



Episode 574: Neocon Says Word Neoconservative Is Outdated Now; I Remain Unmoved

Guest: Paul Gottfried

WOODS: I saw your column at LewRockwell.com, and it was in response to a column by Jonah Goldberg, one of your favorite people in the world —

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: — and he had written a column about the term "neoconservative." And he says that the term "neoconservative" has served its purpose. In fact, his column is called "The Term 'Neocon' Has Run Its Course." Now, there are people who say there are no such thing as neocons; this is an invention of anti-Semites who want to have a code word to use to attack Jews. He doesn't go to quite that extreme. He does say there were people called neoconservatives; he says, but these were people who, sure they were hawkish during the Cold War, but everybody was hawkish during the Cold War, so that doesn't distinguish them any. And he says that, really, to think that there are only two alternatives, isolationism and neoconservatism, that's not true either. He says the term is just confusing; it's not really clear what it ever really referred to, so forget about it. Is there anything wrong with that?

GOTTFRIED: Well, there are a number of problems. One is a, shall we say, problem of historical memory. The term was used for a very long time, and neoconservatives assiduously distinguish themselves from traditional conservatives. In fact, they wrote entire books showing wherein they differed. Unlike the traditional Right, they had utter contempt for Robert Taft, for southern segregationists, for people who did not support the Civil Rights Act, for people who didn't admire Harry Truman, for people who didn't accept Great Society programs. They accepted just about all of these things as good or these people as good.

And even though they opposed the Soviet Union, they generally did it for leftist reasons, for example, that the Soviet Union did not recognize the kinds of labor unions that existed in the West or certain Jewish refuseniks were not allowed to go to Israel. The older anticommunist movement saw communism as a great threat to Western Christian civilization, and they were quite happy to ally themselves not only with social democrats, but also with people on the Right like Francisco Franco. So even the anticommunism was different.

And finally, the Old Right had no desire to bring global democracy to everybody, unlike the neoconservatives. They were quite happy with authoritarian regimes, as long as they were conservative authoritarian regimes, and they were most concerned about preserving republican constitutional institutions in the United States. So there were neoconservatives who distinguished themselves very carefully from the traditional Right, for which they had utter contempt.

The problem came when they took over the Right, and you know, they did purge people like me. Someone like Murray Rothbard had been purged long before by the conservative movement in the 1950s. But once that happened, they then created a kind of new narrative, which is that, you know, all the good people were always neoconservatives. There were some extremist, McCarthyites or people who were isolationists, but all good conservatives really thought like them, and it just took a while for them to come around.

And finally we get the Jonah Goldberg narrative, and he's not the first to use this narrative, because I see about once every 10 years it starts to surface, that the term "neoconservative" is not very useful, because anything we understand as conservative is held by neoconservatives, and there is no distinction. Now, that is partly correct, because they purged all their opposition. You know, it's just like Marxist-Leninism in Russia meant Stalinism, because Stalin got rid of his opponents. So in that sense they were right. I mean, people who were paleolibertarians, paleoconservatives, the Old Right, all of these people were marginalized when they took over.

So in fact, in a sense Goldberg is right because of these massive purges. Because of the concealments that have occurred, they are the ones who are trying to run the conservative show, although right now they seem to be facing a bit of a problem. They're dealing with the populist right, which they hate, and they're trying to stifle it, get it out of the way, associate it with fascism or whatever or anti-Semitism, although it's pretty hard to argue that Trump is an anti-Semite. But they'll do anything to get rid of it, because I think they do see their power as being threatened.

WOODS: So in other words, for Goldberg to say that, look, neoconservative views are not bizarre outliers by any means; they are really the mainstream of conservative thought, well, yeah, no wonder, because you made sure that nobody else got funding or invitations or whatever.

GOTTFRIED: Exactly.

WOODS: You smeared them out of existence. You collaborated with the mainstream media to destroy people's reputations, and then you say, hey look, there's nobody around but us neocons, so now the word doesn't really mean anything, because it really just means the conservative movement as it exists today. So what does —

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, Goldberg, by the way, would agree with you, because he did write a piece about a year and a half ago about the legacy of William F. Buckley, who threw all of the wingnuts off the bus or something or ran them over with the bus, the

conservative bus. But he did admit that purges had to take place in order for conservatism to become respectable.

WOODS: What do you think it means that somebody like a Ted Cruz would use the term "neoconservative" as a pejorative? That's really surprising.

GOTTFRIED: It is, isn't it? I think someone like Cruz does see the big picture. He understands that the neoconservatives are a force which is distinguishable from even, you know, conservative Republicans as he understands them, and they're almost a kind of foreign presence from his point of view. He's also trying to put distance between himself and somebody like Jeb Bush or even Rubio, who are entirely scripted by the neoconservatives, particularly on foreign policy in the case of Rubio — or Fiorina. So he is using — and I think even Christie has used "neoconservative," strange as it may seem, in a pejorative way during this campaign.

WOODS: All right, so maybe we should say a little something about — let's get Jonah Goldberg out of our minds for a minute and just go back to the origins of neoconservatism. I've covered this a few times on the show, but after all, it's 570-some odd episodes, and people haven't probably memorized them all, so how would you explain the origins of this phenomenon to somebody? Where did this all come from? How did it happen, and who were they to begin with?

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, they were a group mostly of New York journalists, and you know, I decline to describe them as brilliant, professorial intellectuals. I think in many ways, Irving Kristol was typical of — or Podhoretz — typical of the first generation of neoconservatives, and they were basically New York Jewish journalists, who had a very, very strong sympathy for Israel, who were reacting against the rise of what they saw as McGovernism in 1972 and saw the Republican Party being taken over by people who were sympathetic to the PLO and who were going to turn their backs on the Soviet problem. And McGovern was notoriously squishy soft on the communists and did have a bit of a period of communist fellow traveling in his background. So you know, they were anticommunist Zionists who leaned in a kind of social democratic direction, but also were able to present themselves as moderate conservatives.

In fact, Kristol when he talks about it, I think it was a biography or something, autobiography of a neoconservative, points that he has created a new form of conservatism that does not exist in Europe. It's an exotic, American creation. Well actually what it was was a combination of New Deal-Great Society economic programs, support for big government together with an anti-Soviet foreign policy and a particularly strong focus on Israel's security. And these became the essential elements of neoconservatism.

Very opportunely, though, they developed a friendship with William F. Buckley, who was then Mr. Conservative, and he did crave their social acceptance for reasons I have never understood, but you know, I don't understand how his mind worked at the time. But he did crave their acceptance, and they began writing for *National Review* and assumed a very prominent place in Buckley's conservative movement.

Another figure who's not quite part of that group but represents a compatible ideology is Henry Jaffa, which, you remember Jaffa was a great fan of Lincoln, later on the Civil Rights movement, and argued that equality was the essential conservative principle. And the neoconservatives had no problem with that, since they accepted a large government, all kinds of social programs. You know, they were critical of them; they were critical of their excess, but not critical of the concept of having the government intervening massively in social policy and even economic redistribution. So somebody like Jaffa and some of the followers of Leo Strauss were important in providing a kind of intellectual respectability or, if you will, window dressing for the neoconservatives.

And then I think by the late '80s, they had become pretty much a group looking for government sinecures. They were able to get hold of the so-called conservative philanthropic organizations, like Bradley, Olin, and Smith Richardson, and they used these foundations to fund their own. A very important victory for them was getting hold of the National Endowment for the Humanities in '80, when they pushed out and defamed a very nice southern gentleman, M.E. Bradford, whom they attacked for racism and whatever. But it was important for them to get hold of the National Endowment for the Humanities, because it offered considerable resources which they could give out to their friends.

WOODS: And the guy who got that position was the great intellectual — you name him.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, William Bennett (laughing).

WOODS: William Bennett, of course. Who else would you want in charge of the National Endowment for the Humanities?

GOTTFRIED: Right, right.

WOODS: The guy who wrote — somebody wrote a story back in, I don't know when, I think in *Chronicles Magazine* about the dissertation that Bennett wrote for his doctorate. I forget what field — I don't even know what field it is. Do you know what field he got his doctorate in?

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, it's also in the second edition of my book on the conservative movement —

WOODS: Is it? Okay, okay, then I also read it there.

GOTTFRIED: Right, it's about value clarification, and it was done under Silber, who later became the president of Boston University —

WOODS: Oh, he was the guy who ran for governor.

GOTTFRIED: Right.

WOODS: Back in 1990 against Bill Weld, he ran as a conservative Democrat.

GOTTFRIED: Right.

WOODS: He was like Trump.

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: Because they would call them the "Silber shockers," because he would say something that was obviously true, and the press would call it a "shocker," and he would get more popular.

GOTTFRIED: Mm hmm, yeah, that's right. But he did have neoconservative connections, which largely came through his student Bennett. And at the time, Bennett, I think when he received his doctorate, he was at the University of Texas, where Silber had taught. The dissertation is about 40 pages, and it's full of grammatical errors.

WOODS: Yeah, it's just an embarrassment, and this is the intellectual they put up because we can't have M.E. Bradford, who had written scholarly pieces (laughing) —

GOTTFRIED: No, who had published multiple books (laughing).

WOODS: Unbelievable. I mean, our people could smack their side, you know, with one hand tied behind our backs, which is why they never give us the chance.

GOTTFRIED: That's right.

WOODS: They pretend we don't exist, because if — I mean, I always thought — I've said this on the show a couple times, but back when Judge Napolitano had his show, *Freedom Watch*, on the Fox Business Network, I proposed to his producer more than once the following scenario: I said, remember the old days, Bill Buckley on *Firing Line* used to have real, live debates with actual people who disagreed. They had a three-on-three debate, and it was actually interesting to watch. I said, you get a three-on-three debate, three neocons and three noninterventionists to debate foreign policy, people would tune it for that —

GOTTFRIED: That they would.

WOODS: — much more than they would for any other Fox Business Network show. I never even got a reply. And yet, that is a good idea. Doggone it, that is a good idea.

GOTTFRIED: Yes, I agree; I agree. No, I think the people who fell into the bad books of the neoconservatives first were the so-called isolationists or the people who don't think that American foreign policy should be based on a world democratic mission. And the people who broke they then attacked as racist or anti-Semites, which were pretty much their stock phrases. But you know, I think the original break had actually come

over foreign policy. I know that's why they turned against me, was not because of anything I said on domestic issues, but I disagreed with their foreign policy.

WOODS: So there are some things on which dissent cannot be allowed —

GOTTFRIED: That's right.

WOODS: — but if it's something harmless that, you know, you can talk about this or that domestic policy that has no chance of ever being changed, they're okay with letting you say it.

GOTTFRIED: Well, not really. I think if it's social policies, they prefer now — at least the second generation or third generation of neocons — prefer allying themselves with the Left.

WOODS: Yeah.

GOTTFRIED: I mean, they're for gay marriage and abortion and so forth. The first generation had not moved quite as far to the left, but neither had the country at the time. And if you say you're an enemy of the welfare state, they're not going to like you very much either, but if you say, you know, we can really change Obamacare a bit or something like that, that's permissible. And they have to be sort of like moderate dissent on economic issues. On social issues, they don't like — for instance, they don't like people on the religious right who are against gay marriage, but they'll occasionally allow them onto Fox, because they're good on Israel. So you have to humor them along on some social issue. But it's very clear that they are uncomfortable with somebody like Cruz or even someone like Huckabee, who takes conservative, religious, moral positions.

WOODS: I want to try to figure out if I can understand exactly what it is they have against Cruz, but before I do that, just a brief message.

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It's hard for me to really understand the nature of Cruz.

GOTTFRIED: Mm hmm.

WOODS: Okay, well, let me see if I can try and figure it out, and you tell me how close I come.

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: First of all, he doesn't seem to want just to make mild changes. He does want to try and block things and stop them and overturn them, which is not their style.

GOTTFRIED: No.

WOODS: He does take also a going-over-the-heads-of-the-party-establishment approach and appealing directly to the people. They're suspicious of that. But also, on foreign policy he seems like he would have a fairly bellicose foreign policy, but then when you listen to him more closely, he is saying that the neocons have made a total mess of the Middle East, every country they have touched has turned into a disaster — which is a point I myself make.

GOTTFRIED: Right, right.

WOODS: So are these the real — and also, they feel like even though he's a U.S. senator, which makes him kind of almost by definition a part of the establishment, there is something about him they feel like — yes, I know his wife is at Goldman Sachs and all that, but there is some part of him they feel like they might not totally be able to control. Do you think I've hit it?

GOTTFRIED: I think you're right, but I also think there's something else they don't like about him. They think he is a serious Christian on social issues, and they don't want that, because they're quite happy that an Obergefell versus Hodges or whatever, in which the Supreme Court made gay marriage a national right, they're quite happy with stuff like this. They want all the social issue to go away, because if they have any views on them, they're either accommodationists or off on the Left. Cruz can raise these issues again and push them in the direction in which the neoconservatives do not want so-called conservative politics to go.

And they want to focus on calling up Bibi is the first thing you do when you become president, which Carly Fiorina said she would do, and then standing up to the war criminal Putin, which, I don't know, Bill O'Reilly wants to do. And then, you know, perhaps dealing with some of the cost overrun of the present administration. I don't think they want to go much beyond those things. I'm sure Bill Kristol doesn't, or Charles Krauthammer.

WOODS: What about the electoral calculation? I think I can answer my own question, but on the one hand, you could imagine them saying we do want the votes of the evangelicals; we just don't want them bothering us —

GOTTFRIED: Exactly.

WOODS: — and do they maybe think that the evangelicals are simply not credible when they threaten to stay home during the election? They've never stayed home; they won't stay home; they will vote for whoever the neocons put up, so why shouldn't we just put up somebody who's going to talk a good game, then kick sand in these people's faces for the next four years, because that way we get everything we want. We get these suckers to vote for us, and then we don't have to deliver.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, I think they feel social and cultural contempt for people in flyover countries who go to small churches or something. They don't like them. They're totally different from themselves. I noticed there's this execrable journalist, what's his name,

Seth Lipsky, who used to be in charge of *The Wall Street Journal* in Hong Kong or, you know, some place where I wish he were back again living.

WOODS: (laughing)

GOTTFRIED: But he had a piece, you know, of how dare Cruz criticize New York values. The whole world learns from New York, you know, and there's an old German thing that "*Am deutschen Wesen mag die Welt genesen.*" The whole world finds nourishment from German being, or something — from New York being, everybody is giving culture, humanity, everything. Like, he was so offended that Cruz could talk against New York. On the other hand, whenever this journalist talks about the rest of the country, like beyond the Hudson River or something — I think a lot of it is simply the provincialism of the neocons. They despise the religious right, although they're good on Israel, or something like that. And they do, you know, they do provide the foot soldiers for the Republican Party. But I think they would be very happy if they could pull in black and Hispanic votes, because that way they might be less dependent on these people in flyover country. I think they have utter contempt for the religious right. And the religious right have allowed themselves to be used so often, I don't blame the neocons at this point.

WOODS: Yeah, I know, and they always huff and puff, and they threaten they're going to walk out, and it never ever happens. That's one thing you can say, you can give credit to the Left, is that they don't just say the hard left is not just satisfied with somebody giving a pretty speech and everybody in the audience knows the guy doesn't believe it. They'll sit in; they will disrupt things until they get what they want. Whereas, you know, you get out your copy of the Bible, and that satisfies these people. So it's almost like they deserve it.

GOTTFRIED: (laughing) No, I agree.

WOODS: I mean, these are people who teach the total depravity of man, and they're satisfied by a pretty speech. What is the problem here? It's cognitive dissonance.

GOTTFRIED: There's a total disconnect between their theology and their politics. Their politics assume human perfectibility, that America's exceptional, that America's sinless and good and, you know, we're all living in the Kingdom of Heaven; yet, you're right, their religious view is based on total human depravity. I think they're irreconcilable positions, but they're probably not aware of the irreconcilability.

WOODS: You know, you were mentioning wanting to get to black and Hispanic votes. What's interesting is that I think if Trump were the nominee, whom I'm not endorse — that chapter of my life closed. But I just think it's an interesting fact that he would do far better among American blacks than any Republican has done as long as you or I can remember, number one. There's no question about that. And secondly, I think he would even do better among Hispanics than people think —

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: — because what possible interest would honest, hardworking Hispanics already in this country in importing more Hispanics? Why would they particularly have any economic interest in doing that? They'd just be undercutting themselves.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, I agree. I mean, most of what I've looked at, you know, in the way of probably black and Hispanic votes suggest that Trump would pick up at least 20% of the black vote —

WOODS: Yeah.

GOTTFRIED: — which would put him well beyond, you know, the numbers picked up by the neocon candidates like Romney or Dole or W. And he would probably do no worse among the Hispanics than Romney did, which is about 31%. He might do a little better. So the notion that these votes would hemorrhage if you put up Trump is utter nonsense. But of course, I think the neocons would prefer losing with somebody else to winning with Trump.

WOODS: Oh, they would.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, yeah.

WOODS: Yeah. And it would be interesting to see how many of them would actually endorse Hillary, and the rest of them would like to endorse Hillary, but they know that if they do, then everything we've been saying about them obviously comes true, so they have to be a little —

GOTTFRIED: But they may not have to be concerned, because they have so much power — I mean within the Murdoch media. And Murdoch himself is a Hillary Clinton supporter. He's not a social conservative. He's just big on Israel and on a global democratic foreign policy, but on most social issues he's a liberal and is close to the Clintons. So, you know, if some of those people, Krauthammer defected or Bill Kristol, I think that it would not lose credibility in the movement.

WOODS: Wow.

GOTTFRIED: The other thing I'm convinced of is that the average American movement conservative, you know, has about the level of intelligence or integrity of a little less in the level of intelligence of members of the American Communist Party during its heyday. I've made this argument many times. They believe whatever they're told. If the party line changes, they change. You know, there are of course people out there who are voting for Trump who were never movement conservatives to start with, and many of them were never Republicans, and that's where he finds his strength. But you know, the people who watch Fox News faithfully every night, you know, I doubt you're going to find a lot of Trump supporters among them. Certainly the people who subscribe to *Weekly Standard* and *National Review* are not going to be Trump supporters.

WOODS: No, you won't get it there, but Fox News is kind of a gathering point for a lot of different types of conservatives, and given that Ann Coulter gets face time on Fox News and she's a big Trump supporter, there must be —

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, but less and less. I mean, she has been pretty much — but of course, Hannity is almost openly a Trump supporter by now and this other guy from *The Washington Times*, Hurt — I think that's his name — Charles Hurt, who's also a strong Trump supporter. They do have a Trump contingent on Fox, although you don't see them on the All-Stars. You know, they're all neocons there. But you do see them nonetheless on Hannity and occasionally they have some other people who are backing Trump.

WOODS: Yeah, I know one fairly frequent contributor over there who is in his heart a Trump supporter but doesn't dare say anything because of the reasons you mentioned. I want to ask you about something that was in — I don't make a habit of reading people's emails on the air, and of course if I said anything embarrassing I would just delete it out of the episode, but it is an interesting question. You said, "Perhaps we can discuss the ontological question. Jonah Goldberg" —

GOTTFRIED: (laughing)

WOODS: Yeah. You said, "Jonah Goldberg questions the ontological status of the neocons, while Rich Lowry does the same for the GOP establishment."

GOTTFRIED: Right.

WOODS: Rich Lowry is the editor, I believe, of *National Review*, for people who don't know. And I don't ever read him, so he's actually claiming in the same way that Jonah Goldberg says, "Neocons? What neocons?" — you're saying that Lowry is saying this about the GOP establishment?

GOTTFRIED: Yes, he said there was a GOP establishment — this is I think his latest or his penultimate column. He said that there was a GOP establishment, but they don't exist anymore. They have sort of vaporized, and they have no influence on anything, and people who invoke the Republican establishment, you know, have created a kind of straw man. And this came a few days after Jonah Goldberg's insistence that neoconservatives don't exist or shouldn't exist, the term shouldn't exist anymore. So we have two leading conservative intellectuals denying the ontological status of things that we assumed were there, but now they've told us, you know, they're not there anymore — or they both concede that these entities existed at some time, but they're either not there or we're not allowed to speak about them.

WOODS: Then how does he account for the nomination of John McCain, Mitt Romney, George W. Bush, and Bob Dole?

GOTTFRIED: Right. Well, he said that they used to be there, but now they've totally evaporated, and even if —

WOODS: In the past four years? (laughing) That was quick.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, even in the case of these other people who are so obviously establishment Republicans, the establishment was not particularly dominant in selecting them. Just the entire party affirmed them or something like that.

WOODS: Sure, we all know there was a spontaneous bubbling of enthusiasm from the general public.

GOTTFRIED: Right. No, he says that there was a Republican establishment back in the 1950s, you see, and these were people who supported Dewey and Eisenhower over Taft. We are allowed to say they existed back then, but they haven't been a presence for some time, and that people who speak about them are creating the straw man. I do agree with you he has problems with Dole and some of these other people who are so clearly establishment candidates, but you know, he tries to say that they had a kind of independent base of support that did not depend on something called the establishment.

WOODS: And so it was just in my imagination that —

GOTTFRIED: It was in my imagination (laughing).

WOODS: It was in my imagination that people during Ron Paul's campaigns were maybe trying to shut him up or wishing he'd go away? These all must have been phantoms.

GOTTFRIED: Yes, I suffered from the same illusions at the time, but I'm glad Rich corrected our misconception or helped dispel the illusion.

WOODS: When I was high school, I used to actually subscribe to *National Review*.

GOTTFRIED: Mm hmm.

WOODS: And I read Joe Sobran in the pages of *National Review*. How can that — in just half a person's lifetime, how can that magazine go from Joe Sobran having a column in every single issue to Joe Sobran does not exist and never did exist?

GOTTFRIED: Right, exactly.

WOODS: And then say, well look, of course the neocons are — the neocons are everywhere and so on and on. Yeah, because you got rid of everybody who's not a neocon.

GOTTFRIED: Exactly, exactly.

WOODS: And so now it's true the term may have less meaning, simply because everybody else has gone away.

GOTTFRIED: That's right, that's right. No, you know, I can think of a time when Sam Francis, Clyde Wilson, and myself were all regular contributors to *National Review* back in the 1980s. All of us were purged, and we ceased to exist at a certain point. They do this all the time. But of course this goes back to Buckley. I mean, Buckley began doing this in the 1950s, began pushing people out, and then lying later on about why people were expelled. For instance, the John Birch Society was not expelled because they were anti-Semites or racists; they were neither. They were expelled because they opposed the war in Vietnam very explicitly.

WOODS: Yeah.

GOTTFRIED: I'm not defending them; I'm saying there was something —

WOODS: No, as a matter of fact, in my experience with reading — I haven't read it in a long time, but when I used to read their magazine, they generally went out of their way to be as pro-Israel as they could. They were always insulting the PLO and, you know, basically because they thought the PLO was a puppet of the Soviets, and they were as anti-Soviet as you could be, so they were pro-Israel. So that was not an issue.

GOTTFRIED: Well, I think it probably was, because if you go back to an earlier point in their existence in the '50s or '60s, a lot of the writers, including James Burnham, were pro-Palestinian.

WOODS: Oh, is that so?

GOTTFRIED: Yes, they changed the party line as Buckley came under the influence of the neoconservatives. And that is the first area where you can see the new party line developing.

WOODS: Yeah, no, I meant the John Birch people in their *New American* magazine had basically been pro-Israel, because I think —

GOTTFRIED: Okay, okay.

WOODS: And I don't know if it's entirely because — and that's why I say, their view was that the PLO was just a creature of the Soviets and controlled by them —

GOTTFRIED: Oh yes, I remember that.

WOODS: — and so they would be basically pro-Israel. But then I got the impression that some of this — and I can't prove it — but was also a way of — you know, when you're in the John Birch Society, you're called every name in the book, and this is maybe one less name they would be called.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, but of course they had Jewish and black editors of their — whatever, *American Opinion*. Schuyler, who was black, was one of their head editors

and, you know, a charter member of the John Birch Society. They were never really racist or anti-Semites.

WOODS: No.

GOTTFRIED: They were kooky about a communist conspiracy, but the things they were accused of were simply false.

WOODS: Yeah, that's right. I mean, there were things, as you could say, that weren't quite right about them, but the things they were accused of doing were things that other people were doing.

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: And they just assumed that, well, if you're on the Right, you're probably all the same people. And we're actually a much more interesting, variegated group than we're sometimes described as. All right, is there anything I'm leaving out here? I want to make sure that we've said what we need to say here, that it's not right to say that the neoconservative term is not useful or it's not descriptive or the neocons are not nearly as distinctive as we might be led to believe. These days, as you say, they're not as distinctive because the competing groups are not in as great a number, but certainly Cruz is not a Ron Paul-Murray Rothbard-style libertarian, but he's also not a flat out neocon either, so there are some people who don't quite fit into these parameters.

GOTTFRIED: Well, another one who clearly does not fit into it is Ann Coulter, although she supported Mr. Establishment Republican, Mitt Romney, and told us things that were untrue about him.

WOODS: Oh, she was crazy for Romney —

GOTTFRIED: I know.

WOODS: — and that we were all nuts for being skeptical.

GOTTFRIED: Right, right. And she still occasionally will defend her choice of Romney, but I think that particular topic is one that she's given up on. But you know, she is allowed to survive. Buchanan is allowed to survive, because you can't get rid of these people. They're too well established. If they could have cut them off at the beginning — they went after Buchanan. They tried to totally destroy him, and they failed to do it.

WOODS: Yeah, that's incredible to me.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, and some did survive the purges and the concerted vilifications, so they can't get rid of everybody. So Coulter is still allowed to be there. If you look at something like *Townhall* website, for which I'm never allowed to write — they won't

even respond to me — that website has definitely moved to the Left. Most of the people writing it, including the head editor, a Guy Benson, are social leftists. Guy Benson is a gay activist, and he runs *Townhall*. But they still allow Buchanan and Coulter to be posted there. Now, whether this will be true in another year, I don't know, but you know, it's not wall-to-wall neoconservative if you read it.

WOODS: I think it would be interesting — I know that Pat has written on the neocons and so on, but he hasn't really written that personal memoir of who did what and what was going on and who was attacking him and all that. I don't think it's really Pat's style to dwell on stuff like that. His view has always been the best revenge is to keep writing bestselling books.

GOTTFRIED: And also he tries to get along with everybody, because he's a television journalistic personality. So I think he tries not to stir up, you know, old animosities if he can avoid them, particularly at this point in his life. He's in his late 70s, so I don't think we're going to see him write such a book.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, it's a shame, but he did write the book about his early years with Nixon —

GOTTFRIED: Right.

WOODS: — and I hope and I believe he's continuing to work on more such memoir-style stuff, which I find very interesting from him, because he did lead such an eventful life, and he's such a great writer. I mean, he really could make anything interesting. But just to learn, by the way — I had him on the show to talk about this book — to learn that he was the guy who told Nixon that LBJ wasn't running again. It was Pat who told Nixon.

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: And it's funny that this is the old days where Nixon would have known that while he was in the air today, but you had to wait till you land and somebody physically comes on the plane to give you news. That didn't seem old fashioned in those days, but it does today.

GOTTFRIED: Well you know, I was the one who gave Pat Buchanan the news that Richard Nixon would not support him for president. He was hoping that the boss would support him, and I had eaten dinner at Nixon's house about a week earlier. This was after I ceased to exist in the world of neoconservatism, American conservatism; I was Nixon's houseguest. But I also saw Buchanan when he ran for president. I got together with him in Philadelphia, and he says, you know, is the boss supporting me, and I said no, the boss is supporting George H.W. Bush, who was the incumbent. But I said, you know, he has great respect for you (laughing), but he's not supporting you.

WOODS: Yeah, and see, there goes the there's no Republican establishment idea (laughing). I mean, if it were just a matter of personal loyalty, certainly you would

think Nixon would support Pat, but it's not in Nixon's blood to support Pat on something like that.

GOTTFRIED: That's what he told me, Nixon, that at the end of the day I'm an establishment Republican.

WOODS: Yeah, and you should have said, I'm sorry, there's no such thing (laughing). Or maybe in the old days — but that wasn't that old; that's still 1990s.

GOTTFRIED: Right, it was 1992, and that was about 30 years after the establishment disappeared for Rich Lowry.

WOODS: (laughing) Yeah. And you know what I love about that book that Pat wrote, is that he admits that Nixon came out and said, look — he basically admits that Buchanan was there to keep the right flank happy. And he says, Pat, you've got to give the nuts 20% of what they want, and that's what we'll do. And I basically tried as nicely as possible to say, Pat, how do you feel basically about being the water carrier in that situation (laughing).

GOTTFRIED: (laughing) Yeah.

WOODS: But he really just, he had such a genuine affection for Nixon, and of course he met his wife while working for him. He's got this picture hanging in his home signed by Nixon as the guy who brought the two of them together. Yeah, I suppose it would be hard to say unkind things, but I mean, really (laughing)?

GOTTFRIED: He once told me that Shelley also adored Richard Nixon, or something like that, you know, suggested there was a kind of Nixon worship in their household. And I thought it was actually very touching the way he was loyal to his old boss, and he looked profoundly depressed when I said Nixon was not going to support him for president.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, but I mean that would have made international news. That would have been astonishing to anyone that an ex-president would endorse not the incumbent, but some right-wing upstart.

GOTTFRIED: Yes, yes.

WOODS: I mean, giving — yeah, making Pat the nominee is way more than the 20% that the nuts are entitled to in Nixon's view (laughing). We ain't giving them 100%; you can forget that. By the way, you know what was funny? I was reading a column by Buchanan recently where he was assessing the election and he was talking about the significance of the New Hampshire primary, and he goes through and he talks about different people who have won it over the years and what it's meant or people who have lost it and what the losing of it has meant. And so he just happened to mention in passing, you know, "And Bob Dole lost in the New Hampshire primary in 1996." He

didn't bother to mention, "Because I won it." (laughing) "He lost it to me." He didn't even mention that. I thought, boy, you're more gracious than I would be.

GOTTFRIED: Mm hmm. And then of course there's the problem that certain people may win early primaries but have nowhere to go. I mean, there's no way Bernie Sanders will be able to deal with the black firewall in the south. He's going to lose every southern state to Hillary, because all the black political bosses are behind her. And probably his success or his gravy train will stop somewhere in New Hampshire, and I don't see him going much beyond that. And he's sort of in the same position that Pat was back in 1992. There's only very limited firepower that he can use.

WOODS: Right, but he weakens the nominee.

GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: I mean, Hillary is going to come out battered by this. She shouldn't even be touched by this guy, and now the numbers are narrowing crazily around the country.

GOTTFRIED: Yeah, but there's no way she could be denied the nomination, given the power block that she has available to her at this point. She's lined up these party bosses years in advance. She would really have to start hemorrhaging votes I think in order to lose that support, and I really don't see those black Democrats coming around and voting for Sanders at this point, nor does anybody else.

WOODS: Yeah, no, that's true, that's true. I was reading a column by Judge Napolitano the other day, and I saw him actually last week when I was in New York City, and in both cases, he thinks there's a plausible chance that Hillary might actually get into legal trouble over the emails, and I think the Judge has been around longer than I have

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GOTTFRIED: Yes.

WOODS: — and yet, that still seems naive to me. I still can't imagine anything really happening to her. It just seems like she's invincible on this.

GOTTFRIED: It all depends on what Obama wants to do. I think there's enough to go after her. It's a question of whether Loretta Lynch, who is entirely under the thumb of Obama, will allow her to go forward. Even if the FBI says there are grounds to prosecute her for something, for criminal charges, I doubt that Obama is going to allow Lynch to proceed against her, unless he decides that he wants to get rid of her as a political figure. And there is bad blood between them. Let's say he decides that he's going to back Joe Biden or some other candidate. Then he just might let her twist in the wind.

WOODS: Well, what I want to do is I want to make sure people have a chance to read the piece that you wrote in response to Jonah Goldberg, so I'm going to put that — let's see, what episode is today? This is going to be Episode 574, so it's

TomWoods.com/574. I'll put the Goldberg piece, your piece; people can make up their own minds. And then we'll have to talk your book on fascism —

GOTTFRIED: That will be out next week.

WOODS: Okay, so we'll have you on. We definitely have to talk about that. I mean, we talked about fascism before, but now you've got the book. We've definitely got to talk about that.

GOTTFRIED: By the way, I also have a book of essays coming out after the book on fascism dealing mostly with fascism.

WOODS: As a matter of fact, I had heard about that. So in other words, you have like an open sesame here to come back on the show.

GOTTFRIED: I do, and my book has been endorsed by my friend Stanley Payne, who's probably the world's leading expert on fascism. He likes the way I go after the anti-fascists for distorting the meaning of the term "fascism." And a good deal of my book deals with that; namely, the abuse of the term "fascism," and how in the United States and Europe it is made to blacken the reputation of people by associating them very often with things that have nothing to do with fascism.

WOODS: Yeah, exactly. So I'm looking forward to that. So once I get my hands on that, we'll schedule to have you back on. But I thoroughly enjoy — I assume it was obvious; I just thoroughly enjoy — I love having these freewheeling conversations about topics like this that I'm interested in, especially when you can absolutely smash somebody who is just handing you a party line, and that's certainly what Jonah Goldberg was doing.

GOTTFRIED: One of the interesting things is that Jonah Goldberg and Rich Lowry are not allowed or don't allow themselves to recognize my existence on this planet, and every time I beat up on them badly on a lot of things they say, they really can't respond, because once they respond, they recognize that people like us exist. They don't want to do that. So one can just bang away, pummel them, and not expect any kind of reprisal.

WOODS: Yeah, and that makes it kind of fun, because you know they read it.

GOTTFRIED: Right.

WOODS: There's no way in the world they missed your article. They read that thing, but you're right, they don't dare respond, so you can just keep on pow, pow, pow. Just my kind of target.

GOTTFRIED: They do not want to admit there's an enemy in the room.

WOODS: No, that's right. That's right; we're all neocons now.

GOTTFRIED: That's right.

WOODS: All right, Paul, thanks a lot. We'll talk to you soon.

GOTTFRIED: Thank you for having me.