

**Episode 2,387: Dave Smith on Trump, Humor, and The Simpsons**

**Guest: Dave Smith**

**WOODS:**  First of all, let's talk a little bit about you have a brand new comedy special. Is it actually called – I've watched it – *30 Minutes with Dave Smith*. Is that actually what it's called?

**SMITH:** Yes, that's the title. And it's part of a series that Gas Digital, which, of course, is run by the great Luis J Gomez and Ralph Sutton. They're putting out a series of half hour comedy specials.

So, mine was the first one out. And yeah, I've been getting a great response, so I'm very happy that people are enjoying it.

**WOODS:** Where did you record this? What was the venue?

**SMITH:** The venue was the Cutting Room in New York City, which is a really beautiful old – like, it's an old rock club that's had a ton of great rock artists there and stuff. So, that was the spot. Luis chose it, but I loved it.

**WOODS:** I should issue a cautionary warning here that it is for 18 and over. it's not for seven year old Johnny.

**SMITH:** This is true of everything I do. It's never – try to keep the kids away from it. I'll try someday to put out some just squeaky-clean piece of content. But not yet.

**WOODS:** But the thing is, for the most part, it's not even the content per se. I mean, there's some language, and then maybe there is a little bit of content. But it's mostly just your outrage at the various absurdities you have to report on.

And I was telling you about this the other day. There are bits of yours that I could watch over and over again – that I have watched over and over again, even though I know how they come out.

Now, it's one thing if somebody plays you a song, you like the song, you listen to that over and over. You get pleasure from it every time. But for some reason, why is it – I don't understand why I want to hear a comedy bit repeated?

And I told you about Brian Regan, who at the end of some of his shows, he'll ask if people have requests. And they'll say: *Oh, do the refrigerator bit*. Or whatever. And he'll remind them: *You've already heard this bit before, but I'm going to do it for you.*

But it's weird. I don't know why.

**SMITH:** I'm pretty sure that the thing with Brian Regan was – he didn't tell me this. But I remember hearing some comic tell me this years ago. That the thing was that he would start getting heckled by people who wanted to hear his old bits because they just loved the jokes so much.

So, eventually he started just doing it this way so people know, like, at the end of his show, he will take requests. So, like, don't interrupt the new bit. Listen to the new thing, and then he'll give you his favorites at the end.

I totally understand it because when I first started stand up comedy and I used to watch all my favorite guys, I would watch them at the clubs, just working out their new act. And I loved hearing them over and over and over again. It's something about hearing it live, is just kind of cool.

So, I'll get in my own head sometimes. If I'm coming back to a city a year later and maybe like half of my act is different, but the other half is still pretty similar to what it was last year, I'll be like: *Oh man, okay, I only have 30 minutes of new stuff and then 30 minutes of stuff they've already heard.*

But then they just love it. They love hearing the same stuff over, too. So, it's a bizarre thing.

**WOODS:** Or I want my friends to hear it, you know? I bring my friends to the show and say, I can't wait till you hear this.

**SMITH:** And sometimes it's been tweaked and changed a little bit. That's usually how I am. Like, if you hear me do the same thing sometime later, there'll probably be some new element to it. But yeah, I know what you mean. It's an interesting thing, because it's not like a song.

With a joke you're like: *You know where this is going, right?* But people still kind of enjoy the experience of hearing it, and hearing the crowd react, and hearing other people hear it for the first time. So, yeah, that's been cool.

**WOODS:** One of your older bits that, again, I've recommended to many people, is the fake sign language translator. I mean, when that whole thing happened, the guy is translating for Nelson Mandela – or was it? No, no, he was translating for Barack Obama upon the death of Nelson Mandela.

**SMITH:** At Nelson Mandela's funeral.

**WOODS:** Right. And that bit is so great. Like, when you heard that news item, did you immediately say: *This is something.*

**SMITH:** Well, yeah. I mean, it's obviously something when you see that. And then I was playing around with it on stage, like, that night. And then it was – it's kind of like sometimes you have a concept of something that you think is really funny.

And then you figure out what's up when you take it to stage. So, then as you start playing with it and you're like: *Oh, what about this angle? Like, what if I tell this guy's story? What's the story of the fake sign language translator?*

And then you'll have one time where you get it on stage and you're like: *Oh, okay, there's something there. This is definitely, like, a monster bit*. And then it's just working it out from there. And then it was later when I connected it to Trump.

Because I thought that was the perfect connection, like he's basically Trump. Like, he's just crushed it in this world that he's completely unprepared for and hasn't done any of the homework. But it's just like that. And then it became the chunk that was on *Libertas*.

Which, that was the joke of that hour special. Like, that was the one that got the most response and stuff. And it was definitely one of my favorite bits I've ever written. It's up there. But some of the other ones that I thought were like: *Oh, I really love this one*.

But just did not get – the response that one got, that one really hit home with people. So, that's another cool thing about doing standup, is it's this constant – even though it's a solo sport, it's just you up on stage.

But it's really like 50/50. It's like you and the audience. Like, you throw a thing out and then they let you know what the answer is. You know, you're like: *I think this is funny.* And then they go, like: *We agree, to level eight*.

And then you throw another thing out and they're like: *Okay, we agree to level ten on that one*. And then sometimes you'll throw a thing out and it's like: *Uh, we disagree. No. Sorry, that's not funny.*

That doesn't make it to the special, though. That stuff's left on the cutting room floor.

**WOODS:**  As just a spectator, I'm fascinated by this process where you go from thinking – like, the way Jerry Seinfeld puts it: *Is this anything?* Like, he's got the idea for a bit and he'll say: *Is this anything?* And he'll ask somebody: *Is this anything?*

And of course, as you say, you can't really know the answer to that until you get out in front of an audience. But it interests me that a guy like Jerry Seinfeld will go to just some New York club. Not a huge venue, but that way he can try out the new material, see what lands, and then refine it so that he can go to the bigger venues.

How do you do it?

**SMITH:** Well, that used to be my process too, was just work the clubs in New York City, and you get up every night and you just refine it and refine and refine it. At this point, that's not really my – at this point, I'm just kind of, like, on the road and I'm running the hour.

So, I'll introduce new things in there and then I'll try it. I'm kind of trying it in front of my audience on the road. And that's for many reasons, partially that I moved out of New York City, so I'm not, like, super close to all of the clubs now.

To go in for a night and do five spots and make a couple hundred bucks, and, like, an hour in and an hour coming back when I got two little kids and stuff just doesn't make as much sense. But it's also, like, I kind of have years under my belt of doing standup, so it's a language that I'm very familiar with.

So, I can make this work for me now, like, testing stuff out on the clubs on the road and then getting that ready for what – you know, the aim is always to record your next piece. And I promise you guys, by the way, I will be much quicker with the turnaround for my next special.

I don't know if I've told you this story before, but I remember I got off stage in Boston in February of 2020. So, I was doing shows up there – for anybody who was in there, I'm sure someone listening here was in that crowd, and it was great.

And I got off stage, and I went into the greenroom. And I was talking to Robbie Bernstein, who, he always comes out with me, and my friend Chris Vega. They were both on the show with me. And they were both like: *Whoa, dude! The hour is, like, totally coming together!*

And I was like: *Boys, I'm two months away from recording a new special. Like, I got this hour down. It's going to be a great follow up to Libertas.* And then March I was like: *All right, I guess I'm going to have to cancel some of these dates, that might push this back a month or two.*

And then, you know, you're like: *Oh, the world's going to completely shut down*.

**WOODS:**  But Dave, I think because of that, a big chunk of material you had at that time has now just gone by the boards. Like, that bit about the Mexicans with the cots at the Radisson. I love that.

**SMITH:** Yeah. And that maybe someday will come back. That's a good one. I've done that somewhat recently. But there were other bits that I had that were – like, I had a whole thing on the 2020 race. But it was, like, the 2020 race at that point.

And so, I was building it out with like all these Pete Buttigieg jokes and stuff that, just, after Covid, it just didn't make sense anymore. You know what I mean? And then, being me, being, like, the kind of political comic, I can't not have a comment on Covid.

So, now I've got to write about that. And then it just changed everything. So, that was the hour special that was never meant to be. And then of course, it got postponed again when we had our second kid and he had some health issues and stuff. So, that also postponed it.

But this finally came together. I wanted to do a full hour, but Luis really wanted to put out these half hour series. And they paid for the production, so I was like: *Okay, that's fair enough*. But I've still got a lot more stuff, so I'm hoping that 2024 I'll have another special for you guys.

**WOODS:** I kind of miss – in the old days, Owen Benjamin had an old podcast called Why Didn't They Laugh? And you would follow the career of a joke as he was developing it. And you would get recordings of him in front of an audience, and it would get a lukewarm response.

And then he would give his commentary and say: *I know there's something here. Like, this is funny. I'm just doing something wrong. I'm leaving something out or whatever.* And then he would say: *So, then I thought I would add X and Y*.

Then they play it again and it gets a little bit more laughter. And it shows the evolution of it being kind of mediocre to being killer. And again, as a non-comedian myself, I just thought it's fascinating to watch that process.

**SMITH:** Yeah, that was such a cool concept, that show that Owen was doing for a while there. Because it kind of like lifted the curtain and showed you, like, *Oh: this is how...* You might just see this killer joke, but every killer joke you see started off as a nugget.

And those nuggets often are indistinguishable from the ones that just go nowhere, that just don't end up doing anything. And it was always interesting to watch how he worked out bits. And every comic has a slightly different process of that, but it's all some version of that.

That you have to take these kind of, like, ideas – sometimes it's not hitting, but you're like: No, I know there's something here. I know I'm on to something. And then, one of my favorite things about being a stand-up comedian is when you have the moment – and it almost always, for me, just happens on stage.

Where you have the moment where you just say it the right way and it hits. And you're like – in that moment, you're like: *Found it, found it.* Like: *That's how the joke has to go. Boom. Now we got that down.*

**WOODS:** Yeah. I can't imagine what that feeling is like. By the way, I've heard comedians say – maybe it was you, actually – say they want laughs, not applause. Like, when the audience applauds a joke, it's maybe because they agree with it politically or something, but I want the laughs.

**SMITH:** Oh yeah, 100%. That's the goal. The applause? I mean sometimes applause is nice. Applause is okay if it's after a huge laugh. That happens sometimes where you hit a huge laugh and then it's almost like when they've recovered from the laugh, they're going: *Oh, that was so good that we clap.*

**WOODS:** Yeah, that's fine.

**SMITH:** But you don't want the reaction to just be applause. Because then all that means is you're catering to what they already agreed with. And that's not what you want. What you want is to make them laugh. That's what comedy is about. That's the force that it is.

And I think the best – this has changed a little bit with all the woke insanity. Because people will nowadays, more so than ever, just decide they're shutting down. Or they'll be triggered by keywords and then they're done: *I'm not going to even hear out what you have to say if I've heard these words.*

But in general, the best feeling is still when you make someone laugh at something that they wouldn't want to. If you can get a laugh out of someone who disagrees with the angle that you're going on it, that's the best.

Because then you know it's really funny. It's so funny that even that person had to go like: *All right, that's good*. Like, if I could get a Trump supporter to laugh at me mocking Trump, or whoever, a Hillary Clinton supporter to laugh at me mocking Hillary Clinton, that's the best.

Because that's the power of the force of funny, that you're like: *Oh yeah, I kind of can't deny it.* Laughing is kind of like breathing. You know, there are those, like, involuntary reactions. But breathing is the one that, like, you kind of can control. I forget – there's a scientific term for it.

But it's like you can stop yourself from breathing, but it also just happens without you being like: I'm taking a breath now. I'm exhaling now. It just kind of naturally happens. And laughing is kind of like that.

Like, you could stop yourself. You can say: *I'm not going to laugh at any of this and cross my arms*. But when you're kind of just open and listening, it just kind of comes out of you. Like, it's an organic thing. You just pull it out of somebody.

It's really strange and hard to describe, but to me it's just so beautiful.

**WOODS:**  I know you know this, but there's a play – it's off Broadway now, it was on Broadway for a couple of years – called *The Play That Goes Wrong*. You know I love this play.

**SMITH:** I've heard you talk about it quite a bit, yeah.

**WOODS:** Yeah. So, I have a business mastermind group. It's a small group, costs a lot to join it, but it's worth it. And I took all of them to see it one night.

And I found out later that just to screw with me, they had all decided that for the first 15 minutes of that play, they were just going to sit there stone-faced and just refuse to laugh. Just to see what my reaction would be, because I was so looking forward to seeing how much they would enjoy it.

Well, it turns out the play is so funny, none of them could keep it up. It just killed. Now, I do want to talk about some current event things. We'll get to that in a minute.

But let me ask you this. I think that bit about the sign language translator, that might have been from 2017. I mean, I think that could be a while ago. Does that sound right? Six years?

**SMITH:** Something like that.

**WOODS:** Something like that. Okay. How are you a better comedian today than you were six years ago?

**SMITH:** Well, I mean, it's just kind of like anything else. The more you keep doing it, the better you get at it. I think it's like a craft that you're constantly working on, so you just get better and better. I think that it's not necessarily that I'm a better joke writer.

I think that I've found my voice more since then, and there are probably little technical things that most people wouldn't notice. But if you watch me do stand-up today, like, my delivery has been kind of perfected more.

And my – just, kind of like, who I am is much better. I'm a drastically different person since when I put out Libertas. Like, I had just started dating my wife at the time. I was childless. And I guess I wasn't "single" single, but I was not married.

And it's just, like, a whole different place in life. And I think that as you grow as a person, you just get better at the art of being a leader, speaking in front of people, it all kind of like – it all helps. So, I'd say that's where I've improved the most, is just kind of like figuring out who I am and what my voice is.

**WOODS:** I think one part of that is that you at least seem to me to be much more confident. Like: I own this stage, and I have a right to be here. And I'm good at this, and I am in command of this audience.

That, I think, comes through really, really well. And not in an arrogant way, it's just something that you exude. Now, because it's a YouTube link, though, I can't say to people very easily: *Oh, go to YouTube.com/, and all these crazy characters*.

Is there an easy way? I'll link to it in the description and at TomWoods.com/2387. Is there an easy way to just type in the name of it?

**SMITH:** Well, YouTube.com/@PartOfTheProblem is my channel, so if you go there it's up. It's the first thing there. But if you search it, I'm sure it comes up fairly easily, but that's probably the easiest one, YouTube.com/@PartOfTheProblem.

**WOODS:** Okay. All right, good. So, it's definitely worth seeing. But the thing is, there'll be bits and pieces of it. You'll be scandalized. You'll say: *Woods, listen to this and laughed!?*. Yes. Yes, dear listener. That is true.

All right. How many times have you been on Joe Rogan?

**SMITH:** This was my 10th time, I believe.

**WOODS:** That is insane.

**SMITH:** Well, I went on twice with Luis J Gomez and Big Jay Oakerson. It's, like, the three of us went on twice.

**WOODS:** Yeah, that still counts.

**SMITH:**  Oh, yeah, it still counts. I'm counting it. And this was my eighth solo. I believe I'm right about that. I'd have to go through all of them, but I'm pretty sure.

**WOODS:** Do you think there are many people who have been on that many times?

**SMITH:** It's a small group, I think. I mean, there are some.

**WOODS:** You should have gotten a cake or something for your 10th time.

**SMITH:** You do feel like: Yeah, Joe Rogan owes me a plaque. I should – you know, I'm going to give him a call and be like: *Hey, you've, like, helped me more than anyone else in this game. Well, now you owe me something..*. [both laughing]

Do you remember the old *Simpsons* line? Where Homer's going around for favors, and he calls someone up and he's like: *Hey, so-and-so. You remember that time I paid back that loan? Well, now I need you to do something for me.*

It was great. So, that'll be my thing to Rogan.

**WOODS:** I'm out of practice, but when I was younger, there was no situation in my life where I couldn't call on *The Simpsons* to help elaborate on a point.

**SMITH:** Do you ever see? Like, sometimes I'll be on a plane and watching like their TV on a plane. And you're just looking through. And they're like: *Simpsons.* And you're like: *Okay, what's the year?* And then it'll be like, oh, '94. And you're like: *Oh, yes! Okay, good one, the good* Simpsons*.*

**WOODS:** But the thing is – the problem is, there's so many seasons of *The Simpsons* that I know the later ones aren't as good, but there are still some gems sprinkled throughout. You just don't know how to find them.

**SMITH:** Yes. And I'm sure that's true. But I just mean you go back and watch it and it's almost like: I can't believe I forgot about this. Because as you watch, you're like: *Oh yeah, that one! It was so funny, just so perfect, man.*

Like, the best comedy show ever. In the prime of *The Simpsons*, there's nothing better. Maybe prime *South Park*, but prime *Simpsons* was just the best.

**WOODS:** Well, there are these little details. Like, the Halloween episodes – sometimes they're kind of parodies of well-known movies like *The Shining*.

There's one episode – and this seemed to be a parody of a *Twilight Zone* episode where there is a cursed doll that's attacking Homer. And it's a clown doll, it's a Krusty the Clown doll.

And he calls up the manufacturer to try to find out, how do I stop this thing from trying to murder me? And they put him on hold and the hold music is a song from 1965 that goes, *"Everybody loves a Clown, so why don't you?"*

And that's a real song, by the way. And actually, it's kind of a sad song. The guy is actually singing this to a woman, that: *Everybody loves me. I'm a funny guy, whatever. You don't react at all. And I'm a real person in here. You understand, right? I'm not just a jokester for you. I'm a real person with a heart. Why don't you respond to me?*

Like, it's actually heartbreaking song. But the line is, *"Everybody loves a clown, so why don't you?"* And I said to my wife: *Wouldn't it have been great to be sitting in the writers' room when somebody said, “You know the song that should be playing on the phone?”*

**SMITH:** Yeah, little details like that. I remember as a kid watching – there was this one scene in *The Simpsons* that I thought – and to this day, it's still so great.

But I remember watching it as a kid and laughing so uncontrollably hard and being like: *That is the funniest thing anyone's ever thought of.* And I don't know what writer came up with it, but there was this episode where Bart gets a pet elephant. You remember? It's like the...

**WOODS:** Stampy.

**SMITH:** Stampy. He wins it on a radio show. And they're like: *Well, do you want the $5,000 or the wacky gift?*

**WOODS:** It's the goofy gift. No one chooses the elephant.

**SMITH:** But so, there's this one scene where Stampy gets out and he's charging at a peanut factory. And they cut to inside the peanut factory, and it's, like, the head of the factory. He looks out and sees this elephant charging his factory.

And he turns back and he's like: *All right, people! This is what we drilled for! I put you through hours of days of preparing for this very situation!* And he goes: *Many of you called me crazy. Many of you requested to be transferred to another peanut plant. But here we are...*

And as he's giving the lecture, the thing just busts through and destroys it anyway. But just the idea of there being this guy who runs a peanut factory who, every day is drilling for an elephant attacking it. Like, whoever came up with that – it's just the funniest thing I've ever seen in my life.

And every detail, down to the fact that then he just gives them like, an "I told you so" lecture, and it doesn't matter anyway. And I just thought it was so funny.

**WOODS:** They're so funny on so many levels.

You want to just do this? This could just be a new podcast me and you do – just *Simpsons* moments.

**WOODS:** Just Simpsons. Well, wasn't there a thing where there's a pillow factory? Like, somebody's falling and there's a pillow factory: *Oh, he'll fall into the pillow factory.* But he falls right next to the pillow factory, right into the pavement. So great.

All right. For anybody who's still on this channel, listening to this, watching this episode, I mentioned Joe Rogan because I want to get from you, what is the significance of Joe Rogan? Because I actually think he has a significance far beyond just an episode or two that he's done.

I think he's helped to shape the debate by letting people hear sides of the argument they wouldn't have heard before. Like, I think he's played a legitimate role in American history.

**SMITH:** Yeah. So, I had a moment with him in the green room of his comedy club. And it was just me and him in there, and we were just talking for a little bit. And I had a moment with him where I was like: *Dude, do you like...*

He said something like: *Dude, I love having you on my podcast and blah blah, blah.* And he was like: *I think it's really important that people hear the stuff you have to say.* And I was like: *Dude, you have no idea what this show means.*

And I was, like – think about it like this. You know there's this talk, these rumors of them trying to bring back Covid restrictions. I'm sure you saw that Alex Jones said he met with someone high up at the TSA. And we all know, Alex Jones gets some things right, he gets some things wrong. Who knows?

But there does seem like following him saying that there's all this talk within the corporate press about the "new strains", and how we might have to bring masks back, and you really should get your booster. And it's unbelievable that they even think they can try to get away with this.

But I was talking to Rogan about it. And I was like: *Do you realize if that's true, and they're trying to bring it back, you might be the difference. Like, you might be the reason why they're not able to get that back again*.

It is no small thing that the biggest show in the world has just been shredding the Covid regime narrative for the last two and a half years. Like, they always try to propagandize us in order to get us – that's why they're not just doing lockdowns, they're having everyone on TV talk about this stuff.

And I go: *You may have made the difference.* And he just went like [exhales sharply]. *That's crazy to think about.* And like, look, I know sometimes people in the libertarian world, we have a terrible habit of, like, a purity spiraling, and kind of missing the forest for the trees.

Because I've seen people who will give Rogan a hard time. And they'll be like: *Oh, he was wrong on this*. Or: *He said he supported universal health care at this point*. Or something like that. But it's like, look, this guy, he has hosted Dr. Malone, and Dr. McCullough, and Alex Berenson, and Robert F Kennedy Jr, myself.

You know, I was probably not as important as those guys. But just so many people throughout the Covid years that were just blowing the whistle on this whole thing, this whole insanity. And just – I mean, for that alone.

And there's lots of other things, but for that alone, he's just such a hero in my mind. And obviously I'm biased. The guy's, like, helped me a lot and he's a good friend of mine. But I mean, just objectively, it's like, this is unbelievable.

And it's pretty incredible that we all have our shows that we do, and we all have audiences, and we try to, like, tell the truth as we see it.

But if you compare, say, like late 2001 and all of 2002, when the war propaganda for the war in Iraq was going on, with things like that today, now we have, like, Joe Rogan and Tucker Carlson.

These massive – the biggest people in media are completely opposed to the regime propaganda. We didn't have anything like that back then. Back then, I mean, we had Ron Paul giving some speeches on the House floor, which was incredible.

But we didn't have anything like this with tens of millions of people watching. So, it's the biggest reason, from my perspective, to be kind of optimistic about where we are. Like, at least we kind of have a fighting shot as long as we have the biggest platforms telling the truth.

**WOODS:** And not to mention, if people weren't receptive to these truths, it wouldn't remain the biggest platform. And that's another white pill. That we're all out there, we're all disorganized, and I don't know how this is all going to come together to result in a good outcome.

But at least I know there are other people out there and I'm not crazy. Well, I mean, the fact that a lot of people believe something does not mean you're not crazy for believing it. They could all believe incredibly stupid things.

But one thing, there's never really any need to stroke the ego of a politician. I totally understand that. But I did tell DeSantis – because I thought it was important for him to know in case he didn't.

Because when you just told that story about Rogan and he was thinking about what you were saying, maybe he hadn't even really thought of it until you put it quite that way – he himself.

Well, likewise, I said to DeSantis: *What you did...* – and look, I know the story. Yes, I know he locked Florida down. I live here. I wrote about it in my newsletter.

I wrote about the fact that in order to go to a restaurant, I had to drive to Georgia, for heaven's sake, in late April, I tweeted – I'm getting back to what I was talking about in just a minute. But I tweeted a picture of a sandwich that I was eating in a cafe.

And that was one of the best, most popular tweets I ever had. It was a picture of a sandwich. And I wouldn't have had to take that picture if we hadn't been locked down in Florida. So, I get that. But at the same time, what DeSantis did – I said to him.

It was of world historic importance, because we had a genuine control group. You can talk about Sweden all day long and people just won't listen to you for some reason. But Florida is demographically identical, probably, to Georgia, very close, which in turn is close to other states.

So, these are basically the same people. And if you adjust for age, you find that Florida and California, there's basically no difference between them. And if you look at all-cause mortality, Florida ended up doing better.

So, all-cause mortality is a great metric because it eliminates the problem of classifying a "Covid death". It also includes the lockdown-created deaths and all that. And it's important for him to get this. Now, in the meantime – now, this will transition into Trump, which I want to talk about for a minute.

I cannot get over that Trump – he did this again. First, he said a few weeks ago that Florida did third worst on Covid, which is insanely wrong. In a list of 50 states, age-adjusted mortality, where number one is the worst, Florida is at 36, which is unbelievable.

And by the way, DeSantis must have had some sleepless nights wondering: Am I really doing the right thing, defying the entire world? That must have been very hard to do. I bet he aged ten years during that.

So, number one, he gives us this BS line. Then he recently (on his truth social) reposted, or whatever, an article from MSNBC saying DeSantis's record on Covid is even worse than you thought.

And so, in other words, Trump is endorsing an article that's basically saying it was so irresponsible of Ron DeSantis to ignore the public health recommendations.

So whose side are you on, Donald Trump? Whose side are you on? How can you – and I know I'll have a lot of Trump people listening to this. I want to know, you specific people who are supporting him, how are you supporting that?

We endured so much at the hands of these lockdowns and irrationality. You could just look the other way when he acts like that was all a good idea because stupid Ron Desanctimonious wouldn't go along with it? Good, that he wouldn't go along with it!

**SMITH:** Yeah, and it's one of these things where like – so, when I argue with Trump supporters about this, what they always have is a million excuses. So, my position is like: *Look, I could never forgive Donald Trump for making Fauci the face of the pandemic response.*

I mean, Trump could have removed him from that task force any day he wanted to. And instead he let him get up there from the White House podium and speak to the American people every day through 2020. And that's on him. He endorsed lockdowns. He was mocking Sweden for not locking down.

**WOODS:** He was mocking Georgia.

**SMITH:** Georgia: By the summer, you're going to have all these deaths. None of that ever came true. And their response is usually like: He got tricked. He got duped. They were lied to. He would have been impeached had he not done that – even though he got impeached anyway.

But that's usually the response. But that's very different than what Trump's saying here. Trump himself is saying, like: *Oh, it's not that he got tricked.* He's still bragging about Operation Warp Speed.

It's a real weakness in Donald Trump that it's just – look, his whole brand is bravado, and so he can never admit he did anything wrong.

And it's always got to be like, if it happened under his watch, it was tremendous. And DeSantis is an enemy now, and so he'll go at DeSantis with anything he can. But it's so bizarre to see him going at DeSantis on the area that he is objectively so much stronger than Trump on.

Like, if he wants to go at DeSantis, go at him about Ukraine, go at him about all the neocon donors flocking to him. That would all be kind of reasonable.

Like, those are the areas where DeSantis is weak. Desantis is kind of doing this thing right now where he knows he can't start talking like Nikki Haley and Mike Pence, because he knows you can't win if you do that.

You know what I mean? Like, that stuff might have worked in the George W Bush Republican primaries, but it ain't working today. You can't talk about how arming Ukraine is the most important thing in the world. But he's also not saying he's against arming Ukraine.

He's trying to walk the ground in the middle. And that's what Donald Trump should be pushing him on, and forcing him to commit, and going at him for that. But basically the only way he can claim that Florida did so much worse, or was the third worst state, is if you don't adjust for age. Then the numbers look bad.

But not adjusting for age? I mean, this is like talking about the wage gap and not adjusting for hours worked.

**WOODS:**  By the way, they do that too. Because they're all liars.

**SMITH:** Yeah, that's what they do. This is what the feminist talking point has been. But it's like, you're not even adjusting for how many hours in a week you work?

And obviously Covid – when the overwhelming majority of people who die from Covid are very old people – like, the outrageous majority of them, to not adjust for age is ridiculous. Then you're not getting at anything about what policy actually mattered.

You're just saying Florida had an older population. That doesn't give us any information. So, on every level it makes no sense. And I will say, DeSantis – again, this is a thing libertarians have a problem on. Like, when someone's not at 100%, we're supposed to almost be like: *Well, they're all bad*.

Which, I hate that tendency. Yes. DeSantis was wrong to initially lock down, but he not only reversed course, he then vowed to never do any of it again, and didn't. And kept a level of freedom for people who lived in Florida that was so much greater than just about anywhere else.

With very few exceptions, maybe South Dakota or something like that. But besides that, kept them as the freest state in the Union throughout 2020 and 2021. And that deserves credit. Unfortunately, I think he's not a great presidential candidate, but that's a different story.

**WOODS:** Yeah. And I have the same misgivings about Ukraine and him. And it seems like he's influenced by people around him, which is a big problem on a thing like this. Where, on Ukraine, you are going to have to have incredible strength of character to be able to resist the overwhelming pressure.

And if you're only half-heartedly taking the position you hold, and you're kind of ambiguous exactly about what that position is, then forget it. You're just going to get steamrolled.

**SMITH:**  I've seen some parallels to Rand Paul's 2016 campaign. I know that's kind of like, from our perspective. But if you were like: *Look, whatever you really believe deep down...* Which, I guess none of us ever know what's really in someone else's heart.

But you're like: *You're just totally missing the mark on what the appetite is for this election*. Like, my perspective is almost like, just lie, then. Even if you're not against the war in Ukraine, if you want to win this election, lie and say you are.

And I guess he's scared about scaring off his donors or something like that. Or maybe he really believes in it, So, I don't know. But it was like when Rand Paul got up and was like – remember his first thing in the debates.

Where he was like: *Donald Trump hasn't pledged to support whoever the nominee is!* And me and you are watching, and we're just like: *Oh, no, Rand... that's what you thought this election was? Who can let them know that I support the Republican establishment the most?*

You're like: *No, this guy's blowing up because he's completely outside of the establishment*. And so, there's a very bizarre thing there where it's like: *You just don't get it.* I remember one time he was asked about the war in Ukraine, and his response was that: *Well, the problem is that the military is just too woke*.

And you're like: *Oh, no. Oh, that's not good.*

**WOODS:** Now he's just like a one trick pony. Like, you've got to be better than that.

**SMITH:** Like, yes, I agree. It is too woke. But come on, that's not your answer here.

**WOODS:** No. And I understand people aren't sure how they feel about Vivek. But I'll tell you, I asked him this question specifically. What is an issue that most Republican are running away from that you think is actually a winner for them?

Which is kind of your point, that sometimes, whether it's Rand or somebody else, it's like they're not reading the audience, really They think they shouldn't say X. And yeah, Mitch McConnell won't like X, but there's a lot of voters who would like X.

And his answer was: *Peace in Ukraine.* He just flat out said that. Now, just one other thing, just returning to the Trump matter. It's one thing in 2020 to not know what's going on, and you're a political neophyte, and this Anthony Fauci has been around for five presidents or whatever.

I don't excuse that, but I understand why he did that. But in 2023, to be saying: *Oh, Florida did so badly*. When, number one, it didn't. And number two, you know that plays into the hands of people who are supposed to be your enemies.

Remember that, Trump? That Anthony Fauci doesn't really like you, and yet you're siding with him against DeSantis. So, the thing is, what don't understand about supporters of Trump in particular – but also DeSantis and others.

Why can't they just say (as a handful of them can) that there are pros and cons of all these people. And each of them has drawbacks and each of them has done and said things they shouldn't have done and said.

Why is that so hard for these people? I mean, if you don't want to look like you're in a cult, then don't act like it.

**SMITH:** Well, I mean, I think that to give kind of the most charitable reasoning, I think the way they view it is that this guy, Donald Trump, is their guy. And he was absolutely never given a fair shot even after he won the election in 2016.

And now he has had the political class and Hollywood and the legal system and the deep state weaponized against him in a way that we've really never seen in our lifetime. And I mean, maybe, I don't know, maybe like Nixon, if you were alive when the Nixon stuff was happening, but nothing since then.

And that they are just kind of like, since he's taking so many arrows, whatever arrows are coming at him, they're against. I think that's kind of what it is. And I think that there's a view amongst the Trump base that it was wrong for DeSantis to run.

I don't necessarily agree with that. But I think their view is, like, he wouldn't have been governor the first time without Trump's endorsement. And from their perspective, I think Donald Trump was cheated out of the 2020 election.

Which, I would agree with in a sense, maybe not in the sense that they mean it. But there were some shenanigans that we know about with the Hunter Biden story and stuff like that. And so, they believe that this is rightfully Donald Trump's, and that DeSantis is wrong for getting in his way, that he should have waited and waited his turn until 2028.

Now, I don't really agree with that, but I think that's their perspective. I kind of get their point. I don't agree, but I kind of get their point.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I hear where they're coming from, but that doesn't mean basically you spread Faucian propaganda.

**SMITH:** No, I completely agree. But this is Trump. It's mob stuff, and all gloves are off. And he's a pit bull, and you want him to come for his bones, so now it's like, whatever he thinks can damage you. I just think not only is it wrong to take the side of Fauci, ever.

But it also just seems to me to be very poor strategy. This is not where your base is. Your base is not: Yeah, we're more with the way Fauci handled Covid than we are the way DeSantis handled Covid. That's not your base.

That's why I would just think – again, he should be attacking him for who his donors are. You know what I mean? He should be attacking him for his position on Ukraine, his position on the wars in general.

That's where he's weak, with his own base. But if you're attacking him for going after Disney or something like that, or for Covid, you're like: No, his base loves that, and understandably.

**WOODS:** Well, what I don't get is – I have made perfectly clear how I feel about all these ridiculous indictments. And we all know what's really going on here. Nobody is staying up late at night worrying about the terrible crimes committed by Donald Trump, or: *We're going to hold him accountable.*

The things they always want to "hold him accountable" for are, like, technicalities. They don't want to hold him accountable for bombing this place, or any of the sorts of things that they want to do, that they would do anyway.

Like, when was George W Bush held accountable for anything? In what universe is it a worse thing to verbally doubt an election outcome than it is to, for no good reason, incinerate hundreds of thousands of people? And in what universe are these things even comparable?

So, I totally get that. But I have to live in reality, and the reality is it's not impossible that he could be convicted. And then you have the situation where independents don't like people who have been convicted. They just don't. And then that becomes a problem for the Republicans.

And you can still say this is an injustice and Trump shouldn't have to endure it. All those things can be true, while at the same time saying this makes him a less than ideal candidate through no fault of his own – you could even add that if you want to – through no fault of his own.

What are they going to do if that is the outcome? Now, a guy like Alan Dershowitz says these convictions, because they're all stupid, they would all be overturned anyway. But they'll be overturned on appeal after the election takes place.

And so, they will have served their intended purpose, which is to stop him. So, I can understand. If I were a Trump supporter, I would say: *I cannot believe the extent to which these savages have gone to stop this one man, and I am going to stick with him to the end.*

But you have reality. You can't win under these conditions. So, then what? What is plan B? There is no plan B, as far as I can see. There is no plan B.

**SMITH:** Yeah, okay. So, there's a lot there. I think that – by the way, I don't know if you saw. Just today it was announced that his trial date was just set in Georgia and it's the day before Super Tuesday. Which, I'm sure it's complete coincidence. You know what I mean?

Obviously he just happened to be charged for a crime in 2020, three years later. Like, all those January 6th people who got charged, they didn't have to wait three years to get charged. They all got charged right away.

But Trump, it took three years for this phone call to the secretary of state of Georgia. And it just happens that he will not be able to be out campaigning the day before Super Tuesday. So, the most important, like, rally night where you draw all the people to be out there in the polls. And he won't be able to do that.

Now, from my perspective, and my guess on this is – and I don't know, these things are kind of hard to predict. But there's also the reverse effect to what you were talking about turning off independents, is that this drives up support in his base.

And his poll numbers have actually only increased from these indictments coming out. I don't think the establishment can go this far and not follow through. You know what I mean? Like, I think at this point, they're taking him out.

I do not think they'll allow him to be appointed as president again, whatever happens in the next year, plus. I just don't see that happening. So, what other ways do they have of taking him out? Well, it could be convictions. It could be, who knows?

Anything from getting convictions in this trial up to a limo ride through Dallas. I think nothing is off the table of what they'll do to this guy. But, so, then that still leads to your question, which is like, so what's the backup plan?

And this is where I would say that I think Vivek Ramaswamy has masterfully placed himself in the race. Where he has placed himself as the America First guy, has all of the policies that Trump supporters would love, and has not at all attacked Donald Trump in the campaign, nothing but defended him.

The truth is that that cult-like mentality you spoke of earlier, whether justified or not justified, once DeSantis and Trump have gone kind of to war, it's going to be very hard for DeSantis to take all the Trump support if Trump for whatever reason, is not able to run anymore. And Vivek has positioned himself perfectly, I think, to gain all of that support.

So, I don't know what happens with all of this. I don't know what happens with Joe Biden. I don't know how they get him out of the way without having to grapple with RFK. So, it's really interesting. It's a really interesting presidential cycle.

**WOODS:** Yeah, no kidding. And the whole Trump matter, you could imagine him – I mean, there are people, I think, who have wondered if he, by some fluke, did not get the Republican nomination, would he endorse the nominee or would he split off or something?

And Tho Bishop made a pretty good point the other day with me. That his own self-interest would make him not want to do that, because the likelihood that he will not actually wind up serving significant time in prison goes down drastically with the election of a Republican.

You figure that has to be the case. So, he has to want whoever the Republican nominee is to be victorious, I would think.

**SMITH:** Yeah, I think Tho is probably right about that. Although I guess these charges in Georgia are not federal charges, so a president can't pardon him for them.

**WOODS:** That's true.

**SMITH:** But we'll see. I mean, I don't know. As you kind of mentioned before, he's being prosecuted under all of these novel legal theories. It's not like it's absolute. The best you could argue is it's a gray area. It's not like there's any clear case here.

But again, as you also know, the law isn't this objective thing that people like to treat it as. It's like, what will 12 jurors vote? That's really what matters.

And so, who knows how any of this could go? But it is so funny that, like, even Barack Obama admitted that there were war crimes committed under George W Bush.

His quote was, *"We tortured some folks."* And this is when he was talking to the – there was a lot of pressure from the left-wingers in his base to prosecute the people in the Bush administration. And he was like: *Well, we tortured some folks, but now's the time to look forward, not backward. We've got to move on from this.*

And so, it's amazing where they can admit that they're like: Oh, there were clear violations of the law by this last administration, but we just don't feel like it, you know? We just don't really feel like prosecuting them.

Like, torture is illegal and the Geneva Conventions have been ratified. I mean, there's really no gray area there. This is illegal. I mean, the only gray area is they're like: We didn't call it torture while we were doing it.

But what type of legal defense is that, really? And there's just no political will to prosecute any of them for any of this.

And it's really interesting that Donald Trump is being prosecuted only because there's so much political will to twist these statutes to say that like: *Well, if we interpret this law this way (even though we've never prosecuted anyone before interpreting the statute this way) we can make an argument that we could get him.*

It's all pretty wild, but I'm looking forward to watching to see what happens.

**WOODS:** Yeah, I hear you. I hear you. Well, I want to strongly recommend, again, for people – understand it's not for everybody, but it's for most of you, 30 minutes with Dave Smith. You can find it in the description, also linked on the show notes page TomWoods.com/2387.

Also, on the *Part of the Problem* YouTube channel, you can find it there. And if you're not listening to *Part of the Problem,* I don't understand that. But you can fix that by just going over there and subscribing.

So, Dave, thanks so much for being here and congrats on the ongoing success.

**SMITH:** Oh, thank you so much, Tom. You are the master, and thank you for everything you've done for me over the years. I will never forget it.

**WOODS:** You're a good man, Dave. Thank you very much.