

**Episode 2,356: All the Wars are Based on Lies**

**Guest: Keith Knight**

**WOODS:**  Keith is freshly returned from PorcFest, which of course, is held every year in New Hampshire, and is ready to talk to the *Tom Woods Show* audience.

He has a very interesting approach to the subject of the state and war. It's a kind of inversion of the old Randolph Bourne saying. And so, he has a talk that he gave not too long ago called “The State is the Health of War”.

And I want to talk to him about that because there are few topics more important in the world at any given time than this. So, Keith is also the editor and compiler of *The Voluntarist Handbook*, which we've talked about, which is an absolutely great introduction to our ideas.

It's got some of the best people writing, some of the most important pieces on some of the most critical issues. So it really, really gets you up to speed very quickly and very effectively and persuasively. So, Keith, welcome back.

**KNIGHT:** Tom, thank you so much for having me. I got the idea for this just because so often capitalism is criticized as "child labor". So, instead of, like, fighting something on principle, they'll just associate something really negative with it.

So, I figured the best way we can combat that is to associate the state with mass murder, and throw a little guilt back at them the way they do to us, since logic and reason seem to be extremely difficult to use.

**WOODS:** It's so funny. Nothing ever seems to stick to them, no matter what we do. It always sticks to us, but for them, for some reason it doesn't. But we'll give it a shot anyway.

Describe, before talking about any specific case, what your overall thesis is.

**KNIGHT:** The claim is that wars and mass conflicts are much more likely to exist when there is one group that has a monopoly on violence, mainly because they have access to a central bank, a monopoly right to issue money and control interest rates, the ability to issue taxes and force people to fund their operations even if the population at large is against it.

Many governments claim the right to conscript people. We even have the Selective Service that men ages 18 to 26 are still required to register for in America. Volodymyr Zelensky instituted conscription February 24th of 2022, forcing people to perform labor against their will in the worst conditions known to man.

They also have a compulsory schooling apparatus in most states. This makes the population at large very sympathetic to whatever the state does. Just as if the Catholic Church or Amazon required people to attend all of their schools for ages 5 to 18, people would see those organizations a little more sympathetically.

And finally, the explicit legal double standard that if I were to do what Joe Biden, Donald Trump, or Barack Obama have done, I'd clearly be seen as either a murderer or a terrorist. But when they do it, it is commonly just referred to as foreign policy or "keeping the nation strong".

So, those are the five reasons I believe that it's important to recognize that wars are much more likely to occur when a state is in existence, rather than if we did not have such double standards for people at large.

**WOODS:** Well, that's true. But in a way, although the logic of it makes perfect sense, it seems borderline untestable, though.

**KNIGHT:** It is difficult to test. However, if we gave these five green lights to any other organization, maybe we could have a control and see if they're more likely to aggress against others than they otherwise would be.

We can look at many historical examples and see: *Well, is this something we could imagine a private organization doing if they had to bear the entire cost of these things?*

So, when it comes to all of the terror wars, you can look at the Council on Foreign Relations website, and in 2016 alone, there were 12,192 bombs dropped on Syria, 12,095 on Iraq, 1,337 on Afghanistan, 496 on Libya, they go into Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan as well.

It seems extremely unlikely when we have to have someone bear the cost of their actions that they're less likely to engage in all of these criminal activities. When it comes to people having to actually bear the cost, they're much less likely to engage in an activity.

We know this because the Democrats will say: *If you raise the price of health care, fewer poor people can access health care, because when the price goes up, it makes things more difficult to access.*

But when they just raise the price of employment through minimum wage or regulations, well, that apparently has no effect whatever. People know this in every other aspect of their life. When the price goes down, people are more likely to consume something. When the price goes up, they're less likely to.

So, when we lower the price of going to war by giving some people the right to tax and a central bank, it makes war much more likely. We have basically every reason to believe so.

**WOODS:** All right. So, let's start with – and you can take your time on these. Give us an example. What would be an example of a war or some kind of conflict where you can apply this framework?

**KNIGHT:** Well, we see that people are very ready to defend themselves when they are at risk. But it seems like with states, we come across a constant thread of lies when it comes to why such wars need to be fought.

So, in June of 2016, a terrible event took place in Orlando, Florida, referred to as the Pulse Nightclub Massacre, in which 49 people were killed, 53 were injured. And Omar Mateen was a guy who pledged his allegiance to the Islamic State.

And Barack Obama came out four days after the event and explained more or less what happened, saying, *"This was an attack on the LGBT community. Americans were targeted because we're a country that has learned to welcome everyone, no matter who you are or who you love. And hatred towards people because of sexual orientation, regardless of where it comes from, is a betrayal of what's best in us."*

Turns out that Trump actually had more or less the same position. Trump on June 13th said, *"This is a very dark moment in America's history. A radical Islamic terrorist targeted the nightclub not only because he wanted to kill Americans, but in order to execute gay and lesbian citizens because of their sexual orientation.*

*It's a strike at the heart and soul of who we are as a nation. It's an assault on the ability of free people to live their lives, love who they want and express their identity."*

So, what you can actually do is falsify this and recognize that terrorism is something people do in order to amplify a message as opposed to conceal it, much like people do at protests.

And here are the words of Omar Mateen in his 911 call. While he's holding the hostages, he initiates a 911 call and says the following, *"You have to tell America to stop bombing Syria and Iraq. They are killing a lot of innocent people. What am I to do here when my people are getting killed over there? You get what I'm saying?*

*You need to stop the US airstrikes. Tell the US government to stop bombing. They are killing too many children. They are killing too many women, okay? I feel the pain of the people getting killed in Syria and Iraq. They need to stop bombing Syria and Iraq.*

*The US is collaborating with Russia, and they are killing innocent women and children, okay? The airstrikes need to stop and stop collaborating with Russia, okay? You see? Now you feel how it is. Now you feel how it is.”*

So, when it comes to, were the governments and the war on terror just set out to protect us with spending trillions of dollars on bombs, killing tens of thousands of civilians, something that would be unthinkable to fund voluntarily?

They put us in this situation and no one had to bear the cost. Very few people, if any, went to jail. Well, except people who actually expose the lies about the war on terror, people like Chelsea Manning or Julian Assange.

So, when it comes to examples like this, we see constant deception in order to get people to not resist in funding state wars. It makes them much more likely to occur.

And because of schooling, people do not meet these statements from Barack Obama, from Donald Trump, with a level of skepticism they would if any other organization was making them.

**WOODS:** And in this case, of course, it's very obvious why a political leader would want to confuse people as to what the motivations of the person are. Because in this case, of course, he can kill two birds with one stone.

He can get a favored constituency to support him further by him portraying himself as their defender against a crazy person like this. And secondly, he can cover up what's really going on in foreign policy. Which is what obviously did lead to the incident, was somebody being upset about that.

So, it makes perfect sense that somebody like an Obama or any other political leader would want to obscure the real nature of the thing.

**KNIGHT:** Exactly. And because we have the primary source of the 911 call, it's just unbelievable that both the left and right came together to advocate a social justice angle, which is dislike or hatred of homosexuals, when the actual answer is so clear.

Just as we saw so many people enlisting after 3,000 Americans died on 9/11, when tens of thousands of people in Iraq and Syria are killed by US bombs, they also get the same feeling that we did. Now, even going back – this is not necessarily some recent phenomenon.

AJP Taylor wrote a book titled *The Origins of the Second World War*, and in it he summarizes the First World War. He says, *"The assassination of Franz Ferdinand provoked Austria-Hungary to declare war on Serbia.*

*The Russian mobilization in support of Serbia provoked Germany to declare war on Russia and France, Russia's ally. The German refusal to respect Belgium neutrality provoked Great Britain to declare war on Germany.*

*And just like that, in a matter of a couple of days, governments were able to spend tens of millions of dollars, conscript millions of people, to fight a war that started because Franz Ferdinand was assassinated."*

Something, again, almost unthinkable in the voluntary sector, especially when you're dealing with conscript armies and people don't have the right to opt out. This is a war where Russia lost 1.8 million people, and all of those people were on the front fighting it out in this conflict.

And the Bolsheviks were able to take over the capital in 1917 because they weren't defending the homeland. Another example of how wars can easily weaken empires, contrary to what Vivek Ramaswami and Donald Trump like to say.

Germany lost 2 million people. France, the number I believe, is 1.3 million. The Habsburg Empire of Austria-Hungary, 1.1 million. The United Kingdom, 920,000 deaths. Italy, 460,000. And 116,000 Americans who came in towards the end of the war.

**WOODS:** But on some level, everybody recognizes that after World War Two, the British lost their empire. And I mean, you have to understand that is because the war decimated them. So, on some level, we get it.

**KNIGHT:** And on another level, they say: *Those stupid Soviets got bogged down in an unwinnable war in Afghanistan in the late '70s and '80s.* Also: *War grows the economy, so you've actually got to support the warfare state.*

They will say those things almost one right after the other and not see the blatant contradiction. But they did it again in the Second World War. After the National Socialists invade Danzig on September 1st, a town that was roughly 98% German and has a population about the size of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

It was Neville Chamberlain who declared war. Not because Britain was about to be taken over, but Neville Chamberlain's justification on September 3rd was, *"This morning the British ambassador in Berlin handed the German government a final note, stating that unless we heard from them by 11:00 that they were prepared at once to withdraw their troops from Poland.*

*A state of war would exist between us. I have to tell you now that no such undertaking has occurred, and as a result, this country is at war with Germany."*

So, just like that, a few people can unilaterally send millions of men into the death grinder under the guise of protecting Poland, in which millions of Poles died as a result of this conflict, and Poland ended up in the hands of Joseph Stalin afterwards.

So, just as we say: *Well, we're going to protect Ukraine and make sure we kick out Viktor Yanukovych, we're going to install Petro Poroshenko and then Volodymyr Zelensky in order to keep Ukraine safe, and now Ukraine is suffering the consequences.*

And they're more or less doing the same thing: *We're going to protect Taiwan from the Chinese. We're going to play real tough with China.* And basically, this allows Taiwan and Ukraine to determine the foreign policy of America.

So, it's extremely costly. We have no reason to believe any voluntary organization could get away with this. You know, Churchill actually wrote a book after the Second World War. He wrote six of them.

And in the first one, *The Gathering Storm*, published in March of 1948, Churchill himself said, *"The human tragedy reaches its climax in the fact that after all the exertions and sacrifices of hundreds of millions of people and the victories of the righteous cause, we have still not found peace or security, and that we lie in the grip of even worse perils than those we have surmounted."*

Clearly referring to the fact that the Soviets now occupied Albania, Bulgaria, all of Czechoslovakia, not just the Sudetenland – which Chamberlain is called a coward for not going to war over. The Soviets occupied Poland, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, and East Germany as well.

So, again, we see that: *Look, we're going to have to have a huge sacrifice, but in the end, we'll get a large victory.* The war was over Poland in the first place, and Poland ended up in the hands of Stalin after they suffered millions of deaths.

And we're constantly told that it's extremely exploitative to take a job voluntarily in which you get money, and your labor is actually being extracted, its surplus value. And no one ever has this same principle for the state.

The war they can't stop bragging about, the Second World War, had all these devastating consequences and led to a proxy war in Vietnam, Korea, and Afghanistan afterwards.

And we're still called the ones who are greedy for advocating voluntary exchanges, while they advocate this mass death murder machine, and they're just advocating social justice.

**WOODS:** Let's see. I've got a list of these that we can talk about. And it's kind of sad, isn't it, that we have such a long list of these?

**KNIGHT:** It is sad. One more thing on the Churchill myth, because the Sean Hannitys of the world cannot exhale without admiring Winston Churchill.

It turns out that it was a guy named Frederick Lindemann, a physicist who worked for Winston Churchill, the two of them got together and put forth a strategic bombing policy. It was summarized by JM Spaight, the principal secretary of the Air Ministry in 1944.

His book is titled, *Bombing Vindicated* and he said, *"Because we were doubtful about the psychological effect of propagandists distortion of the truth that it was we who started the strategic bombing offensive, we have shrunk from giving our great decision of May 11th, 1940, the publicity which it deserves.*

*It was a splendid decision. It was as heroic, as self-sacrificing, as Russia's decision to adopt her policy of scorched earth."*

Another source on this is CP Snow, a science adviser to the war government gave a series of lectures at Harvard in 1961 titled Science and Government.

CP Snow summarized Churchill's policy as, *"The paper laid down a strategic policy. The bombing must be directed especially against German working-class houses. Middle class houses have too much space around them and so are bound to waste bombs.*

*The paper claimed that given a total concentration of effort on the production and use of bombing aircraft, it would be possible in all the larger towns of Germany (that is, those with more than 50,000 inhabitants) to destroy 50% of all houses."*

Can you imagine a voluntarily funded organization spending this much time and money? If you've ever worked at a corporation, they're constantly having every incentive to cut costs.

And we're supposed to believe that, well, whether you get money coercively, you have the right to print it, you have to work for it and get it voluntarily, we're still going to get the same outcome.

All of this mass destruction is a result of this legal double standard. Not to mention the fact that Churchill was first Lord of the Admiralty in 1914 during the First World War. A very pro -Churchill historian named Martin Gilbert has tons of exclusive Churchill access to the archives.

According to Gilbert, in a 1994 book titled *The First World War*, he estimates that the total civilian death toll of Churchill's blockade of Germany alone resulted in the deaths of 762,106 German civilians.

And the people championing this guy are all about civilization. They're all about helping the working class and making the nation strong, when the results are the opposite, even in the cases they brag about.

Churchill was responsible for an atrocity that certainly equals Pearl Harbor. I also want to touch on Pearl Harbor because that's an important one. It's referred to as Operation Catapult, in which 1,297 French servicemen were killed off the coast of Algeria by the Royal Navy.

It was done under the guise of: *Well, if we actually don't kill these people and destroy these boats, then the National Socialists are going to take over*. So, really murdering innocent people is not actually that big of a deal when you take things into account.

Again, just blatant double standards, and people will still pledge their allegiance to them. And the Churchill myths of the world and all of the death of the Second World War is proudly boasted about and used as a reason for: *Well, we should stay strong on Russia because Putin is the next Hitler and Zelensky is the current Winston Churchill*.

So, they just have these fake historical narratives and use those instead of actually studying the empirical evidence, which is too depressing, so I don't necessarily recommend it. But this Churchill myth, this pro-war myth, is so vital to destroy in the minds of people.

**WOODS:** Well, I'll tell you something. Talking about Winston Churchill in that way is one of these things that libertarians do – not all libertarians, the good ones – do that will just shock people. They think: *Wait a minute, what are you talking about? I've been taught from birth that Churchill was a great hero.*

It's like when people suddenly realize that when we say, "no stealing" and we say "private property rights", we really mean that in all its implications. So, that means you can't have this, you can't have that. If you want this and that, you've got to earn it like everybody else.

And this shocks people. But I would say in case there's anybody who's shocked or scandalized, that I bet a few years ago you probably thought maybe the CDC was a bunch of bumbling fools, but yeah, more or less probably harmless.

And now you see: *Wait, hold on a minute! All these institutions, even the ones I kind of thought were probably the least harmful, are also out to get me in a way*. So, I think it is a good time to have an open enough mind to reconsider everything.

And by the way, the show notes page for this episode is TomWoods.com/2356. And I'm going to put on there a link to an episode of the *Tom Woods Show* did with Pat Buchanan on the Churchill myth.

And I rather suspect people listening to this, whether you're skeptical of these claims or rabid for more, will find that episode intriguing. So, I'm putting that there.

What do you want to say about Pearl Harbor?

**KNIGHT:** Well, the reason this one is so important is because it's a historical narrative that's used to justify basically everything: *We can't just sit back and let another Pearl Harbor happen. Pearl Harbor is an example of how when you're an isolationist country, wars eventually come to you*.

It turns out that this is a complete myth. If we go back, even to the 1940s, a guy named George Morgenstern published a book titled *Pearl Harbor: The Story of the Secret War*. And what he does is he gets into the diaries of Henry Stimson, the secretary of war at the time.

And far from governments trying to avoid war and make sure the country's kept safe and making sure government's upholding their end of the social contract, they're actually constantly provoking this war. What Morgenstern uses – you can find Stimson's diaries at Yale.

He was a Skull and Bones member, so basically all of his stuff is there. The diary entry of 1945, in November 25th, 1941, he cites Stimson saying, *"There the president brought up entirely the relations with the Japanese.*

*He brought up the event that we were likely to be attacked perhaps as soon as next Monday. For the Japanese are notorious for making an attack without warning. And the question was what we should do.*

*The question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot without allowing too much danger to ourselves."*

He then cites Stimson talking about after Pearl Harbor. Stimson's saying, *"When the news first came that Japan had attacked us, my first feeling was of relief that the indecision was over and that a crisis had come in a way which would unite all our people.*

*This continued to be my dominant feeling in spite of the news of catastrophes which quickly developed. For I feel that this country united has practically nothing to fear, while the apathy and division stirred up by unpatriotic men had been hitherto very discouraging."*

So, people will say: *Well, maybe the secretary of war was sort of a psycho and he doesn't really know that much of what's going on*. *There's people behind him. It's not like Roosevelt was wanting to provoke an incident. He wanted to keep us out of the war*.

This myth lasted almost three decades. The *New York Times* published an article January 2nd, 1972, titled "War Entry Plans Linked to Roosevelt."

These are a number of documents that were kept secret from Churchill's secret minutes of this meeting in Newfoundland in August of 1940 in Churchill/Roosevelt meetings.

Churchill said, *"He (Roosevelt) obviously was determined that they should come in. The president said he would wage war but not declare it, and that he would become more and more provocative. If the Germans didn't like it, they could attack American forces.*

*The president's orders to these US Navy escorts were likely to attack any German U-boat which showed itself, even if it were 200 or 300 miles away from the convoy. Everything was to be done to force an incident.*

*The president had taken this very well and made it clear that he would look for an incident which would justify him in opening hostilities, Churchill told the war cabinet, according to the minutes of the meeting.”*

It took another few decades – in 1999, a book was published titled *Day of Deceit* by Robert Stinnett. And he came across a document as a result of the Freedom of Information Act by Naval Intelligence officer Arthur McCollum.

And McCollum writes in this memo in 1940, *"It is not believed that in the present state of political opinion, the United States government is capable of declaring war against Japan without more ado. And it is barely possible that vigorous action on our part might lead the Japanese to modify their attitude.*

*Therefore, the following course of action is suggested. Give all possible aid to Chinese government of Chiang Kai -shek. Send a division of long-range heavy cruisers to the Orient, Philippines, or Singapore. Keep the main strength of the US fleet, now in the Pacific, in the vicinity of the Hawaiian Islands.*

It's important to know that Hawaii was not a state at this time – completely embargo all US trade with Japan in collaboration with a similar embargo imposed by the British Empire. Again, reason to believe he's not just some random kook, this was actually implemented.

It's referred to as the Export Control Act of 1940. McCollum ends by saying, *"If by these means Japan could be led to commit an overt act of war, so much the better. At all events we must be fully prepared to accept the threat of war."*

Knowing that with things like military conscription, people couldn't opt out of it if they wanted to, and they couldn't opt out of funding it. And even if they did, they would print the money and find another way.

The Pearl Harbor myth is what gets very good people to justify things like murdering 100,000 civilians in Tokyo in Operation Meetinghouse, murdering another 100,000 in Hiroshima and another 80,000 in Nagasaki.

The state is the health of war, and every chance they get in many countries, time and time again, knowing this legal double standard exists, constantly provoke war to increase their own social status at the expense of the rest of us.

**WOODS:** Well, not to mention, there's a very deliberate effort made to encourage the public to identify with the regime so that if somebody like you comes along and says: *Look at this atrocity that these people carried out!*

They think of it as a personal affront, like you're insulting them. Because this is my government, and this is my country.

And they've got people so confused that they think criticism of an extremely small elite few people, who make decisions without any regard for the input of the general public, are somehow "America", are "the country".

And so, people come to associate with it. And again, they feel personally attacked if you say things like this. They can't even think clearly. So, there's that.

And there's also the fact that there are so many people in America who have a family member who either is currently in the military, potentially in the military, or previously in the military, that anything you say whatsoever about the military from any period of history, again, is viewed as an attack on your uncle or your friend or whatever.

And I don't think they necessarily planned it that way, but it's a nice side benefit.

**KNIGHT:** It certainly is. And they're constantly doing things behind your back that you can't possibly say: We are the state, we are the military. First of all, they have the right to order you around and force you to do things. And you don't have the right to resist them or else you're a January 6th terrorist.

You could never do that to them. How is this the same group of people? They have rights that you explicitly don't have the right to do. And they unfortunately don't learn the lesson.

Chris Murphy, senator, went on C-Span and said, *"I think it was our role, including sanctions and threats of sanctions, that forced, in part, Yanukovych from office."* referring to the coup that the US staged in 2014.

Lindsey Graham, in 2017, went to Ukraine with John McCain and said to Ukrainian soldiers, *"Your fight is our fight. 2017 will be the year of offense. All of us will go back to Washington and we will push the case against Russia. Enough of Russian aggression. It is time for them to pay a heavier price."*

Finally, Senator Adam Schiff, while he was making the case for Trump's impeachment, he said, *"The United States aids, Ukraine and her people so that we can fight Russia over there and we don't have to fight Russia here."*

This is after the Cold War ended without (by some miracle) a nuclear exchange. They're constantly vilifying Russia, knowing they won't have to bear the cost for anything that they do. The Ukrainians will. The American population will. Many Russian conscripts will have to bear the cost, but they don't.

Again, they don't learn the lesson because they don't have the incentives to avoid conflicts.

**WOODS:** I don't know what the conclusion of this is other than...

**KNIGHT:** Stop having double standards for the state.

**WOODS:** Yeah, the thing is, it's a point I've made in so many different contexts, the double standards for the state. I mean, there's another double standard.

That when the state under-performs, let's say, with something like education, this never, ever makes people question the state. It just means that the state hasn't seized enough resources from us.

Now, you wouldn't treat anybody else that way. You wouldn't think that way – like, if you went to a mechanic and the mechanic did a lousy job on your car, you wouldn't say: *That's because he didn't charge me enough*.

Even though he's charging more than the other mechanics in the area, which is the analogy with the government schools. They're spending more than the other schools. So, you wouldn't say: *I'm probably just not paying enough.*

You would never, ever say that. But if it's the state – or even the police. And even people who criticize the police, they're really criticizing the police really only around the edges: *Oh, the police, they can be too harsh with people sometimes. Or, they can be tempted to engage in, let's say, instant execution of people they suspect of being guilty, and this is bad.*

And those things are bad. And I would expect to see that happen. But this is not a matter of: Well, if we just vote for more people, we have some police reform, and whatever. The incentives are still going to be there. There's no firm that would be able to get away with anything like this.

And so, in other words, the police thing doesn't make us say: *There's something wrong with the state.* It's always: *Well, we just need some reforms. Let's change this around. Let's tinker with that*.

But if Walmart were in charge of providing security to us and it generated this result where most crimes go unsolved and a lot of people are very unhappy with their interactions with the Walmart police, well, that would be it.

I mean, Walmart would lose the contract. That would be it. But with the state it's: *Well, you know, we'll figure it out. We'll vote for some other city councilor or something*. And that's it.

**KNIGHT:** So, that is sort of why I'm trying to attack this both on the logic and empirical realm, as well as trying to get people to see, they are blatantly lying to you. Obama or Trump – the average person will like one of those.

They explicitly lied about Pulse. I could share with you the time that I moved from: *Gosh, these people are surely mistaken and maybe we just need higher standards for politicians.* This was my, "Do you hate the state?" moment.

Researching George W Bush's speeches, he had 1st September 20th of 2001, an addressed to Congress after 9/11.

And he said, *"Americans are asking, why do they hate us? They hate what they see in this chamber, a democratically elected government. Their leaders are self-appointed. They hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote, and assemble, and disagree with each other."*

I thought that more or less made sense. I then came across a book titled *Al Qaeda in Its Own Words*, published by Harvard University, and they cite a pamphlet that Osama bin Laden is passing around to Mujahideen fighters in 2003.

And bin Laden says, *"Then the fighters realized that the gang in the White House could not see things clearly and that their leader, that idiot they obey, was claiming that we envied their lifestyle when the truth which this pharaoh would like to hide is that we are attacking them because of their injustice toward the Muslim world, and especially Palestine and Iraq, as well as their occupation of the land of the two sanctuaries.*

*When the fighters saw this, they decided to come out of the shadows and take the fight into their territory, into their homes*.”

Pearl Harbor, Pulse, 9/11, the world wars, all based on lies. No one held accountable because people have this double standard for the state. I just wanted to show you that one, because I was so humiliated.

That you could have told me all day about all the mass death that the government's engaged in, and the solution is: *Well, we've got to get better people in there.* I was so humiliated after realizing that I was swindled for more than a decade in my political research, that I was just willing to believe anything.

And then I was able to drop the double standard that I had for taxation, for the central bank, for compulsory education.

**WOODS:** You know, this whole thing about war after war after war being based on lies, we almost say that – not you, because you're genuinely outraged about it. We almost say that as a throwaway line. Like: *Ah, it's another war started on false pretenses*.

But this is really, truly horrifying. That something as momentous as the decision to go to war is being taken – well, again. Now, listen to the naivety of me, here. As if the public has really anything to say about whether wars get started or not.

That's not true. I was going to say that these decisions are being made without the full information. It doesn't matter. They're not making the decisions.

I mean, remember World War One, they had to propagandize the American public with these street corner propaganda speeches and censorship everywhere. They knew how deeply unpopular it was. They didn't care what the general public thought.

And likewise, continuing on today, it makes no difference. It makes no difference. I don't know if it was Julian Assange – or it was in a Julian Assange documentary. I think it was Julian Assange saying how the thing that really, really affected him in the development of his political thought was seeing the massive, massive global protests against any war in Iraq in 2003.

And it didn't make the slightest bit of difference. Nothing that people did mattered at all. It did not stop this determined few that were absolutely determined to wreak havoc, chaos, death, and destruction everywhere.

And you would think again, if these people, as you say, hadn't been given this special perch and we hadn't been propagandized to think of these people as being special.

Like, they have magical powers now because they collected a certain number of votes and that gives them magical powers to do things the rest of us cannot do.

If we didn't have that, these people would be imprisoned somewhere. Or at the very least, at the very least, everywhere they went they would be jeered. They would find it impossible to function in normal society. But to this day, they're honored and welcomed in all elite circles.

I mean, that is a bizarre situation.

**KNIGHT:** Your World War One example is so important. Because the guy, George Creel, who was head of the public information campaign, appointed by Woodrow Wilson to get people on board with this, talks about how – in his book, it's titled *How We Advertised America* – how he had 756,000 pamphlets published to make sure everyone knew to register for the draft.

Tens of thousands of speakers on street corners making the case for why the Germans are absolutely terrible, and we've got to take on Kaiser Wilhelm. Because, I mean, taking down Wilhelm, you just take him down, and then no one worse could take his place.

I can't imagine anyone worse than Tsar Nicholas ever controlling Russia. So, yeah, let's make sure to get on board with this war.

Arthur Ponsonby wrote a book in 1928 after the First World War and said, *"How is it that all of these countries constantly lied explicitly? There were babies on bayonets in Belgium. There were crucified Canadians. There were mutilated nurses everywhere. And then there was nothing to back this up*.”

And Ponsonby's thesis is more or less that in order to get the population to be willing to get the limbs of their sons blown off and devastate tens of thousands of cities, you almost have to lie. You have to say: *Putin's going to take over Ukraine, then Eastern Europe, then Western Europe, then South America, then Mexico, and then Putin's coming to America*.

It has to be so sensational in order to arouse the public into justifying both the huge sacrifice in life, limb, and the monetary cost. And you have to constantly vilify the opposition as being totally deluded: *You can't talk to Putin*.

So, we could have a formal alliance with Joseph Stalin, but Putin is a bad guy. We can't talk to President Xi of China. He's crazy. But Nixon and Kissinger can go make friends with Chairman Mao after China explodes a nuclear bomb in 1964, proving their capabilities.

And in every sense, they don't have the incentive to make friends with people who they obviously easily could make friends with. Not to mention they were friends with Saddam. Rumsfeld's shaking hands with him.

And that's why Ponsonby's thesis is so important. To know that that's why all of these people who are unrelated in all of these countries for so many years have engaged in wartime deception. Because it's almost a requirement.

The truth about Ukraine, if we didn't go to war and we didn't take on Poland, the guy on the throne would be someone like Viktor Yanukovych.

Or we could fight a huge, massive, bloody, deadly war, and the guy on the throne could be Volodymyr Zelensky, who recently said that we're not sure if we're going to be able to have presidential elections in a time of war, because that's not consistent with our Constitution.

Conscripting men by the millions, confiscating property from the Orthodox Church, outlawed 11 political parties. And this is NATO's guy who's going to defend democracy. So, that is Ponsonby's reason for why we actually see all this.

**WOODS:** For some reason, have this sense that he's unpopular among historians. I could be wrong about that. Or maybe not among historians, but among the fashionable people who are knowledgeable about who he is.

But if he is, it's only because he's a truth teller. There's only because he's a truth teller. The falsehoods that are told in war time, occasionally a few of them come to light and make it into the textbooks.

So, we know something about what happened in Vietnam, which seems to be almost the only foreign policy adventure that bothers left-liberal historians.

That's the only one that really, they bother to dig all that deeply into. The rest of it, I don't know, for whatever reason, it just doesn't keep them up at night. I always wondered about that. What made Vietnam so unique?

I mean, suppose part of it is that the draft was in place at the time and a lot of people did not want to go. And after Nixon got rid of the draft, the antiwar protests basically dried up. And so, I think a lot of people's opinions about that war were tied up with their quite legitimate fears of being conscripted into it.

But the thing is, there's more to the moral enormities of war than the chance you might be conscripted into it. There's also all the people who die.

**KNIGHT:** Exactly. Yeah. And from my grandmother's telling of this, she was completely shocked to see on her television the actual atrocities of war. You think: *Gosh, there's probably some fighting, but they're also negotiating on the sidelines*.

And: *Well, we can't really let this one just end because then the Soviets will take over Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, and then they'll take over America*.

Once the costs are actually real to you, and you actually see not just: *Well, there's some drone campaign in Afghanistan or Iraq*. Once you see the Chelsea Manning videos of innocent civilians getting murdered, then it's actually real to you.

Just like they will say: *Well, a few million people died in the Second World War, but we had to do it.* But watching Tony Timpa gets suffocated to death by Dallas police officers while he's begging for his life after he called the police, that wakes people up.

The Eric Garner situation really woke people up to, this is the life of a peaceful person. Well, you just Maj Torre get arrested on your stream the other day. And we can actually see a peaceful person getting aggressed against.

And that makes it so much more real to us then all of these abstract figures. But it's still important to know that the wars are still empirically based on lies.

**WOODS:** Right. Now, I sent out a note to everybody in my School of Life program to tell them what happened when I had Maj on and all of a sudden we lost the feed.

And we had seen that he was being accosted, but we could also see, because we'd been watching the video, he wasn't doing anything wrong.

And I'm quite sure they did not count on who he was talking to, and the running video and how many people were eyewitnesses and everything. But anyway, the world we live in is crazy.

And you and I have at least some of the answers and nobody wants them. It's a sad thing. Nobody really seems to want them.

**KNIGHT:** If could just end on a white pill. Kaiser Wilhelm wrote the Kaiser memoirs and says: *Look, we lost this thing because of propaganda. The British, their tanks were good, but the propaganda machine, that is really what killed us.*

So, I was on the lookout for who our best propagandists can be. And I came across an article from the Independent by Skyler Baker-Jordan. She says, *"I went to a right-wing libertarian conference as a socialist. I was pleasantly surprised by what I found.”*

She says, quoting Dave Smith, *"'We are libertarians because we love liberty, and we hate injustice.' comedian Dave Smith said in remarks on the opening night. 'The reason we are libertarians is because governments destroy innocent people's lives, and we hate that."*

*Smith went on to speak against the Patriot Act and imperialist wars such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and in favor of civil liberties. The exact issues which motivated me to get involved in left-leaning politics in the early 2000s.*

*Dave Smith, the comedian who headlined night one of the conference, pointed out that it was we progressives who oppose the Bush era wars and Patriot Act. I myself was dismayed when liberals on Twitter demanded January 6th insurrectionist suspects be added to the no-fly list.*

*I'm old enough to remember when the left opposed the no-fly list, and I still do. Indeed, my principles have not changed much since 2002. American politics, however, has."*

So, I think the best thing we can do is find our best propagandists. Like Thomas Sowell says, *"Culture is changed by people who are willing to take a big risk, be courageous, and in a way that makes you sort of envy them and make them very likable, get them in front of the masses."*

And then people will say: *Hey, it's okay to be a libertarian.* That's why was cool with being a libertarian after I saw OBGYN Ron Paul, the Vietnam veteran, say things in this very nice way. And it wasn't just someone online or some hippie from Woodstock saying: *War is terrible and it's all about money.*

So, finding our best propagandists, I think, might be our best strategy. And he does well on Rogan every time.

**WOODS:** Well, I agree with you. Dave's extremely strong. Dave is extremely effective, I think. And it's interesting, the sliver of people in what we might broadly consider "our movement" who are critical of him, not one of them could do 100th of what he does.

Like, not one of them is a better communicator, is able to attract that big of an audience, not one of these people. So, anyway, let's end by promoting – because people should be reading you. Because you are a great young up-and-comer.

I hope you don't think that is patronizing. It's the truth. I mean, you are beyond an up-and-comer. You're already here. You've arrived through your hard work and your effectiveness as a communicator. Tell us briefly about *The Voluntarist Handbook* which will link to at TomWoods.com/2356.

**KNIGHT:** The Voluntarist Handbook is a collection of 50 articles, excerpts from books, the things that took me from being a progressive to being a libertarian. The wide variety of authors is, I think, what makes it so important.

You have people from the right, such as Joe Sobran, making the case in "The Reluctant Anarchist" for why things like "The Myth of the Rule of Law" are things that pulled him away from being a statist.

And we have people on the left, left-libertarians like Sheldon Richmond, making the case that libertarianism, far from being "every man for himself", is actually more accurately defined as social cooperation between a wide interconnected web of people in society.

Even though I'm sitting in this room alone, I'm using a microphone someone else made, internet someone else gave me, a house that someone else built, air conditioning that other people built. We're constantly socially cooperating, and we should see that as a great benefit. As opposed to "cooperating" where one group has the right to coerce another.

So, those are the things that really got to the heart of what changed my mind about the world. It's 318 pages, but you can find a summary of the book in the two introduction pages and the two afterword pages, because I know that's long.

And you can get it on Amazon or Barnes and Noble. Or, if you don't trust me that it's going to be good, go to LibertarianInstitute.org and get yourself a free PDF.

**WOODS:** All right. Excellent. Everybody should go do that. You should support the *Libertarian Institute* also, because it's great people doing great, very, very important work. I'm very glad to sit on the board of that organization.

Keith, congratulations on your continuing good work, and I look forward to hearing more from you and getting you back on sometime in the not too distant future.

**KNIGHT:** Thanks so much, Tom. Take care.