



Episode 726: How and Why Progressives Keep Changing What's Offensive

Guest: Michael Malice

WOODS: A lot of times I have you on, and I don't really know where it's going to go. I just think, look, it's Malice, and he's going to drive the episode, and I'm going to follow, and we're just going to see what happens. Well, in this episode that is multiplied by 100. I tweeted something out about a week or so ago about this controversy about Amy Robach of *Good Morning America*, whom I'd never heard of because I don't watch *Good Morning America*. The idea that I would even be awake at that hour to watch — I don't even know when it's on, but if it's called "Good Morning," it's way before I'd be awake. And apparently she was actually trying her best to make an anti-racist statement, which, you know, you don't get any extra points when you're trying to make an anti-racist statement when you accidentally say something that "offends," so-called, the snowflakes. So she was talking about — well, you tell the topic, because your view is that the thing that she was talking about was the issue that should be broached, not her inadvertent use of an insensitive term.

MALICE: Well, I mean, I think — I don't know that I agree necessarily. I think it's a complete nonissue from my perspective, but it just speaks to how race in the media is played, where she had a comment where she said that there should be certain movie roles reserved for "colored people," as opposed to the preferred term, which is "people of color." And I think your tweet was something like, having that word "of" in there and a little bit different syntax is the difference between being in the Klan and being enlightened.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, let me jump in on that. I tweeted out that — I said, I've never used the term "colored people," because of course it reminds me of Archie Bunker from when I was growing up —

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: — so I wouldn't use the term "colored people." But I said, isn't it bizarre that that's unforgivable and that the correct term is "people of color"? So what is it? Is it the missing preposition that's the issue? I mean, it's just weird the way the rules of discourse work in America, that you could be that close to being driven out of society just in the way you arrange these words. I mean, I don't care where you stand on the racism spectrum; that's screwed up. That was the point of my tweet. And you latched

onto that. You wound up writing a column for *The Observer* about this. Of course we're linking to it at TomWoods.com/726. Now go ahead.

MALICE: Well, my question for you is was that tweet meant facetiously or rhetorically, or were you sincerely asking why is this a difference?

WOODS: I was having fun with these people, because my view is that the difference between the two — obviously there is no substantive difference between the two. To me it's a matter of — it's a matter of these people want to control and dominate all these situations. They want to make clear who's in charge, and you are not in charge, and you will sit there and pathetically forgive our forgiveness, and we'll consider whether we're going to grant it. That's the position they like to be in. That's my view.

MALICE: Well, I think that's the position most people like to be in, to be fair, given the choice of — But the point I made — and I thought that you were being sincere to some extent that you thought it was ridiculous — and the point I was making is it's not ridiculous in the sense that they are being somewhat consistent in their use of language and its role. And its role isn't necessarily to dominate for the sake of dominating.

So as I talk about in my article, the term "colored" is a historic anachronism. It used to be the term for black people, especially in the South, back in, I don't even know when it started changing to black, then Afro-American, then African-American. This was the Jim Crow era. Nowadays, "people of color" is the term, because it refers not just to black people, but to nonwhite Hispanics and sometimes other people get grouped into that depending on whether or not the speaker wants to regard them as being oppressed at that particular moment. So sometimes it means, you know, people from the Indian subcontinent and that area; sometimes it doesn't.

But I don't think that most people understand how this works, because it's not arbitrary. So here's — let me break it down how it works like I wrote in my article. So if I'm a progressive in the religious sense, I want to constantly demonstrate my commitment to the progressive agenda. And one of the easiest ways any group demonstrates their commitment to an ideology is through the use of jargon. We certainly see this in libertarianism; we see this in objectivism; we see this with Republicans, when Republicans talk about, you know, I'm old-fashioned, is a Republican code word, or I'm a real American or something like that.

And progressives have the same thing. So they will use terminology. The problem is everyone wants to use the correct progressive terminology, because as this woman found out, when you don't use the correct progressive terminology you're going to have negative consequences, because they're in a position to hurt people who aren't playing by their rules. And this has been demonstrated more times than you can count.

So now if the progressives want you to use the correct words to demonstrate that you're progressive and everyone is going to try to use those correct words because everyone is trying to pass as a progressive, well, that's a problem now, because

progressives can't identify each other by using the correct words because a lot of people are lying and just using their jargon to kind of swim with the tide. So then they have to start constantly changing the words that they use in order to have their cues be current, just like clothes.

In the same way that not that long ago people would say "mentally retarded," and it was not an offensive term at all; it was just used as a descriptor. And then there was this campaign, ban the R word. Jane whatever-her-name-is, I forget that actress, the comedian. She had a whole video about the R word and how you shouldn't use it, and retarded people are special and should be cared for. No one is arguing that retarded people aren't special. This term was not used as approbation; this was a descriptor of people who had mental disabilities.

WOODS: Especially, just read the dictionary definition of "retard." That is exactly what we're dealing with.

MALICE: Right. But no, then it became, well, everyone's using this term; therefore some people who aren't with the program are using it ironically, or they shouldn't be using it, so we have to change it. So what happens is when you keep changing these terms, if someone uses an outdated term that is a cue that they aren't caught up with the program, that they're not on the progressive bandwagon. And they're always looking for outliers to attack and destroy, because there's a group of people who appoint themselves as the police, and now they know who to swarm. So in that sense, she — I'm not going to say she got what she was asking for. In one sense, though, this is something that could be foreseen, because they act this way consistently and repeatedly across different areas.

WOODS: I saw a series of tweets in response to this whole ridiculous episode with Amy Robach on *Good Morning America*, and one of the people was saying, I'm going — and this person was saying this in all seriousness. I'm going to let this slide this once, but if it should happen again I'm going to watch some show other than *Good Morning America*. Now, all right, the preposterousness of the faux outrage of all this, that she failed to put the preposition in the middle of the words and she got them in the wrong order. First of all, how tone deaf about American society would you have to be? If she said this again, she'd be off *Good Morning America*.

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: That'd be it. We would never hear from her again. You wouldn't have the opportunity to say, all right, well now I'm really going to — And secondly, given the outrage, the ridiculous outrage about her use of this phrase, she's obviously if she values her career never, ever, ever, ever going to say this again. So I mean, really, some of these folks — now, I'm not talking about the people who drive these campaigns; I'm talking about the useful idiots among their followers. I mean, most of them honestly do not understand how American society works. They have vastly overestimated — everybody who disagrees with them is a white supremacist. It's

impossible to have a rational conversation with anybody who is that upset about what was to my mind obviously a slip of the tongue and a mistake by her.

MALICE: Well, I'm going to disagree with you a little bit, because let me explain their view on race, because I think a lot of people who are not progressives get frustrated by their view of race, and they're kind of talking past each other.

So this is the metaphor I used: let's suppose you have a school and a bunch of kids are in detention, and the teacher — for this kind of detention you have to write an essay saying what did you do wrong and why you won't do it again. And the teacher who's in charge of detention is grading the papers, and once she says, okay, you did a good job, you can leave detention. So she's basically holding the kids in that classroom. Now someone knocks on the door and tells the teacher we've got a school shooter. Someone's shooting up the school; get out of here. And the teacher says, well, we're not leaving until I finish grading these papers. And the guy goes, what are you talking about; there's a school shooter; do you not think this is an issue? And the teacher will say, okay, I'll lock the door.

Now, if you were the person talking to this teacher, you would think she is either insane or evil. At the very least you would not respect her, and you would ignore her and try to get those kids out of there, right?

WOODS: Yeah, of course.

MALICE: So this is their idea of racism. For you to — I don't mean you specifically, Tom; I mean for someone to say that racism is a problem and to acknowledge racism's a problem but not act immediately as if this is a huge emergency that's happening everywhere in your environment, from their perspective you're in that position of the teacher. From their perspective, if racism exists it is an emergency and is as pervasive as the school shooter, and locking the door is not going to matter. So when people say I care about race, I'm not prejudiced, that's not enough for the progressives, because for them if something is this big of a problem and your response to it is some minor change in behavior, you're dismissing this problem and you're ignoring it when it's on the level of a metaphysical outrage that is happening constantly.

WOODS: All right, so it's not just — so in other words, in your view this is not just a raw effort to exert power over other people; it also has roots in a whole way of viewing the world.

MALICE: Well, I wouldn't use the word "root" because of the pun, but yeah, it definitely has — right, it's their worldview. And the question that I love to ask people on the Left is, is there a point at which the cost of fighting racism and discrimination outweighs the benefit. Is there like a little amount you could be happy with? And many people who are on the Left who are approaching this from a rational perspective, who think we should live in a country where people are treated fairly, that mentality which I subscribe to, they'll say, yeah, of course, you're never going to be able to eradicate it. Everyone's going to have their prejudiced grandma, and that's fine. But the

evangelical progressives, even asking that question to them is insane and makes you morally suspect.

WOODS: Let's shift gears a bit, but still on this same general theme. I'm pretty sure — you know who Bette Midler is of course, right?

MALICE: (laughing) I have a funny story with her, but yeah, go ahead.

WOODS: (laughing) I'm sure you do. Well, the story that I know of is apparently some time in the last — I don't know when I read this new item. Did you read it, where she made some what she thought were humorous remarks about Bruce/Kaitlyn Jenner?

MALICE: No, I didn't hear this.

WOODS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, and you know, they were obviously meant in fun, and of course she — what do you think happened? Do you think people said those are funny jokes, or do you think they said, well, Bette, I know you think those are funny jokes but you may be a little bit behind the times; we actually don't consider those jokes to be admissible anymore? Do you think that was the response?

MALICE: Wait, Bette — oh wow, "she apologizes for offensive Kaitlyn Jenner tweet? I never heard about this.

WOODS: Yeah, so she apologized, yea. Now look, I'm not saying it's impossible ever to offend someone or that everything you might want to say is a good thing to say. Nobody's saying that. What fascinates me is just the process that we all know — we all know what's going to happen to that person. We know the exact process. There's going to be the ritual denunciations. It's like a liturgy.

MALICE: Yes.

WOODS: And then the response is the abasement and the firm commitment to amendment of life. I mean, it's bizarre. It's just — I'm curious about your comments on that.

MALICE: Why is it bizarre if it's something that follows something that already has precedent. It's the opposite of bizarre. Like I've always said —

WOODS: I guess it's the precedent that's bizarre.

MALICE: Progressivism is just Christianity without the mythology. So of course they're going to use the historical methods that have worked, because they have worked. So they're conservatives in that sense, so why would they try to reinvent the wheel? And there was an episode of your show with Vox Day, and he has that book where he just goes through the steps — a fellow Bucknell alum — where he just goes through the steps of how this works.

WOODS: What did you think about the statement that appeared in the acceptance letter for the class of 2020 from the University of Chicago? I assume you saw that?

MALICE: Yeah, they were talking about no safe spaces and no trigger warnings, correct?

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, what did you think about that?

MALICE: Um, the wonderful thing about the fringe rights, for lack of a better term, on social media is that they are forcing people who don't want to talk about these things to talk about them and acknowledge them, because if you are in a position of dominance you don't have to explain yourself to anybody. The Fed doesn't have to explain itself to anybody; they're just going to do what they want with their money and keep it secret. Same thing with the CIA, FBI, or these other government – Homeland Security especially. They're not accountable. So when you have complete progressive domination of the universities, from their preferred method they're going to do as they please, and you're not in a position to question.

And it's funny when a lot of libertarians are like, oh, these are private institutions, so they don't have to answer to anybody. Well, that's not – they don't literally have to answer to anybody, but in a free market you're perfectly allowed to critique any business' options, and they can choose to answer or not as they want.

So the fact what Thatcher back in the day called the loony left, the fact that they have to account themselves and be like, why are you overturning things, like, innocent until proven guilty, and why are you claiming to be for an honest exchange of ideas but have those ideas delineated so narrowly that there's no point in exchanging – you know what I mean? It's like, let's have free money but the only one you can use are pennies. It's like, this is not actual free exchange.

So we all knew that there was going to be pushback and that it's starting, and frankly I think – here's my prediction. I think before you get a pushback in terms of free speech being to some extent reintroduced in campuses it's going to be much more likely that having a university diploma is increasingly looked at as pointless and a waste of money.

WOODS: I'm not as optimistic on that last point. I think it's so entrenched in the mentality of middle class parents that their ticket to upper middle class respectability is to have a college graduate child that I think they are willing to sit through abuse and insanity and absurdity of all sorts in order to get that ticket. I believe that the social pressure is just too great not to put their kids in that environment, so it's going to be like pulling teeth I think to get them to change their practices.

I do want to comment on this idea – I am so sick of having to clarify this. Every time I critique a private institution I actually get some libertarian who says, but it's a private institution; they're allowed to do X, Y, or Z. So it means I have to insert a caveat in every single thing I say that, yes, I know they have the right to do it, but just because

they have the right to do it doesn't mean I can't criticize them for doing it. So these libertarians have bought into the leftist idea that libertarians are not allowed to critique corporations. They're not allowed to critique private property owners. Yes, of course we — what? That's a crazy idea.

MALICE: My favorite example of this is it's like, well, if Ayn Rand didn't believe in social security, why was she taking their checks? Checkmate, libertarians. And it's like, yeah, if Ayn Rand thought money was being stolen from her and there's some that's being returned to her, why wouldn't she keep it?

WOODS: Yeah, I mean, why wouldn't she say it would be better in my hands than in the hands of the moochers and the looters?

MALICE: Of course. So this idea that we can never criticize anyone else's actions is just — if you're a libertarian and you have a roommate, and the roommate has an equal voice in your house, you can't tell him to turn the music down? What?

WOODS: Yeah, it's nuts. So look, yes, I am allowed to critique places and to celebrate when people do the right thing. So yeah, I sent out an email to my list about that University of Chicago thing, because when I was on Milo's show recently, he said that what he expected to happen was that it's getting so bad that there will be universities that will look to differentiate themselves on precisely this basis. And the reward for that is that they will attract students who just have no time for crap like this and who probably do take their studies seriously, and this has to benefit them. And I think it was a really smart PR move. And they didn't do it in the form of a press release. They sent it out as the admissions acceptance letter to all these students, knowing full well it would be on the Internet within 10 seconds of the first kid opening it.

MALICE: Yeah, but the problem is where these ideas are most entrenched are usually the most prestigious universities. So I'm surprised and delighted that it's a university of the caliber of the University of Chicago that was the first one to break free, because you would expect it would be some kind of second or third tier school or even a fourth tier school like Bucknell. They would be the ones who are going to try to compete on this level. Because this is a very big deal to stick your neck out against this kind of egalitarian, progressive monopoly in academia.

What I want to know is, you went to Columbia, just like Alexander — you and Mattress Girl and Alexander Hamilton. You speak to a lot of young college kids. From your perspective and the feedback you've gotten, has it gotten worse or better since you were at Columbia and places like that?

WOODS: Oh, I think it's much worse now, actually, and I remember at the time thinking it couldn't get any worse (laughing). But it's much worse now. Now, as a grad student I didn't really have time to worry about any of that. I really, really was seriously busy, so I didn't join any student groups or anything. But when I did look around I noticed there really weren't any student groups worth joining. There was the

College Republicans, who were absolutely hopeless. I mean, in a way it's almost understandable. They were so outnumbered.

But as an undergrad at Harvard, there were vastly more — partly it's because the freshman class is four times larger. But there were vastly more student groups and there were ones that were actually congenial. And we had fun, because we would shock the campus by doing things that we weren't supposed to do, you know, that were off the 3x5 card, and that would get the narrative going in our direction. People would have to engage with us. So we had some fun doing stuff like that. But yeah, I mean, now it's partly that the resistance to all this has moved so far leftward that now you're just reduced to resisting only the most ridiculous, absurd, preposterous aspects of all of it.

So yeah, it is pretty bad, and I think it makes people inclined to just — you know, most people don't want to be called haters, and they don't want to deal with everybody boycotting them and ostracizing them, so I think most people outwardly will just go along, but inwardly they'll feel like there's something wrong with this, but I just can't — there's nothing I can do about it. I just have to go on.

MALICE: Can I tell you a funny story of when I went to Bucknell about this issue? It's really, really hilarious.

WOODS: I know that your Bucknell experience was not very good, because I read *Ego and Hubris*, but I'm sure I don't know this particular story.

MALICE: I allude to it. So *Ego and Hubris*, for those of you who don't know, Harvey Pekar, the late Harvey Pekar of *American Splendor* fame, wrote a book about me called *Ego and Hubris: The Michael Malice Story*. I wanted to call it *The Little Engine That Could but Shouldn't*, but Ballantine said that was no dice, so we called it *Ego and Hubris*.

WOODS: (laughing) Okay.

MALICE: So I was in College Republicans, okay, and if you wanted to get a notice about your club meeting, you had to email students@bucknell.edu, and whoever was monitoring that inbox would approve your message, and once approved it would go to every student's inbox. So there was a gatekeeper. And it was frustrating, because there was a couple of times when I would send out a notice, and the email only went out, like, two days later. So I think at one time it was even after the meeting had happened. I don't remember, but it was a source of frustration.

Now, there was a group in school who decided to have something called Jeans Day to show your support for gay rights. Now, if there's one thing I hate more than anything, it's hypocrisy, and the Bucknell student body back then, and I'm sure now — well, now it's very different — it was very socially conservative, and coming from New York, this was something I didn't jive with very well at all. So they had Jeans Day to support gay

rights, but they barely advertised it, so then they could say, look, everyone's in jeans; this is a campus that supports gay rights. So that drove me crazy.

So some girl emailed students@bucknell.edu about some minor issue — I don't remember what it is — and she wrote, P.S. I'm not wearing jeans today, but I still support gay rights. And this went out to everybody, and this drove me crazy, because I'm like, why are they forwarding this girl's stupid note to everyone at Bucknell. So I emailed them, coincidentally, Friday at, like, 4:45, something else, and I'm like, hey, can you guys do a better job of moderating these messages. And I wrote, P.S. I'm not in jeans; I support family values, just to give her the finger, thinking it's going to go to the person moderating this account. It didn't. What had happened in the interim between my last message and her message is apparently they just let that email account be unmonitored, so my email immediately went to every student in school.

WOODS: Oh no.

MALICE: Right? And one student says, Michael, you just found out that this email account is unmoderated, but since it was Friday at 4:45, all weekend people were emailing this account, and every email was hitting every student, and we brought down the Bucknell email server.

WOODS: (laughing)

MALICE: And it was hilarious. And then I had to kind of like eat crow a little bit, because I was being facetious, but then it's like, what did you mean by this, blah, blah, blah. I didn't have any negative consequences; I'm sure now I would probably be literally murdered. But it was a very funny moment.

WOODS: It goes to show, by the way, though, that — I think one of the things that people are learning on the college campuses is exactly what the limits on what they're allowed to think are. Like, that is absolutely conveyed to them. It is made absolutely clear. Now, there are some —

MALICE: No, it's not. No, no, no, you're wrong.

WOODS: All right, correct me.

MALICE: This is the whole point of my article. The limits are not clear. The limits are constantly changing, and that's —

WOODS: Okay, all right.

MALICE: — how they determine who to punish: who hasn't caught up with the latest limits.

WOODS: Okay. I guess — but the thing is, if you avoid entire areas of life altogether, if you have no comment whatsoever, nothing's going to happen.

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: Don't try, is basically what you're encouraged to do. Don't try —

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: — because even when you try to be friendly, there's a possibility that maybe you were condescending, so they'll get you for that. You understand that there are certain areas of life that can't be talked about, debated, whatever. That is enforced — or what you learn is the people who do speak up against that are viewed as obnoxious, terrible, outcasts from society. They're made examples of. And I think people learn that more than they learn other stuff these days.

MALICE: Yes, obedience. And coming from the Soviet Union, this kind of mindset was very, very familiar to me. And in fact, when I went to North Korea — and again, I really do want to make clear I'm using this as a very broad metaphor. I had it when people compare America to North Korea. It drives me crazy. But there's things in North Korea that are universal to human experience. So when I was there I thought, they are going to have rules about free speech, because you can't literally control everything that everyone says. People have to be able to talk about the weather or so on and so forth. There have to be rules that are unspoken but understood by the populous, and I wanted to figure out how that works in North Korea.

And the rules in North Korea are, number one, you don't criticize the government, especially the leaders, and number two, you have to pretend like everything's fine all the time. And in a way, number two is a corollary of number one, because if you're saying something's wrong and since the government's providing everything, by saying something's wrong you're saying the government's providing something incorrectly.

And there's this video on Vice — the Vice got to North Korea, and Shane Smith goes there, and he goes to this huge ballroom, and it's empty, at the hotel. And the waitress is giving him food, and he goes, there's a huge ballroom; where is everybody? And she goes, they just left. And he laughs at, like, look how crazy these people are. And it's not that she's crazy; it's that she's a great improv artist, because if you have a huge ballroom, you can't say this ballroom here is a waste and the government's making a mistake; you have to very quickly have some reason why you'd have a ballroom without people in it. So that's their rule.

And again, this is universal. Whenever someone has control, they're going to have certain rules about what you can and can't say that are usually actually fairly understandable. And like you identified with progressives, there's certain areas of speech where don't talk about it, because we're in a position to arbitrarily to things to you, whether you like it or not, whatever your intentions are. Because for that to work, if you're speaking a taboo, all that matter is did you hurt somebody else's feelings — or not even. Am I going to say you could have hurt someone else's feelings if they were here, because usually the offense is on behalf of somebody else, as opposed to the person actually being offended. It is much easier — I've worked with many

people of color on books. It's much easier to offend a white person about these issues than someone who's actually a minority.

WOODS: All right, so now I want you to leave us with some advice. Vox Day has a way of handling this, but it's pretty "throw hand grenades everywhere" — not that I'm opposed to that, metaphorically. But let's suppose you're just a regular person of good will, and you've got to navigate a society where, as you say, the rules are changing and the lines are changing, and what you're supposed to do and not supposed to do is changing. What should you do? How do you cope?

MALICE: That's a great — well, I'll tell you this. If you're an average person of good will, in a sense you're screwed, because if you are in a position without power, you're going to be at the mercy of somebody else regardless. I mean, this is again one of the big messages from growing up in a Russian household, that there are going to be people who are stronger than you, and they might do things to you, and there's nothing you can do about them. So I think most people intuitively have figured it out. Certainly by the time they graduated college, because they've seen other people be made examples of, and that's the lesson they're taught. So I don't think I have any advice that's going to be particularly useful that they haven't deduced on their own and that you haven't talked about in this episode.

WOODS: See, this is why — people sometimes get on my case — why do you favor people who are — they think somebody like Milo is obnoxious, and why are you giving support to him? Well, because we're living in this crazy, bizarro system where, as you say, the rules of what's allowed to think and say and do and whatever changes all the time, and if you get it wrong you could be completely ostracized, or you have one tweet, and you get on the plane, and by the time you land your life is over. Your life is over. That's not normal. That is insane. And so if somebody's a little bit over the top in fighting against that, that is down at number 100 on my list of 100 concerns.

MALICE: Well, you also touched on something I think a little unintentionally. When people say, oh, why do you support Milo, there's also this idea, this technique that they use where having a guest on your show is endorsement. And I've told you when I do my next book, I will talk to any group at any time, and frankly, the more they disagree with me the more I'm in a position to change their mind. I don't want to be preaching to the choir all the time. I think a lot of times we all get into echo chambers where we only talk to people we agree with. But that's another technique that progressives use, that if you only talk to other progressives that creates the appearance that progressivism is the only valid thing to talk about, and your truth has to be somewhere within this Overton window.

WOODS: All right, people should check out your column for sure, so TomWoods.com/726 is where they can find that link, plus all the episodes, all those Michael Malice episodes in one convenient place, they can be found right there on that page. Michael, thanks for being here —

MALICE: He —

WOODS: Oh yeah, go ahead.

MALICE: He's the boy you hate to love.

WOODS: (laughing) That's an interesting way of putting it. You should check out *Ego and Hubris*. If I haven't got that up on that page, I'm going to make sure we do that, *Ego and Hubris*, because I'm telling you, you think to yourself, I'm not sure I want to read a book about Michael Malice. Oh yes, you do.

MALICE: Who would say that. Who would ever say that? What kind of dope? What kind of racist dope?

WOODS: I'm talking about somebody who's just a drive-by, who just accidentally listened to this episode. My regular listeners are dying to read a book about Michael Malice.

MALICE: Only a racist dope would not want to read that book.

WOODS: I'll tell you, when I get to the part of that book where you wrote that letter about the type of person you would want as your advisor at Bucknell —

MALICE: Oh yes.

WOODS: — and if you didn't get it what you were going to do, I just burst out laughing. Just laughing out loud. I was in a hotel room with Heather, and I just — you know, she's doing some school work, and I just laughed out loud all of a sudden. What is this all about? I couldn't read the letter with a straight face, which ruined it. I mean, you've got to read that deadpan, because that's what makes it so funny. And I couldn't.

MALICE: (laughing)

WOODS: Couldn't do it. All right, thanks again, Michael.

MALICE: Thanks, Tom.