just through laziness that I haven't. I have nothing against the idea. I'm very much in favor. It's pure laziness on my part. So if I were to go do that, what's expected of me? What do I do? How do I be part of it?

**BUSH:** Sure. So the website, FreedomCells.org, is a great place where people can go and get tapped into the network. Right now, we have around 4,300 members globally. And if you go to the website, you can register. You just enter your email. You can put an address, although it's encouraged to put like the park down the road or the local coffee shop. And then you go to the member map, and you can find people in your area that are of like mind that are looking to opt out, that are looking to build, that are looking to organize. And so there's just all sorts of little dots on the map. It's super inspiring. Just a couple months ago, we had 2,000 members. We've already doubled, and I expect before the end of the year, we'll probably reach around 10,000.

So there's not a whole lot of that's expected out of you. It's totally voluntary. You get out what you put in. But really, I think where the innovation lies is the structure of the network, because there's fraternal organizations and mutual aid groups here and there. This one's dedicated to liberty, and it's for people that want to ultimately opt out of the matrix. It's also for people that are concerned with this growing technocracy and the technology and the tracking and tracing and the idea that if you don't take your COVID vaccine, then you're not going to be able to travel or be employed here or there. We're like trying to create the network and infrastructure, so if that happens, we're like, man, we've been getting our food from the farm down the streets, and we work with one another, and we encourage entrepreneurship.

But the infrastructure, like I was saying, is really what's pretty cool. And so this is essentially how it works. The foundation of the Freedom Cell Network, it lies in what we call the inner cadre. I like the term *cadre* because Murray Rothbard used to use that word.

**WOODS:** Yeah, that's a great word.

**BUSH:** Yeah, it's also like an old commie thing kind of, but whatever, we're repurposing.

**WOODS:** So it's about time we took one of their words.

**BUSH:** That's right. Yeah, they've been doing a number on us for a while. So the center of the organization, the heart of it is the inner cadre group. This is a group of approximately eight people. We choose the number eight based on the research of a guy named John David Garcia. This research was popularized in the liberty movement by another guy named, Bob Podolski, who wrote this book called *Flourish*. It's a really good book with very similar insights. And so this guy John David Garcia did extensive research and found that through group dynamics, the number eight is the optimal number to enhance creativity. His highest ethical value was creativity. A lot of the folks in the Freedom Cell Network, our highest ethical value is freedom, but also creating and building and doing things.

And so the inner cadre group is encouraged to have around eight people, and the inner cadre group comes together, they come up with a communication channel – a lot of us use Telegram – and then they set some common goals. And some popular goals people like to start off on is that everyone has a few months' worth of food storage, everyone has an encrypted or off-grid communication channel like CB radio or ham radio, everyone has firearms and knows how to use them safely and proficiently – although if you're not into firearms, that's your prerogative. Not everyone has to do these things. It's just voluntary and kind of an open-source idea. And then everyone has a bug-out plan, somewhere to go in when crap hits the fan, maybe together or not. So that's the inner cadre group. There's a whole other series of goals we can talk about too, some other applications for this network.

So you have your inner cadre group. Ideally, you are local in a given area, like southeast Austin, for example. The magic is you then start encouraging the creation of other inner cadre groups. And you're like, hey, we've been doing this thing for the past few months. It's really benefited us. We're chipping in money, we're buying food storage, we all got the same kind of ammo so we can do bulk buys, we help each other plant gardens in our backyards. You and your crew should do something similar.

So the next level is to link up with eight inner cadres and form what we call a middle cadre. Now, imagine this is kind of spread out across a city, for example, like Austin, is the middle cadre. They're not as tied or connected as the inner cadre, but they're more connected than the general public. Well, the magic lies in whenever you link up with other middle cadres. Now we're doing this all across the globe. In Texas, for example, there's a middle cadre group, which is a couple inner cadres at this point in Dallas Fort Worth. There are some inner cadres in the Houston area, and we have an inner cadre and there's a couple more that are forming in the Austin area. So once this grows, we link up and have what's called a meta cadre, which is a group of middle cadres in the Texas area. So that would be the Texas Freedom Cell Network.

And the idea is, as our numbers grow the structure, the social organization of the network remains horizontal. It never takes on a hierarchical structure. And there's this term, a biological term called autopoiesis, which is like a biological organism, a cell that self-replicates. And essentially, as more and more numbers grow, you just go from a meta cadre that's across Texas,, now all of a sudden we have a meta cadre in Austin because there's

multiple middle cadres because now we have 500 people participating, for example. And so the opportunities and applications when you have this number of people on the same page, you really can protect your freedom and do some cool things.

**WOODS:** Can you talk about agorism and explain how that's related to this, if at all?

**BUSH:** Yeah, probably most of the folks in the network are hip to agorism and would consider themselves agorists. So the quick definition of agorism would be revolutionary market anarchism. More than a philosophy, it's a strategy that was iterated first by this guy named Samuel Edward Konkin III. He was an early libertarian activist, broke away from the Libertarian Party. He intellectually sparred with Murray Rothbard quite a bit. There's a lot of good back and forth that you can find from him.

But he created the New Libertarian Manifesto, where he came up with this concept of libertarian left, which has since been skewed and kind of has like some SJW elements. But originally, it was about the tactics. The right libertarians or the Libertarian Party political activists wanted to reform the system. He said, in order to create the free society, we ought to live the philosophy of liberty consistently, and the natural outgrowth of that would be freedom. And in order to do that, the means to achieve the end of a free society is what he called counter economics, which is loosely defined as anything that's anti-state. But more specifically, it's participating in black and gray markets, black markets being those activities or goods that are expressly prohibited by the state, gray markets being those activities or services or goods that you have to ask permission for.

So with the Freedom Cells, on the onset, what we're doing is not illegal. We're not breaking any laws by organizing and supporting one another and growing gardens in our backyard and buying ammo. But ultimately, what I want to see from this network – it doesn't have to go this far for everyone, but I would like to see us leverage the strength and numbers that comes when we have a good 10,000, 100,000 or more people where we can collectively opt out of the state, and hopefully have a little more backbone and a little more courage that we're not going to be the guy standing alone that gets crushed. And so having this network in place can help us to better achieve the agorist goals that were lined out by Samuel Edward Konkin. He also talked about agorist cadres and agorist networks, but he never really got to play that out because he passed away, so we're kind of living the dream here.

**WOODS:** Is this your idea specifically? This comes out of your brain?

**BUSH:** So yeah, I've been an activist for like 20 years now. It started off with like 9/11 truth conspiracy stuff. Then I got introduced to the good Ron Paul in 2007 and got involved in libertarianism. And we started a PAC, Texans for Accountable Government. Still around today, focused on police, state surveillance, state gun rights, cannabis decrim and stuff like that. And we were actually really successful, and the group is still successful. We actually got some legislation passed in Texas, pushed back on all sorts of police department stuff in Austin.

But it wasn't satisfying for me, because even when we had what I would call a victory – like we stopped police officers from being trained as phlebotomists who would do blood withdrawals on the side of the road – that was great, took a lot of time, took a lot of energy, a lot of lobbying and stuff that isn't very enjoyable. But in reality, we didn't create more freedom; we just slowed the growth of more government. So instead of taking a step forward,

we really just slowed – instead of taking five steps back, we took four steps back. So this wasn't satisfying for me.

So I started exploring alternatives. I learned about agorism and anarchocapitalism through Murray Rothbard. And then around 2014, it was 2014 that I came up with this idea, because I was like, everybody wants to opt out. People don't want to pay taxes or property taxes, but we rightfully are afraid because the government coerces us and takes people away and takes their property. So it's like, what can we do to kind of build some strength in numbers and give people a vehicle for them to organize? I also realized, like after Ron Paul's campaign, there was a lot of people that voted for Ron Paul. And I started to understand that we don't need to wake up the majority or take political power. There's quite a few of us. If we were to just organize and get on the same page, then we could probably find freedom in our lifetimes, or at least set the stage for our children to find freedom or our grandchildren, hopefully.

So I came up with the idea in 2014, just shared it on some podcasts and some speeches, and then I pulled back because I was doing the activist thing, and by now I had a child and two children. And I realized, like I can't raise these kids living in poverty, as an impoverished activist. So I really focused on business and entrepreneurship. And then fast forward to today. Now I have the time to pick the ball up again. But my good friend Derrick Broze, in that time – he's with the Conscious Resistance Network – he really found a lot of inspiration in the idea. He took it and spread it and helped create this website, made speeches, talking events, big interviews with big names like James Corbett, and he really helped to grow it and take it from an idea to a reality.

**WOODS:** Now, when was this exactly?

**BUSH:** Starting in 2015.

**WOODS:** Okay, so it's been a little while, because I was wondering if it got particular impetus given the crazy circumstances we're living through today.

**BUSH:** It has grown exponentially in the past six months since COVID started, big time. Everybody sees what's coming down the road. A lot of us are concerned with technocracy, which is like essentially rule – instead of rule by politicians – it's supposed to be ruled by the people of democracy, but we all know that's a fraud. Instead of rule by politicians, the idea is you get ruled by experts and technocrats, through experts in science and algorithms and technology. This is what we see coming to fruition with the 5G and the smart cities, this huge emphasis on experts. Really, it's going to be the oligarchs choose the experts and the technology in order to track and control people.

But this type of scenario we see where they have the COVI-PASS or immunity passports like Fauci and Gates have talked about – and this is a reality. This isn't conspiracy theory. It's happened in Singapore, China, the UK they're starting to flirt with the immunity passport to fly. And then the *New England Journal of Medicine* and also some law journals have recently said we don't want to make the vaccine mandatory in that we'll put you in jail, because we don't want it to get involved in the courts if we do so – they already know that they don't have the lawful authority – so instead, we want to make it so you can't travel or so you can't be employed or so you can't go into the grocery store.

So we are preemptively – we're doing it because this is how we ought to live anyways, free human beings with decentralized, voluntary, mutually beneficial associations, not state-coercive hierarchies. We're also doing it as a defensive mechanism, when they start flipping off your switch, or the social credit score comes to the United States – because it's like a proving ground in authoritarian China, and they're like, oh, this actually plays well; let's try it over here – we already are prepared and we already have a social network. Like I said before, it's like you can't enter the grocery store unless you have your COVI-PASS green on your app. It's like, we haven't gone to the grocery store the past three months, because we're growing organic food and we have a little network where we trade and barter with one another.

**WOODS:** Earlier on, you talked about what your ultimate vision for this is and what you'd like to see come of it. Before you get to that kind of number of people, what are some immediate, practical, finite goals that you can achieve in the here and now that might make Freedom Cells seem attractive to people listening?

**BUSH:** Sure. So earlier, I mentioned four goals. It's all about, like, we don't want to put – it's not a top-down thing. So the whole idea of like the mission of the organization is to work together for mutual aid, mutual defense, and achieving common goals. And then beyond that, it's like an open source idea that people can take and run with and do whatever they want with. Me and Derrick and there's some other folks that are kind of leaders in organizing, so we offer advice and insight.

But the cool thing is that the goals I mentioned earlier, they're kind of centered around preparedness and survival, which is like some basic important stuff in the world we're living in, with coming civil unrest that's going to explode after the election, I suspect. But there's a whole other layer of goals. So for example, a really important one now is you can use the Freedom Cell infrastructure, this inner cadre and middle cadre, to have goals for school education and parenting. A lot of people are pulling their kids out of school now, rightfully so, and looking for alternatives.

So imagine you have an inner cadre that's comprised of parents. And the idea is we have eight people, so Tom and Susan are going to take Monday and Wednesday, and Jerry and Delilah are going to take Wednesday and Thursday, and they're going to bring their kids together and go to those families' houses on those days and these families' houses on these days. The family is going to chip in and buy the Ron Paul curriculum, for example, and they're going to do a Friday go out to the museum or go to the park or something. And the families are going to set the goals where, okay, the first goal is to make a schedule, the second goal is to acquire a curriculum, the third goal is to schedule a weekly family support meeting where we check in with one another and see how everything's going. And so it doesn't have to be like preparedness or survival or opt-out goals; it can be all sorts of goals to benefit your lives.

Another goal could be a lot of us in our little group of eight or middle cadre, a group of approximately 64, are really interested in entrepreneurship. We see that they are trying to shut people out of employment if they don't get vaccines or whatever. And so we want to set these goals where we're going to create a mastermind where we work together, we're going to collectively participate in this virtual or in-person entrepreneurship conference, we are going to maybe hire the same marketing person or company and they're going to service our businesses, so on and so forth.

Or there could be spiritual goals. Us eight, our inner cadre, we're going to have a weekly yoga session, we are going to get vulnerable and talk about the areas in our life that we need improvement, and we're going to be accountability partners for one another. There's a whole wide range of why this group helps. And again, when you have more people, it's more beneficial, like going back to getting the bulk discount on ammunition or groceries or storable food.

And then one thing that I want to see is midterm – not when we get to like 100,000 people and we opt out and declare independence and everyone stops paying property tax and income tax, but a midterm goal would be to create a health share. So right now I have a health share with this company called Zion. It's a secular health share. There's a lot of Christian ones that require you to go to church and stuff like that. But I found a secular one, and it's like \$205 a month. And if there's an emergency, I have to pay out of pocket up to 1,000, just kind of like a deductible, and then they cover everything else.

**WOODS:** All right back up a minute. I'm curious about that, because when I talked to somebody early on on the show, I did an episode on these health shares, and they said that the reason they were able to do it was that there was a loophole that allowed for religious organizations to do this. And I thought it had to specifically be a religious organization. How are they getting around that? Or am I being naive? Is this underground?

**BUSH:** No, it's not underground. It's a full-on company. It has great reviews. It's ZionHealth.org. I don't know where they – I think there's like an actually legal designation for this type of thing now.

**WOODS:** Okay. Okay, well, that's very interesting, because I had a lot of people who were interested in that, who were saying, well, I'm not religious, and I know I could pretend to be and I just invent a religion that includes only me just so I can get into this health share, but I'd rather not do that if I can avoid it. So ideally, you'd like to see within the Freedom Cells something along these lines?

**BUSH:** Yeah, as I say, we have 10,000 people now, which is right around the corner, or 25,000 – who knows what the number would be? And then I'd like to talk about later this communication and decision making structure that we could use, but it's like, okay, now we have enough people. Half of the people are interested in this and want to participate, so we could either go to Zion health and say, "Hey, we have 5,000 people" – even on a smaller scale, 500 people – "We have 500 people that want to participate in your program. Is there a way that we could get a group rate?" Or if we have more people, we say, "Hey, guys, let's go ahead and start our own legal entity that caters specifically to our network."

Or if we want to do an agorist style, or like let's go to some sort of cryptocurrency with a smart contract where these variables need to be met and unlocked with private keys in order to access the funds that have been on reserve, something like that. I don't know. I wouldn't mind if it was actually a legal entity, because maybe there'd be less risk than experimenting with smart contracts and everybody's money. But this is the type of things that we could do when we have the network, when we have the people that are willing to participate, and when we have the decentralized mechanism to make a decision as a group without having to rely on politicians or elected representatives to make those decisions for us.

**WOODS:** Well, it's all very interesting. Sounds like something John Bush would do. It really does. Or it sounds like the kind of thing that maybe you would talk about when you were young and now actually start to try to implement. So first of all, let me just remind people because of my mistake earlier, the website is FreedomCells.org. Okay, from now I'm just going to read off the paper. FreedomCells.org. So what would be the — I don't know if you want to make an elevator pitch, or what would be like your wrap-up if I just gave you the mic for two minutes and said you can either make your pitch to folks or you can say something that we didn't get a chance to say? If I just say the mic is yours for a couple minutes, what would you want to say?

**BUSH:** Okay, well, earlier we talked about kratom, and if people want to try to create them for free, no risk, all you've got to do is pay \$5 shipping and handling, you can go to FreeOunceofKratom.com. I said the government doesn't like it, so we can't do credit cards and debit cards because of this silly Obama era program called Operation Choke Point. But we do echeck, totally safe and secure. You can mail in check or money order. Cryptocurrency, of course. And we also have Zell, which is on most people's mobile banking app. So I really encourage people to give it a try if they haven't already. It's really helped a whole lot of people.

And then I'd love for people to check out my podcast I just started. I used to do podcasts back in the day like Tom, and I guess if I'd kept with it, I'd have thousands of episodes, but I switched to this, this podcast, whatever. But I started another one. It's called *Live Free Now*, and you can find it at LiveFreeNow.show.

And then the Freedom Cell thing, I think we have a really viable alternative, a way that likeminded people, libertarians, voluntaryists, agorists, or other type of radicals that are tired of the status quo, it's a vehicle. It's a social organization that people can participate in. It's not just an idea. It's not speculation or theory. We're actually doing it. There's over 4,300 people that are signed up on the website and expressed interest. Many of those people are organized in these little inner cadre and middle cadre groups.

And as we continue on this road to serfdom, really, we need to think of some innovative ways to push back, and not just push back in a defensive way, but to live together as human beings in a way that honors our individual sovereignty. And the current status quo of coercion or even trying to put in a new buffoon or elect a libertarian buffoon isn't working. And so we've developed this innovative way where we can create our own social organization. You don't have to take it as far as when we have 100,000 people, we declare our independence and support one another and defend one another from the armed aggressors.

It doesn't have to go that far for you if you don't want to take that risk, although I invite you to so we can really have some freedom. But there's all sorts of ways that it could benefit you and your family, from education, entrepreneurship, spiritual growth, a gardening club, health, a freedom forum, whatever. So check it out at FreedomCells.org. We'd really love your listeners to be a part of it.

**WOODS:** All right, terrific. I'll put all three of those links up on the show notes page, TomWoods.com/1752. And John, thanks for your time and for doing this stuff that you don't have to do. I mean, you're doing well in business and you have kids, and there are plenty of ways you could spend your time and no one would begrudge you that. But I have the feeling you're going to be a Ron Paul in the sense that when you're 85, you're still going to be saying,

"Look, the website is..." [laughing] You're just one of those guys, so we need more like you, John. Thanks a lot.

**BUSH:** Hey, thank you so much for having me on, Tom. You too, keep up the good work.