



Episode 703: Social Justice Warriors: Who They Are, and How to Deal With Them

Guest: Vox Day

WOODS: *SJWs Always Lie*. That's such a great title. Let me start off by saying a couple of things, because I've got a few listeners who have actually written to complain about my use of that term. They say I'm trying to introduce certain people to your podcast, and I think if you are using that type of language it's just going to turn them off. And I want to say a couple of things.

First of all, I don't like the term social justice warrior, because it actually makes them sound sort of respectable, that they believe in something and they're going to be warriors for it. I don't like that. I want to make them sound completely disreputable. But I use the term, because everybody uses it, but it wouldn't have been my preference. I would have chosen something far more derogatory.

Secondly, in terms of whether I should use it so I don't alienate people or not, if I'm talking about communism, I'm going to say that's an evil system. I'm not going to say, well, there's a possibility somebody is sharing the episode with his Marxist friend. I can't worry about that. At some level you have to — well, you have to call a spade a spade. Let me be as insensitive as I can be. I mean, you have to speak the truth.

And these people are not just people who just care about justice but they've just gone a little bit wrong, or they just want to have everybody feel comfortable but they're just going about it the wrong way. That is absolutely not the way I see it. These people cannot be redeemed. They are horrible people. They are a threat to a free society, and I'm not going to kowtow to anybody on that front. They need to be beaten back as effectively as possible. And I'm not trying to convert them, because, yeah, one out of 500 million of them can be converted. So in other words, if I spend all my time I might be able to get 16 conversions if the entire earth listens. Not worth it.

DAY: Well, I think there's a certain contradiction there in even what you're saying. If the term is not effective, then why would anyone take offense to it? If the term is positive, then how could anybody possibly object to being described as that?

WOODS: I get that; it's just that I think calling them "warriors" — I don't want to call — I think they're actually — I don't know; anyway, I could come up with some really derogatory term. I just feel like it's too complimentary. Even if they still say it's

insulting, I guess my view is it's not insulting enough. I guess on this I can't be appeased.

DAY: But that's something that Chapter 10 deals with. What you are doing is you are attempting to dialectically analyze a rhetorical term, and that is not the right way to look at things at all. Essentially what you're doing is you're attempting to analyze a Chinese term in an English sense. Rhetoric is only about the emotional impact it has on people. It doesn't deal with information at all. It doesn't deal with logical, factional information at all, and so the fact of the matter —

You know, this comes up fairly frequently and it did when the book first came out, but you would see people say, well, I don't call them social justice warriors; I call them social justice whiners or whatever. And the thing is that a more derogatory term is a less rhetorically effective term, because they don't feel that it applies to them. The SJW does not feel that he's a whiner, and so what affects them, the reason that the term is so effective is that when they hear people using the term with contempt dripping off their chin and they identify with the term, that's when the maximum emotional effect takes place.

So what's happened is that regardless of the meaning of the term, the essence is so rejected that the term has become negative. It's much in the same way that blacks or previously African Americans, previously Afro-Americans, previously negroes are constantly changing what term is offensive or not offensive, because the core problem is that they don't like being identified as a separate racial identity. It doesn't matter what the term is; over time the perception of the term is colored by its meaning. And that's what's happened with SJW.

WOODS: I still feel like the average person who is innocent of all political knowledge hearing a term that has "warrior" and "justice" in it might think, ah, well, that sounds admirable. I just don't want them to sound admirable. It's a trivial point.

I want to get on to the more substantial point, which is — I mean, this book of yours is — I don't think I've ever read anything quite like it. And it just kept getting more and more — I don't want to say outrageous, just because that would sound like I disagree with it, but I thought, okay, how's he going to top this chapter, and then you would each time. So first of all, what are the ideological preconceptions that these people hold? And then I want to talk about the tactics they use to try to force these ideas on everybody.

DAY: Well, their core ideological has its roots in John Stuart Mill, and that's actually where I got the term "SJW convergence" from, which we can discuss later. But essentially, their core ideology revolves around tolerance, equality, progress, and inclusion. I think the acronym actually worked out "TEPID"; I'm trying to remember what "D" stood for — diversity. Diversity. And so those five elements are their core ideological, but what's important to understand is that what they mean by tolerance is not necessarily what the dictionary defines as tolerance. What they mean by diversity is not what the dictionary defines as diversity. It is their highly refined,

very particular definition of those things where their tolerance is actually highly intolerant; their diversity is absolutely non-diverse when it comes to intellectual opinions and so forth. But that TEPID acronym essentially describes their core ideological. If you scratch an SJW, you're going to find something related to those things.

However, it's important to remember that their ideological is fundamentally dynamic. It is constantly changing. It's what we talk about when we say "the SJW narrative." One of the — best way to think about SJWs is like a school of fish. They're all moving together in sync, and then suddenly they all shift to the right or to the left or up or down, and they're all very aware of what the others are doing and thinking so that they can move in time with that, because the one thing that terrifies the SJW more than anything else is to turn right when all the other SJWs turn left. Suddenly he's out of sync with the narrative, and they will turn on him and attack him just as mercilessly as they would attack a non-SJW.

WOODS: So what are the sorts of things — give me an example of somebody who ran afoul of the SJWs, and not only ran afoul of them but then responded in precisely the wrong way, and what was the outcome.

DAY: Well, one of the examples from the book that I think is the most tragic is Sir Tim Hunt. He is not an SJW, but he's also no archconservative or anything. He's not very political at all. He's a Nobel laureate, a man of great accomplishment, and he was giving a speech in Korea, and he just happened to make a minor joke about women in the laboratory. And this is a guy who, it came out, has actually been very supportive of women in science. In fact, he was speaking at a conference that was related to women in science. And what happened was that he was sandbagged by an SJW who really falsely characterized and exaggerated some of the comments that he made to make him look like this outrageous sexist who didn't think that women should be allowed in the laboratory.

And because he was traveling from Korea, he had no chance to respond to it. And by the time he had landed, SJWs at his academic institution had already put pressure on his wife, and she ended up leaning on him to or encouraging him to resign, thinking that they had a deal where he would just resign and the whole thing would be kept quiet. And then of course the SJWs always need to parade their scalps and show off their trophies, so the institution promptly announced that it had caused him to resign, and he ended up getting kicked off of some other academic sort of honorary seats and so forth. And it was really sad, because the guy and his wife clearly had no idea what was coming. They had no idea that they were going to be the target of a global media campaign, and he was completely unready for it.

WOODS: As are most normal people, because most normal people don't think or act this way, or they think if I apologize these people will be happy. It has nothing to do with him as an individual; what it has to do with, as you say in your book, is making an example of him so as to terrify everybody else. And boy, a lot of people, they get right in line. And as you point out and as I've pointed out, people don't like to be called

haters or — you know, whatever. They just don't like being cast in a bad light when they know themselves and they know that they're decent people, so their natural instinct is to protest. And then their natural instinct becomes, I'm not going to say anything in the first place that could even slightly be misinterpreted by these people. So it puts everyone in a state of constant terror.

Now, I can imagine libertarians coming back and saying — and this happens to me all the time when I criticize any private institution, I get told, well, you know, they have the right to do that. Yeah, I get that. I get that. Can we just say for now — this is Episode 703. I'm just going to call it the Episode 703 Principle so that I never have to refer to it again. I get that a place can hire and fire as they wish. That's not the point. I can still criticize them.

But yet, let's try to take that objection seriously. Why should a libertarian — and I know you wouldn't describe yourself as a libertarian, but my audience is — why should a libertarian care about this if really all we're dealing with is a bunch of private employers who have the right to be pigheaded and oppressive if they want to?

DAY: Well, first of all I would point out that the statement is false. Not only in the USA but in the rest of the world, employers no longer have the right to hire and fire whoever they want. I mean, it's fine and dandy to talk about how in your imaginary, ideal, intellectual world everybody's got that right, but in the actual world we inhabit and in the legal systems we actually live in, that's simply not true. You can and you will — you know, corporations have certain rules that they have to abide by and laws they have to abide by, and some of the things that are protected are related to the individual speech rights, so the employer doesn't necessarily have the right to do that.

But more importantly, the reason it matters is because the whole program of social pressure has been one way. Like for example, you even see people try to argue that Twitter had the right to kick Milo Yiannopoulos off of Twitter because they didn't like what he was saying, because it's a private institution. And yet, these are the very same people who are applauding the fact that a Christian bakery was fined hundreds of thousands of dollars and is being forced to bake a wedding cake for a homosexual couple. And then there's another case with a floral studio, I believe, a flower shop. And so it's not correct to pretend that we're living in a society or a legal framework where everyone is treated equally, and so given where we are, given the fact that we are caught up in a very vicious cultural war that has really only been fought by one side for the past 20 to 30 years, it's not appropriate to pretend that that cultural war does not exist.

WOODS: You mentioned Milo, who wrote the foreword to your book. I posted a number of tweets relating to his ousting from Twitter, and I was responding to people who were especially hysterical about this, saying that people like Milo — this was a black woman. She was saying he's trying to keep black women off the Internet — which, I don't know where that's coming from. But he's trying to keep black women off the Internet, so I responded and said, and yet the funny thing is no black women have actually been driven from the Internet, and yet Milo was driven from Twitter. You

don't think there's maybe a little hysteria going on here that we might want to ratchet down?

I think the reason they respond to him the way they do is not just for his provocative style; it's for what he represents. He's somebody who, he doesn't just answer them; he causes them to objects of laughter and ridicule, which is something they don't know how to cope with, because these are the people with the least sense of humor of anyone who ever lived, as far as I can see.

DAY: Well, it's more than that. The reason that Milo's a target, the reason that I'm a target, the reason that you're a target is because all of us have at various points in time stood up to the cultural Left. And that is something that they really cannot allow to stand. They can't just ignore it and let it pass, because every time somebody stands up to them, then 10 other people realize that it's possible. Like you were talking about earlier, one of their goals is to instill a state of fear so that people muzzle themselves so that they don't even have to be muzzled by the SJWs, so that no one is speaking any of the crimethink that might be taking place.

And so the more that people see people like Milo running amok, the more that they see me standing up and saying things that are deemed unacceptable, the more that you're talking about things that the Left does not approve of or want people to hear, the more people realize that they can speak up too. I mean, look at — my blog just yesterday passed 100,000 page views for the day for the first time. That's terrifying to them, because every single person who's visiting that site is being bathed in this crimethink that they want to stamp out, and it makes other people much more likely to stand up against them.

And so that's really what's driving their campaign against Milo. That's why he was kicked off Instagram, even though he didn't do anything on Instagram. That's why I was kicked off Goodreads. That's why eventually we're going to be introducing a whole number of alternative social media structures, simply because they cannot permit the outspoken and fearless Right to even be present on their social media, because we are much more convincing than they are.

WOODS: And again, I want to emphasize we're not dealing with — I have people I talk about on the show who, let's say, disagree with me on some aspect of economic policy. Well, you might disagree with me on some economic policy.

DAY: Sure.

WOODS: So what we normal people think is, well, maybe someday we could sit down and try and hash that out. And I think a lot of people who are naive and not really aware of what we're dealing with hear think that the SJWs are the same way. They're just a little bit outspoken, but if we could all just sit down with them and if Woods wouldn't use inflammatory language, maybe we might get somewhere. What's wrong with that?

DAY: Well, that's fundamentally the moderate perspective. To be honest, I have a lot of contempt for moderates, because they like nothing better than shooting at their own side. A lot of the people who feel comfortable criticizing you, people who are on the Right who criticize you, have probably never said boo to anyone on the Left. So the moderate loves to engage in criticism and backseat driving, and he's always happiest shooting at his own side. So I just don't — you know, they're — I'm not sure that you can convince a lot of those people otherwise, because they're not being driven by any — they're really being driven by their "split the difference" personalities more than the idea that they can actually convince the SJWs of anything. I think deep down most of those people know very well that the SJWs can't be convinced. I think that they want to talk you into playing nice, just with the idea that maybe we can all pretend that this cultural war is not taking place.

WOODS: What are the various steps — and you don't have to say too much about any one of them — that we can expect to see in an SJW campaign against an individual or an institution? It seems to, as you point out in your book, follow a certain pattern.

DAY: Yeah, in fact, if you go to my blog at Vox Popoli, there is a free SJW Attack Guide, and it actually —

WOODS: Oh, okay (laughing).

DAY: It's actually in five different languages. I think we've got English, Spanish, German, Portuguese — four different languages, anyhow.

WOODS: Well, even having it in German in the first place is a crime of some kind, probably.

DAY: Probably. But anyhow, there's eight stages of an SJW attack sequence. The first one is to locate or create a violation of the narrative. Remember, the narrative is always shifting, so it's very easy for them to create a violation of it. Number two is point and shriek. Number three is isolate and swarm. They're always intent on cutting off their target from any emotional support that might be offered. That's why it's so important whenever you see somebody being attacked by SJWs to immediately get in contact with them and offer support and make sure they understand that they're not alone. The fourth stage is reject and transform, and what that refers to is the apology. If you apologize they will always reject your apology, and they'll try to transform your apology into proof of your guilt. You know, why would you be apologizing if you weren't guilty of the crime? The fifth stage is press for surrender. The sixth stage is appeal to an amenable authority. The seventh stage is the show trial. And then finally is the victory parade, where they parade the head of their target around and point out to all the other SJWs what they did.

WOODS: All right, so as this is going on, suppose you are the victim of this —

DAY: Right.

WOODS: Suppose you've been attacked. Now, somebody like you and me, we expect to be the victims of this. But let's just say you're the average person, you're working for some corporation, and you tweeted something out or something, and somebody reported you to your boss. Let's say it's something like that. So you really aren't expecting to be made a target —

DAY: Right.

WOODS: — and you get that terrifying call into the office, and close the door, and "Sit down. We have something important to talk about." How should you take things from there?

DAY: In that SJW Attack Guide — which again I point out is free; you don't have to buy the book or anything to get this part of it; it's just —

WOODS: But you should buy the book. I'll say it for you. You should buy the book. But go ahead.

DAY: The reason I created it was — and it's actually been very useful in this regard — is because people have come to me and said, hey, my friend is being attacked; do you — you know, there's no way I can get them to read an entire book right now; do you have anything? And so I just thought, okay, what would somebody who is being attacked need? And so most of the guide is actually what you're asking here.

So for example, the very first thing to do I say is to rely on the three Rs, which is recognize that it's happening, remain calm, and realize that no one cares. You know, it's very important for people to understand that other people don't really care about what's happening to you. Your really close friends might; your family might, but even they kind of figure, well, this wouldn't be happening if you didn't have it coming. And so the immediate instinct for most people is to plead their innocence and then run around telling everybody and their brother about what's happening to them. That does no good whatsoever. In fact, it actually makes things worse.

Then I also point out, don't try to reason with them. The instinctive reaction when somebody accuses you of having said something that was sexist or having done something that was racist, their first instinct is to try to deny it and explain it away. But that's missing the point. That's taking their accusation at face value. They're not accusing you because you did something and they're upset about it. They're going after you because you're a target, and this is just their weapon. This is just their tactic. It's like trying to argue with a machine gun or a sword. So don't try to reason with them.

And above all, the single most important thing is do not apologize. If you apologize —

WOODS: Ugh, cannot emphasize this enough.

DAY: If you apologize, it is interpreted as a confession. It is exactly like — you know, if you can imagine, suppose the police bring you in and they accuse you of murder, and

you go and you apologize for committing the murder. Well, they will view that as a confession and then will pronounce you guilty and move right to the punishment stage. And so an apology is not — you know, a normal person thinks an apology of, hey, even if I didn't do anything wrong, I'm sorry that you're upset. I don't want you to be upset, so I'm going to apologize so that you won't be upset. But what they're doing is they're signing their confession of guilt to something that they didn't do, and so that's why it's very important never to apologize to SJWs.

WOODS: The whole thing is so stupid, though. I mean, it's evil, yes, but it's so dumb. Like, their arguments are dumb, and the faux outrage is so dumb. It seems like it's so dumb that we ought to be able to counterattack a lot more effectively than we have, don't you think?

DAY: But that's exactly what gets into the heart of the problem of dialectic and rhetoric. When a lot of the people who are most victimized by SJW attacks are highly intelligent people. I mean, for crying out loud, Sir Tim Hunt is considerably smarter than 99.9% of the people on the planet. He's got a Nobel Prize for science. And actually, several of the people that I mention in there — in fact, I think pretty much every example that I have in the book is of a highly intelligent person being attacked. And part of the problem that intelligent people have is that they don't understand the power of the nonsensical. They don't understand that 80% of the people only speak rhetoric, and so you can make the finest, most logical case in the world defending yourself —

WOODS: No, look, I get that. I get that that doesn't work. But why can't we come up with — I mean, we're clever and funny. Why can't we come up with stuff that smashes and embarrasses them?

DAY: Well, we do, and that's called what Milo does and what I do, and the main reason that we can't do it as effectively is because most of the people on the Right, a lot of the conservatives and a fair amount of libertarians, are much too concerned about etiquette. They don't want effective names — they don't want the Left being called effective names and being mocked and ridiculed and so forth, because that would be unfair. And it is unfair. The sort of ridicule that Milo directs towards his opponents quite often is not fair, but it's funny and it's effective, and so as long as we've got tone police operative on the Right, that's the biggest — conservatism's biggest single problem is the fact that the tone police rule. And one of the reasons the Alt Right is so effective is because we completely reject the tone police, and in fact, any time somebody tries to start tone policing us we shout them down.

WOODS: Well, I'll tell you something. There are a lot of libertarians out there who will very, very grudgingly in principle recognize somebody's right to speak, but then make sure to engage in as much virtue signaling as possible to let everybody know, now, I don't agree with this reprehensible person. Let me make that into four-fifths of my article —

DAY: Right.

WOODS: — and then grudgingly say, but we have to allow degenerates and deadbeats like this to talk. You know, at this point I feel like I'm going to forgive Milo for whatever transgressions of his I'm not aware of and say that what this boils down to is you have to pick a side here. And again, my listeners after over 700 episodes, they know that I'm as reasonable as you can get, in terms of I'm willing to listen to arguments and weigh them on both sides and whatever. So if I'm telling you that this is so bad and so severe that you've got to just chuck all that out the window and just fight and ridicule, then something really is wrong. Now, what was the case of the — I want to mention the Firefox episode, because that's an example of, after — what was the guy's name?

DAY: Brendan Eich.

WOODS: Yeah, after he was basically driven out — or he resigned, but we all know what that means — the share of browser usage that Firefox enjoys among computer users went down substantially. There was a whole campaign among people who just did not — whether they agreed with him or not, who cares? The totalitarian aspect of how his case was handled led to a mass campaign to uninstall Firefox, and they were hurt badly by that. It seems like we ought to be doing a lot more of that.

DAY: Well, we should be, and we are. You know, Brendan actually has a great new browser out. He was the main technical guy behind Firefox originally, and so that was why he was named CEO in the first place. And he's got a great new browser out called Brave. I'm using it on my system and on my mobile stuff right now. It's pre-release, but it's already better than anything else out there. It's important to support those actions, and a lot more of them are coming. We're going to be introducing an alternative Twitter, an alternative Wikipedia, all kinds of stuff. There's a lot of stuff going on on the Alt Right that people don't know about yet, and it's going to be very important for people like you to let them know about it and let them know why it's important to do these things, rather than allow yourself to be subjected to SJWs like Zuckerberg and Jack Whatever-His-Name-Is at Twitter. Right now the SJWs have the social media high ground, but we're going to take it away from them.

WOODS: Well, I hope you're successful. Tell people how they can find your blog.

DAY: Just VoxDay.blogspot.com. Pretty much if you type "Vox Day" into any search engine, that'll be the first thing that'll come up. And I think that — I would encourage anybody who is under any sort of attack by SJWs, please come by and please read that Survival Guide, because I think you'll find that very helpful. A lot of people already have found it very helpful. And the main thing that I would encourage is don't be afraid and don't think you're alone. They want you to feel fear. They want you to feel like you're alone. But like the books says, they always lie.

WOODS: Well, I urge people to check it out, both the book and your blog. I'm going to link to both of them at TomWoods.com/703. We're going to have to get you back as soon as I can get that Murphy on. I think Murphy debating you was the only time Bob's been on my show since we launched *Contra Krugman*. He's always juggling a lot of

stuff, and I've got to get him to put that stuff down and get him back on to talk some more about trade, because I really enjoyed that conversation, as I did this one. Thanks so much.

DAY: You're very welcome.