



**Episode 530: Dr. Mary Ruwart on Crime, Terrorism, Medicine, and Other So-Called Services the Government Screws Up**

**Guest: Mary Ruwart**

**WOODS:** I haven't had you on since Episode 140, which, I don't know, what was that, like 1978 or something? So a lot to catch up on here. I'm glad to hear that you have a new edition of your book, *Healing Our World*. It's got a tremendous subtitle and sub-subtitle, which I'll get to in just a minute, but it's great news, because so many people have said that this was the book that really changed their minds and converted them to the cause of liberty, so I'm really glad to have a chance to talk about it.

But before we jump into that, I want to ask you a little bit about your own background. I know about your professional background a bit, but I don't know how it is that Mary Ruwart came to be somebody we think of as being an important thinker in the libertarian movement. How did you become a libertarian? Did you come from — I'm just guessing. I just have a guess that you might have come from a more liberal background, whereas I came from a more conservative one. Am I right about that? That's a wild guess.

**RUWART:** Yes, yes. I read Ayn Rand in college, and I had gone to Catholic school for 11 years, so even though I wasn't a Catholic anymore, the part that stuck with me is that loving your neighbor was a practical thing to do, and so when I heard about the libertarian philosophy and realized that if I put a gun to somebody's head so that they would be forced to give money for the poor, that that was a less loving act than their selfishness in not giving. And once I realized that, you know, I was totally hooked.

**WOODS:** Wow, how about that? Okay. So how long had you been a libertarian before you wrote this book?

**RUWART:** Well, of course in college I actually learned the fundamentals, but there wasn't a Libertarian Party at that time, so I became actively involved with the party in the early '80s, even though I think I joined it in the '70s and never heard back — you know, there was an ad in *Reason* magazine. So I wrote this book at the end of the '80s, because I had what I can only describe as a moment of revelation where everything was connected: the libertarian philosophy, the idea of loving your neighbor, the idea of the ends being created by the means we use. And when that all came together in this single moment, what I could see is that we are biologically rigged for freedom, that our evolutionary path as humankind, if you will, is to seek freedom, and that we

would do it, because our happiness depends upon it, if we didn't blow ourselves up first. So I was on cloud 9 for a couple weeks. I had this grin on my face for two weeks; I could barely contain it, because I could see optimism here; I could see a happy ending for humankind — again, assuming they didn't blow themselves up first — and so then I wanted to communicate this wonderful feeling of hope, and I couldn't do it in a little video. I tried to make a little video first. It was just too much, so I eventually wrote *Healing Our World*.

**WOODS:** First of all, I was going to go through a little bit of the table of contents, because the table of contents pretty much has everything that you could possibly think of that you would want answered from a libertarian perspective. It really is everything. But you sum that up really in the new subtitle and sub-subtitle of the new edition, so tell us what that is. It really struck me.

**RUWART:** Sure. It's *Healing Our World: The Compassion of Libertarianism — How to Enrich the Poor, Protect the Environment, Deter Crime, and Defuse Terrorism*.

**WOODS:** That's quite a promise that you're making in this book. Of course we're going to link to it on today's show notes page, [TomWoods.com/530](http://TomWoods.com/530). We'll have a link to the book. These are all obviously — it seems like not a coincidence that you would choose the areas where there would be the greatest skepticism, because of course those are the areas in which we're told that libertarianism would be terrible, because criminals would run free, because we're either smoking pot and not worrying about it or we don't believe in laws or whatever people think. And terrorism would run rampant, because we don't believe in defending ourselves, or whatever the complaints would be. And the environment, well, we believe in big business, so that means we believe in pollution. And of course the poor, we don't even think about. And it turns out it's the opposite. Everything I just said is not true.

**RUWART:** That's right. That's right. And I think that that's something that's been missing in our rhetoric when we as libertarians approach people, because most people — you know, and this is I think a good thing — most people want to care about their fellow humans, and they want to see them being as happy as they are and not starving to death or dying of disease. They want good things for other people, and I think that's a very promising attitude. The problem is that government has convinced them that liberty just doesn't do those things, and of course it's just the opposite. So I think that's the message we need to get out there.

**WOODS:** Given your own ideological background, have you made a special effort to specifically try to reach people who are coming from a more left liberal perspective?

**RUWART:** Yes, I have, because that's — only because the arguments for the conservatives have been made time and time again. I don't really need to go there. In fact, in *Healing Our World*, I don't think I actually talk about human rights at all. I don't talk about the rights arguments at all. I just basically talk about the non-aggression principle, show how it's something we learned as children and practice in our one-to-one relationships and how we throw it out the window when we interact

group-to-group and all the devastating consequences that happen — and all the wonderful things that can happen if we just reapply it to our group-to-group interaction.

**WOODS:** One of the things that I like about *Healing Our World* is not just how comprehensive it is, but that in trying to reach people — and perhaps trying to reach people who have never thought about this before, who don't come at this with our foundational ideas — is that you're not compromising the ideas in order to reach them, and unfortunately from my perspective, there's been a trend over the past several years among some libertarians who are so eager to reach out to the Left that they are in danger of buying into so much of the Leftist platform. I mean, I even had somebody on — I don't want to necessarily open this up now, but I don't think it's a good idea for libertarians to be advocating a basic income guarantee for all people.

**RUWART:** No.

**WOODS:** This seems like it opens up all kinds of problems. But that is an example of trying so hard to reach out to the Left that you turn into them, which we have no reason to do that. We've got such compelling ideas on our own, we can draw them in on the strength of our ideas, not by trying to ape them or say that, you know, we're only a little bit different from you. No, we're radically different from you.

**RUWART:** Well, we all want the same things. I mean, if you think about it, most people would say, yes, we don't want the poor to suffer —

**WOODS:** That's true; that's true. I shouldn't have put it quite that way. That actually is — yeah, in that sense, we're not radically different.

**RUWART:** That's right. The goals we want are the same; it's just we are radically different in the way we think they can be accomplished, and this is where I think libertarians haven't been as well educated, maybe is the way to say it, in our own philosophy. You know, our philosophy — you know, when I had that moment of revelation, I saw how deep it was. I mean, and it keeps unfolding. The more I work with our philosophy, the deeper it comes in, and I realize that there's so much more there than politics. So what happens is, one of the wonderful deep things that happens is it benefits everybody. Just about everybody gets what they want with liberty; it's just that as libertarians we're so used to thinking kind of like an ex-conservative that we don't get that. And so that's why it's so important I think to have a book out like *Healing Our World*, and I've actually been surprised that there haven't been more books coming out around these ideas. There have been a few, but nothing seems to — there's no one out there I think that is integrating these things as well as *Healing* does, and I'm not trying to be a braggart about it; I'm just noticing that it really still is an excellent, excellent source.

**WOODS:** Let's give you a tricky one. Given that you put it in your subtitle, you must be prepared to talk about it. Poverty is an issue that a lot of libertarians have talked about, maybe not exactly the same way you have, but it's not an issue that's foreign to

us. But in terms of deterring crime, well, libertarians have had some things to say about it, but as soon as you start talking about it, it depends on what type of libertarian you're talking to. Are you talking to a minarchist? Are you talking to an anarchist? Because that's going to very much influence what their views on crime and crime prevention are. How do you tackle that issue in this book?

**RUWART:** Well, I think the most important thing to recognize is that part of the non-aggression principle isn't just refusing to initiate force, fraud, or theft against your neighbor. It's what do you do if you do that by mistake or intention. And that is, you have restitution. This is something that libertarians kind of talk about on the side but don't really get into. This is kind of the way that you get around all those tough questions that libertarians are asked, like, you know, if you're falling from a building and somebody doesn't want you to grab onto their balcony, you're initiating force. Are you going to save your life, or are you going to drop to the ground? And it's all about restitution, because when we violate somebody's property rights, for example, then we restore them to whatever extent that they've been harmed.

And this is also the fulcrum for crime, as well. When we look at criminals not as people who are bad but as people who need to restore their victim, we treat them very differently. In other words, if we had — if I came and stole from you, for example, Tom, and you said, okay, you stole from me, and in addition to losing the money because you've spent it already, I had to hire some people to apprehend you; we had to go to court; we had all these expenses; I lost time at work; I think you should be paying me X number of dollars to make it up to me. And if you do that, then we can shake and be friends again, or at least not have animosity between us.

So when we do that — and we don't talk about this as libertarians very much, as the mechanism of how we would do that; that's what I do in *Healing Our World* — then we can kind of erase those bad feelings. And if I have to restore you to your original state, that's a lot of work, and if I do that, when I start with the small crimes, which is how most criminals start, I'm going to say, you know what? Crime doesn't pay. It's not worth it.

That's what happens in Japan, actually. In Japan before they even go to court, the perpetrator of the crime has to make a restitution agreement of some sort with the victim, and if it's not a good one and the victim says no, you're just trying to jerk me around, then when they go to court, the judge is going to be very harsh. And if everybody's happy, the judge is very lenient. So this is a real-time model we can use, and Japan is like the only industrialized country in the world where their crime rates have dropped pretty much since World War II because of the system. And it's a system of forgiveness; it's a system of taking back the wrongdoer and teaching them basically that crime doesn't pay and that it's very expensive and you are hurting somebody, and it changes the whole attitude and the whole dynamic of crime.

**WOODS:** What about the response, though, that maybe somebody who just enjoys inflicting harm on others and inconvenience on others who has a lot of wealth and is in a position to make restitution from now until the end of time, could just be a source

of obnoxious behavior forever? There'd be no deterring this person, because he's not deterred by the effort involved in making people whole, because he has such riches.

**RUWART:** Yes. If there was a repeat criminal of any kind for whatever motivation, it's very likely that at some point one of the victims is going to say, okay, for my restitution I want this person locked up, because they're just going to do it again. And restitution of course usually will be monetary, but it doesn't have to be, and so that person may indeed get locked up.

**WOODS:** All right, now what about the terrorism question? I'm sure — because I saw you in the *For Liberty* documentary that you were as moved as the rest of us were by the Ron Paul debate moment when he just refused to go along with the standard third grade narrative about why the United States is attacked by people in the Middle East, why are people unhappy with the U.S. government. And he said it has something to do — it's not entirely to do with our awesomeness. There is maybe some other factor at work. Is that the approach that you take to dealing with terrorism, is the just stop annoying people to begin with and you're much less likely to be attacked?

**RUWART:** Well, that's part of it, because Osama bin Laden actually laid out the reasons he was upset with the United States, and one was that our embargo on Iraq was killing a lot of innocent people. The other one was that we had put military bases on what they considered their sacred territory and also that we were helping their enemies, Israel. Now, it's interesting that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor for exactly the same reasons. You know, Japan said that we were invading their territorial waters — which we were. We were sending our ships into their territorial waters. We were helping their enemy, China. And we had an embargo on them. So it's interesting that the only two times that the U.S. has actually been attacked on its own soil has been for what looks like the same reasons.

**WOODS:** Now on the other hand, let's say there's a group, and I know there are people who would characterize Islam this way, but just to leave that whole question to the side, let's just say there's a group of people called the Wozzles, and the Wozzles are committed to the destruction of Americans. Now, in a private system if we had a country where everything was privatized, we would not have a system where we'd say to such people, well, come on in. There's no way we can stop you, so come on in and have free access to everybody. That would not be a policy that any private owner in his right mind would ever adopt.

**RUWART:** No.

**WOODS:** But suppose we had a people today called the Wozzles, and they were dedicated to the destruction of the U.S. and to killing Americans, what, given that we live in a world of states, would you propose doing other than saying, well, I guess that's the price we pay to live in a free society?

**RUWART:** Well, I thought Harry Brown had a pretty good way of looking at it. He basically thought we should use the letters of marque which we used to have to hire

people — they could be private or, I mean, depending on the structure that we had going at the time of the state — to go in and seek out these people and dispose of them if they were indeed guilty of attacking us or were an imminent threat. Now, the thing is about that that's different than what we're doing today is today we go in and we bomb, and I think the statistics that I saw were that we killed one terrorist maybe for every 134 innocent bystanders that we killed. And this is what is so horrendous about what we're doing today is we call it collateral damage and we just kind of ignore it, but these are innocent people that are getting killed. Their blood is on our hands, and more importantly, if we want to think about our own security, they are people who are angry at us and become very easy recruits for the terrorists.

The terrorists don't have — they don't exist in a vacuum. We've actually funded most of the terrorists. We funded Saddam Hussein, Osama bin Laden; we funded the Taliban greatly. In fact, we sent them a few million I think just before 9/11. So one of the things to realize is these people don't just rise up with a lot of money and power and ability to recruit. We have helped them do that. So we have to stop using our tax dollars to fund tyrants overseas so they'll be our attack dog, because eventually they're going to turn on us. The second thing we need to do is if we go after people that are an imminent threat, then we need to do it in a way that we're not creating a lot of innocent deaths, because that gets the people very angry at us and rightly so. So there's different ways to go about the same thing.

**WOODS:** All right, let me play devil's advocate, and let's imagine that I'm a sort of left progressive, and I've just been told that I'm in the room with a libertarian and I come over to you and I'm outraged, and I say don't you realize that you are just an apologist for privilege. You're an apologist for the established, wealthy and for people who don't want to change the status quo, and if you really believed in improving the welfare of people you would say we need the state to strip these people of what they have and distribute it to those who are in need.

**RUWART:** Well, I would probably say that I worked with welfare recipients for 10 years, and what I found in most cases the welfare payments are actually creating a poverty trap for the poor, and I'd go into how that happens. But also I think something even most libertarians don't realize is most poverty today is created by government. It's created by government regulations that keep the disadvantaged out of the workforce.

And again, I can tell stories about how some of my tenants actually had small businesses in the apartments that I rented to. I was happy with it, because there was no extra traffic, but the city government hounded them because they didn't have a business license, because the apartments weren't zoned commercial; they thought one woman who did childcare for the rest of the apartment complex, the ceilings weren't high enough, even though these same children lived in identical apartments when they were home with their parents. And they drove them out of business and pushed them onto welfare.

So that's a whole story that we can tell about how we prevent the poor from actually making their way up the ladder of affluence. And it's an important story, because 80% of millionaires get their money in one generation, and half of them start with nothing. Their parents don't have any money to put them through college; they have to do it all on their own. And so the American dream is there for the poor, for the disadvantaged, and they deserve a chance at that, and government is preventing them from doing that.

**WOODS:** I want to say something about your professional work. Tell us something about your scientific background, the work that you did as a scientist, and how that — although people I think look to government again for scientific innovation, for protection against bad medicine and so on and on — how your experience as a scientist confirmed your views in terms of libertarianism.

**RUWART:** Well, I have degrees in biochemistry and biophysics. I had a post-bacc in surgery. I worked for the Upjohn company for about 19 years. That's in Kalamazoo, Michigan, a pharmaceutical firm. And what I saw was that the FDA regulations were so onerous that I was shocked that any drug actually made it to market. And so right now I'm actually writing a book about that, because these regulations that were passed in 1962 that were there supposedly to protect us from things like a Thalidomide tragedy have actually been responsible for the premature deaths of about 1 out of 5 Americans since that time, and I think this is a story that people need to hear, and it's a story that only an insider can tell.

**WOODS:** All right, well I'm going to very much look forward to that. Do you have an estimate as to when you'll be done?

**RUWART:** I'm hoping it'll be out next year.

**WOODS:** Ah, all right, so I'm already putting in for my episode with Mary Ruwart for when that book comes out for sure, definitely. Let's say something now — I told you this was coming; there's just no avoiding it. When you get involved with the Libertarian Party and you run for the presidential nomination, you're just going to get asked about it. So we did talk about this a little bit. Not everybody listening to Episode 530 heard Episode 140, so it's okay if we repeat ourselves a little bit, but I am curious about your experiences in the Libertarian Party and your views about where it is right now. Let's do one of those at a time. You had been in the party since the '70s, but you ran for the nomination in 2008. And then any other time?

**RUWART:** Yes, actually in 1983, my first national convention. The only reason I ran is that I was a little naïve, so I had this idea that if we ran a woman at the top of the ticket, the news media would actually give us some press, which probably they wouldn't have, but I wanted to share that idea, and I was told by Roger Gary of Texas that the only way that message would get out is if I actually ran for president. So I did. (laughing) I didn't think anyone would take me seriously; I just wanted to get my message out, right? But I ended up being — you know, there were two frontrunners who were sort of tied, and they each had about 40% of the vote; I ended up with 20%

of the vote, so I got to see how things worked up in the upper echelons of the party. And it was interesting; it was somewhat of a shock.

**WOODS:** Do you think things are different between then and now?

**RUWART:** Yeah, I think there's been an evolution. What I saw then was that we didn't treat each other as libertarians when we were up at the top. We broke our promises, things like that. Now, the next — I don't know; I want to say 10, 12 years — I ran unity campaigns at the national conventions, and I think that we changed our attitude, because even — it used to be that if somebody lost the nomination, they didn't get it, they were kind of driven out of the party. That's terrible. We're all — there's not that many of us. We need to work together. And towards the end, that wasn't happening anymore. In fact, the person who lost was given a standing ovation; it was very nice.

But we have regressed, in my opinion. In 2008, we started bringing in people for the nomination who really didn't understand the non-aggression principle or a lot of our philosophy or weren't willing to be our standard bearer in that respect, so we have devolved, in my opinion, to almost losing our soul. We have candidates who do not even know what the non-aggression principle is, who say that we shouldn't even adopt the non-aggression principle, and I think this is losing our soul. It's really bad. And the infighting has started again. I've been attacked by several of the presidential candidates running, basically because they're afraid I'm going to run, so they're trying to be preemptive. And this is crazy. We need to be —

**WOODS:** Do you want to announce your run here on The Tom Woods Show?

**RUWART:** No, I'm not running; I'm not running, Tom.

**WOODS:** (laughing) Okay.

**RUWART:** I can run or I can write, and frankly I'm much better at writing than I am at running, and I feel like the FDA book that I'm working on now is something that maybe I and maybe one or two other people in the world could write, so I feel like it needs to be my priority.

**WOODS:** Yeah, sure.

**RUWART:** But I think that if we do — and we're doing it at just the wrong time. Finally, the news media in 2008 knew who we were, and now we've kind of lost our identification, our branding, because now it looks like maybe we're not that anymore, and that's a mistake I think, because we saw with the Ron Paul campaign so many people were so excited about the philosophy of liberty. They're not going to be excited about Republican light. We're not going to get more votes that way.

**WOODS:** Yeah. I just don't get that strategy at all.



**RUWART:** No, if you're going to be — if you want to vote for Republican light, why should you vote Libertarian? You might as well vote Republican.

**WOODS:** Yeah. So again, it doesn't make sense, and they'll say but this is the way we win. All right, then show me your record of wins.

**RUWART:** Let's talk about that, Tom, because we have a record of wins that we don't celebrate. I want to mention that, if you don't mind.

**WOODS:** Please do.

**RUWART:** You know, we are not going to have a very easy time getting elected, as we know, and even if we do, as we can see from Ron Paul in Congress, we have limited ability to roll back big government. But what we are very good at, what we have done and won many times is rolling back big government without electing anybody. And the way we do that is when we have initiatives, when we go out against a tax increase that's coming down the pike in our local community, eminent domain, things like this we've been very, very good at. And I'll just give very briefly some examples. I mean, look at what happened with medical marijuana in California. That was spearheaded by Steve Kubby and other libertarians, and it's changed the whole face of the drug war. We've got lots of states now making it legal and having medical marijuana — more than half the states have a medical marijuana initiative. Colorado actually passed something back around the same time that they couldn't hike taxes without going to the people and getting it voted on, and in this last election they just had, the voters turned down the tax hike. So these are things we can do at the state level, at the local level.

When I ran as a Libertarian — actually, it was a nonpartisan race, but I might as well have put the Libertarian label on there because the press did. They thought that it would discourage people from voting for me, and what ended up happening — this was in the early '80s, by the way — I just had to explain the libertarian philosophy and people liked it, right? So after I lost the election, there was an eminent domain issue, and I actually had an elderly gentlemen come up to me at the meeting about this eminent domain and put \$200 cash in my hand, which back in the '80s was a lot of money, before he said a word. And he said, Dr. Ruwart, I know your employer's going to benefit by this eminent domain grab, but I know you're on my side, because you, Dr. Ruwart, are a libertarian, so take this money and fight, because they're trying to take my bicycle shop away. And that's trust, you know? That's faith; that's hope. And that's what we can inspire people to do. And of course the libertarians joined that effort, and we did stop the eminent domain, and that's what we're good at.

And if every Libertarian Party in the country focused as much effort on that — just as much effort, not all the effort — as much effort on that as winning elections, we would be known as the Ghostbusters for big government, and we would be the people that victims of big government turned to. And Institute for Justice does that now for some cases, and they've been very successful. We could be successful too, and we could be the party that people turn to.

**WOODS:** It's so interesting you say that, because I know — I can understand even, and I myself am prone to the tendency to get attracted to the presidential race, because big issues get discussed there, and you feel like I've got to be one of the voices there. But there's so much going on at the local level, so much going on that you actually can have a real live effect on them. Not just be in a debate, but really change. But it's not as exciting. Nobody wants to do that hard work. And yet, there's a lot, as you say, there's fruit ripe for the picking at these things.

**RUWART:** Yes. But nobody — just for people who are organized and who have the energy to go out and do it. And the Libertarians are organized. We've been able to get on the ballot in 50 states. That's no small task. We are organized. We're the most organized out there. We're even more organized usually than the Democrats and the Republicans when they're trying to push these things through, and we are good at this. We are very good at this. And I'll tell you, once you do it, it's very sexy. Once you see people looking at you and saying thank you for helping us, thank you for saving my bicycle shop, it changes. And it rolls back big government without electing anyone, not that I'm against electing people. That's a great thing. I love running as a candidate because it gives me a chance to talk to people and tell them about the libertarians and tell them about the non-aggression principle. So I like that; I think that's a great thing. But the winning actually happens in a different way.

**WOODS:** That's such an excellent point. By the way, I feel like the Libertarian Party, especially in the age of the Internet, is just not creative enough. There's no energy emanating from it. You could sit around and brainstorm for half an hour and come up with all kinds of fun gimmicks that you could be playing during a presidential election season. You should be having your own event the same night as all these debates. You should be having a Libertarian Party event right across the street in the building right next door, and you should do everything you can to get a ton of people there and get C-SPAN to cover it. Do your own thing. Get attention to yourself by piggybacking on the attention that's already generated for the other two parties. It just seems like there are so many possibilities.

I was at the — in fact, I can't remember; maybe you were there. I think you were actually, the Libertarian Party of Illinois a couple years ago, I gave a talk there, and I loved this idea; I think there should be an ad where you've got — and you could make this on the Internet; it wouldn't be that pricy — where you've got a red Buick and a blue Buick, and they represent the two old parties, and not that I want to disparage people who are older, but you've got people who are walking around with canes getting in their red Buick and their blue Buick. And then the libertarian shows up in this awesome hotrod kind of car. You know, in the old days — here's what the old days were like. You had three channels; you had two choices of this, five choices of that, and in the old days, you had two political parties. But you know what? Things have changed. I mean, there are just so many ways you could make fun of the existing system in a way that would be productive and that would draw attention to the Libertarian Party, and I just see no interest in doing any of it.

**RUWART:** Well, part of that, having served on the LNC for three terms, is the structure and what happens there. Unfortunately, that's where the infighting and the fight for this whole party is taking place, to a large extent. There is definitely — if we were all in alignment on the LNC, things like that would happen, but we're not. When I was serving on the LNC, basically I felt a lot of the things that I did were simply to keep the soul of the party, simply to keep the people who were there to basically be the power mongers, if you will, to keep them at bay, because there is an element that comes along with this Republican light, and that is an element of political power, and we're infected by it just like the other parties are.

So we have these factions, if you will, trying to make the party one thing and another faction wants to make it something else. There's what I call the Old Guard, myself included, who believe that we should be the party of principle, but there is another faction that thinks that that is something we should not be, that our focus should be on winning and money and power, and that's sad. But that's what's happening. And you see it when you see a candidate who doesn't know anything about the non-aggression principle in your local races. You see a reflection of that. And unfortunately, that's the fight that's going on right now.

**WOODS:** Where would you say the energy really is? On which side? Is there an ebb in terms of the strength of the people who you describe as being in the Old Guard? Is the New Guard kind of in the ascendancy? Is there a real struggle? Is one clearly victorious?

**RUWART:** First of all, I need to correct myself. I said the "New Guard," and that sounds like I'm saying all the new people are in that group, and that is not true.

**WOODS:** Right.

**RUWART:** I need to be very careful about that. When I saw the Old Guard, I am referring to people who are passionate about the non-aggression principle, that they're in the party to see that become part of our political scene. I'm not going to use the word New Guard anymore, because it's just, like I said, it implies that everybody new is in that camp, and that is not true. In fact, a lot of people in that camp have been around for a while too. So I'm going to call them the Republican lights, and they're the ones who are feeling that we need to be focusing on winning elections, and they want power, and they are willing to lie to get it. So in other words, they're already out of the non-aggression principle camp. Right now, I think they are in more ascendancy than they were, say, 10 years ago. Whether that will continue, I don't know. Unfortunately, it makes it very difficult when you spend your time, instead of being an activist, you spend your time just trying to make sure that they don't do any more damage.

**WOODS:** Right, sure. Now, I want to find out who the candidates for president are, and it seems pretty hard to track that down. Has Gary Johnson officially announced?

**RUWART:** No, not as far as I know. It's expected that he will, and he probably I guess will maybe make that decision at the very last minute, because he can probably walk

into the convention at the very last minute and take the nomination without doing much, and so that's probably what he'll do.

**WOODS:** Okay, 2016 presidential candidates, I just got it. And so far, I'm only seeing a half dozen people as officially declared. Even though Austin Petersen's been talking about it on Facebook over and over, I don't see him listed. I think I only know one of these people. So that doesn't mean they're bad, but it just means that, boy, this sure is a New Guard. I don't know any of them.

**RUWART:** Yes, and actually, I don't know very many of them either. There is a gentleman in Texas, Rhett Smith, who I do know because he's in my party, but the others I don't know personally. I've had some correspondence with some of them, and it's a little disappointing in the sense that we have basically a lot of people who are fairly new to the party. And there's nothing wrong with that; it's just that there's a learning curve, in terms of answering the tough questions, and I fear that maybe — if there's people in that group who are able to do that, either I haven't investigated enough to discover that about them, or it's not happening, and I'm not sure which it is.

**WOODS:** You and I have a mutual friend named Lee Wrights —

**RUWART:** Yes.

**WOODS:** — who was in the party for a long time, but is he more or less retired from it?

**RUWART:** At the moment, yeah, he's taking a breather. He's not going to be running, but he is doing a lot of things on the side, and he admires you a lot. He actually asked me to make sure that I told you that he sends his greetings.

**WOODS:** Well, I know that we briefly talked about running together, as a matter of fact.

**RUWART:** (laughing)

**WOODS:** (laughing) That was great. I was down at the Libertarian Party of Texas — and just so you know, I have never officially belonged to any political party, but I have spoken at — I've spoken at some GOP things too. Never spoken at a Democrat Party thing, but I've spoken at some Libertarian conventions, and I spoke at the one in Texas, and he just loved it so much, and we really got to know and like each other. And then maybe a year, year and a half ago, I was going through some tough times, and he wrote to me and I said you know, I just can't even think about stuff like this right now; I've got a lot on my plate. And he said you know, me too, and boy, did I sacrifice a lot in my life for this, and I need some time to live my life and not be battling with jerks on some political committee somewhere.

**RUWART:** Yeah, I mean, that is when you get in the political fray, there's a lot of negativity, shall we say.

**WOODS:** Well, your strategy, then, moving forward is for you to specialize in the area in which you have unique things to say that couldn't be said by other people, and that seems like it is the smart thing to do. Pick the thing that — as one of my friends puts it, find that area in which you would be most difficult to replace, and make your accomplishments and do your work in that area. And that's probably the best advice we can give anybody.

**RUWART:** Yes, and we all have a role to play. Some of us just may talk to our neighbors and friends, but that's very valuable, because people listen to their friends and family. So you know, we each can do what we can do, and one of the things that has been a great joy to me is that people who have had trouble talking to their spouses or their family because maybe their family is more on the liberal side of the spectrum, have bought *Healing Our World* as a gift and given it to them, and I actually meet the people who have read the books then at conventions saying, yeah, I wish my husband had explained it to me this way; I'd have been a libertarian for a long time. So we each have our specialty, you know? And I want to take this opportunity if you don't mind, Tom, to really thank your listeners, those who have done this, you know, distributed *Healing Our World*. That's how it gets out. It's in a few bookstores, but it really gets passed around by libertarians wanting to share it, and I just so appreciate that.

**WOODS:** Well, I'm certainly glad to do what I can to promote it, and I'm glad people are reading it and passing it around, and of course it's nice to get into bookstores, but in this day and age, it's almost like the bookstore is like trying to get on one of the three channels or something. It's so old hat; it's so not the way books are really moving. It's not the direction of books in the future. I love going to a bookstore and browsing; it's definitely true, but when I self-published a book last year, I didn't go out of my way to say, well, let me make sure that it's all teed up so that it can be in bookstores. I didn't really pitch it to bookstores; I didn't need it to go into bookstores. And it was more successful than a couple of my books that have been in bookstores, so it's great that these developments are very libertarian friendly, where the individual can make an impact even outside the traditional channels, whether it's traditional broadcasting channels, bookselling channels, music-making channels, there's so much that's in our hands as individuals.

The very fact that up until very recently, I did all the audio editing for this show, because the technology is such that even an idiot can actually do the audio editing for his show. I mean, things have been put in our hands, technologies that cost \$50 or less that would have been unavailable to me basically at any price even 10 years ago, so we've got to grab these opportunities. Well, I really appreciate your time. I'm glad you came on for another chat with me. Let's make sure that next time it's not 390 episodes separating the appearances. That's my fault. I'll reach out to you again soon. Thanks so much.

**RUWART:** Oh, you're welcome, Tom. It's a joy to be on your show.