



Episode 785: Trump: His Election and His Direction, with Lew Rockwell

Guest: Lew Rockwell

WOODS: What's interesting is that just through a fluke or whatever, you and I have not actually spoken since the election.

ROCKWELL: Terrible.

WOODS: Until this conversation right here. This is the first opportunity we've had to catch up.

ROCKWELL: Yeah, it's true.

WOODS: So what I thought we'd do is talk a little bit about the reaction and what's happened since the election, but we might as well start off with this question, even if it is a little bit dated at this point. What's your reaction to the fact that Trump won?

ROCKWELL: Well, I was glad that he won.

WOODS: And by the way, you called it on this show. You called it. You said he was going to win months and months and months ago. You said it. So we're just reminding people: listen to Lew.

ROCKWELL: I think it's good news. I think, as I said originally on the show, I believe that Hillary was guaranteed to be 100% bad and Trump might not be. And I think Trump clearly will not be 100% bad. Where the percentage ends up we just have to see, but I must say, just as it was so much fun to see all the media enemies of Trump have to eat crow, although I noticed they immediately bounced back and started lying again, but it's fun to see, not the violent part, but it's fun to see the reaction of the anti-Trumpers, the sobbing, the safe rooms, the fact that college kids have to have their coloring books and teddy bears because they're so shocked that Trump is the president.

And I noticed one of the sort of delegitimization things that's going on is to say, well, Hillary did win the popular vote by about a million votes at the latest count. But there are two things to remember about that. First of all, up to 3 million illegals voted in this election, and my guess is they weren't voting for Trump. And then you also have the fact that most states do not count absentee ballots unless there's a close election, and they all differ as to what they might describe that as. So there are a lot of states

where either Hillary won massively or Trump won. They didn't count these votes. And absentee ballots tend to run about two to one Republican, so I don't think, in fact, that Trump lost the actual American citizen vote, so that's just –

They're continuing everything, I noticed, that the crazed Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts was denouncing Steve Bannon, who, I think he's got problems, Steve Bannon. She said, Imagine a white nationalist in the White House. And I thought, you know, Steve Bannon is only a white nationalist in the Ann Coulter definition, which is somebody who doesn't want to kill white people.

WOODS: You know, it's funny about this whole Bannon thing. I agree; it looks to me like he's got some problems, but he also seems to be in some ways an okay guy, and is basically just saying – I don't see any real problem with the guy, other than he's got some right-wingy things that are not so good. But the interesting thing is somebody posted in my private group a link to a Facebook post by a well known leftist, who said, Can you believe this guy, Bannon, literally said he's a white supremacist and he hates Jews? And I wrote back and I said, You know, without knowing any of the facts, I will guarantee you right now he never literally said either one of those things. And of course I was right, but I didn't put any money on it, which I should do.

ROCKWELL: (laughing)

WOODS: By the way, here is my new moneymaking thing. I've been telling people for a long time about different ways you can monetize your website and your online presence, but the best monetization scheme I have come up with is when you hear bizarre, demonstrably false claims by the left about Trump, whether – I've heard that LGBT people are going to be rounded into detention camps –

ROCKWELL: (laughing) Yeah.

WOODS: I've heard that blacks are going to be gassed. And I've heard somebody saying to me the other day that – A second-generation Mexican citizen was saying, Yeah, I'll probably be deported next year. Okay. I say you put monetary wagers with your friends – if these are friends of yours, for some reason, who are saying crazy thing like this – put bets on them and get rich next year. Get rich. Get rich off stupidity. If they really are convinced that's going to happen, give them 10 to 1 odds. I'd give them 100 to 1 odds that there won't be detention camps for LGBT people. 100 to 1 odds. I would clean up. Absolutely clean up. So profit from stupidity, is my new business motto.

ROCKWELL: Well, one thing we know for sure, George Soros is paying trolls to go online and make these kinds of claims, just like he's paying the violent rioters and other protesters, transporting them, paying them up to \$35 an hour. Pretty good for causing trouble. So this is – So they've got some money to bet you, Tom, so that's wonderful.

WOODS: Yeah, that's right. Might as well – Since he's giving it away, might as well take it. Well, before we go on, I want to point out about the electoral college, another point to bear in mind is that if the rule had been the winner of the nationwide popular vote – which, by the way, runs completely counter to American federalism,

constitutionalism, the whole American tradition, so anybody calling for a national popular vote just doesn't get what America's all about, basically. But big surprise there.

But if the rule had been that the winner of the national popular vote becomes the president, Trump would have run his campaign differently. So you can't say that he would necessarily have been the loser in the popular vote. He would have strategized differently. He wouldn't have said, I have to win this particular state, so therefore I've got to put a lot of resources over here. He would have said, I have to win X number of people. And so he probably would have campaigned harder, for example, in a place like California, whereas he probably wrote off California. There was no chance he was going to win. But he could have gotten some votes in California if he'd tried, but he didn't, because he was doing an electoral college strategy. So that whole — That is totally sour grapes, that whole line of argument about the popular vote. And to heck with the popular vote. It has nothing to do with America.

All right, what about this? When I look at the response to Trump's election, where you've got just seething hatred in the street — and don't tell me these people are full of love, and they're just protesting hatred.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) I thought love trumps hate.

WOODS: Exactly. These are people who, not for three seconds, have they sat down to try to get to know anybody who voted the other way and try and see if they can have a meeting of minds and hearts to understand each other. They've already made up their minds. These are terrible, awful people who are racists — It's all that. Everything is racism. Breathing is racism.

So it makes me think that there's a real turning point going on here in American history, that it's now become blatantly clear how much one half of the country hates the other. And it seems like every single election now, there's going to be unrest and unhappiness. First of all, do you agree with me, that there's a watershed here? And secondly, that maybe this could open up possibilities that you and I can't imagine now, in terms of some kind of decentralization?

ROCKWELL: Oh sure, I think it's absolutely true, and I do think that this is a watershed moment. I've never seen anything like this in my lifetime. And as you know, we have a campaign to have California leave the Union and join Canada, if the Canadians want it; Washington and Oregon, too. But of course this would be the solution to these kinds of things: secession, and maybe doesn't need to go by state. It could go by region; it could go by city or town. As Mises said, if it were technologically possible, it certainly is technologically possible, to have individual secession, that should be allowed too. If somebody in California wants to become a citizen of Canada and cut himself off, but still live in America, of course, on his property, but become a Canadian citizen, that should be allowable too.

So massive decentralization and secession is the only way to avoid much more serious trouble, because I think, probably like you, I see much more serious trouble coming, much more violence. Probably it's overstating it to say a civil war, although we hear people talking about that. But it's going to be like Belgium, the fight between the

French and the Walloons or whatever. And there, secession of course is the answer too. So I think secession is the wonderful method that Americans have always believed in to bring about an answer to disagreements and hatreds. So let the Millennials establish their country of Sorosland, and let them abolish Christianity and heterosexuality and whatever else they want to do. Let us live our lives; let us be the way we would like to be. But that's just terrific. We don't wish them ill. Go in peace, brother, but just leave us alone.

WOODS: Well, I wrote a little quick essay just off the top of my head for my email newsletter. You ended up reprinting it over at your *Political Theatre* blog, which I appreciate —

ROCKWELL: By the way, your essays for your — I don't know how you do it, Tom. Your daily essays are just tremendous. They're just so well written and interesting, and of course one learns a lot from them. It's like a pocket-sized version of libertarianism every morning. It's a great thing.

WOODS: Oh, that's funny. I love writing them. And the nice thing about it is since it is free and since it's just something I do just kind of as a hobby on the side, I have five kids, and sometimes something comes up in my life, and I can't do it, and nobody kills me if I don't. They're saying, I'm amazed you do it when you do do it. Sometimes I do it twice a day. And I have friends like Bob Murphy who say, Yours is the only mass email I actually look forward to reading, so I really like getting feedback like that. Thanks.

In that essay I was saying that, although I like what you're saying and I agree with it, that of course this should be the outcome we should want and it should be the outcome they should want, what I fear, and as I'm sure you agree, is that on the left they are maximalists. They're not the type to say, Well, maybe we can at least get half a loaf. We'll be able to create a life for ourselves that we want. They can't — It's not in their DNA to leave other people alone. They can't do it. They have to spread the French revolutionary mission all over the world. They can't keep it in France. It's that sort of mentality.

ROCKWELL: Sure, and it's the New England mentality; it's the Yankee mentality, that you have to be —

WOODS: Yeah, yeah, we're superior to you.

ROCKWELL: People who are decent don't care what they're doing in Massachusetts, but the people in Massachusetts care a heck of a lot about what other people are doing and want to run their lives.

WOODS: Exactly. So it's nice to see that there are some people on the left who are thinking about secession, because that does run counter to their normal inclination. But at the same time, why did it take them so long? We've had this division in the country for a long time, and people on the other side have been protesting it and talking about secession. But they've always been condemned because their motives must everywhere and always be bad, so therefore their desire for secession can't be credited.

ROCKWELL: Well, they're centralizers, and they are power mad, and they want to crush the opposition. They like to kill the opposition. I think if you were to put these present people in power, these rioters and their allies, would they put us in camps? I mean, as far as we don't want to put them in camps; you're exactly right: they probably would like to put us in camps.

WOODS: What do you think about what we're hearing so far about possible appointments by Trump?

ROCKWELL: Well, they're virtually all terrible, but we can't — Some of this is psyops; some of it is friends of a particular guy, like the evil John Bolton, who has a lot of friends with savvy in the media promoting him. I hear that there's no chance for Bolton to be appointed, but somebody's promoting him. So I think we just have to wait and see who's actually appointed. So what we know about the actual appointment so far, I think Reince Priebus was bad, although I always have to be humble enough to realize maybe Trump knows something I don't know, but I don't like the idea of Reince Priebus, Paul Ryan's ally in that job. On the other hand, Steve Bannon, like Trump himself, has all the right enemies. All the right people hate his guts. That goes a long way to gaining my approval.

WOODS: Yeah, well, that's for sure. In terms of foreign policy, look, I've been glad about what Rand Paul has been saying, because no one else would have said it. I mean, honestly, no one else in public life would have come out and said what we're all thinking, which is that, how could you possibly run the campaign you just ran and have it even be plausible that you could consider John Bolton, that you would have praised John Bolton or Rudy Giuliani or these other names that are coming up? And I'm glad that Rand has said, I would never support either one of these. Both of them would be an obvious betrayal of Trump's on views — supposed views.

Again, it's like, as I've said all along, there's this thing going on all over the world, anti-globalist in its implications. And Trump has been viewed as being a part of that. I don't think he fully gets his own significance. I think he thinks he's a guy who wants to cut down on immigration. I don't think he sees the full world historic implications of any of it, which is how you get a confused result like, I win; now, Rudy, come head the State Department.

ROCKWELL: Well, I think that's correct. Of course he's not an intellectual, although he's very smart. These have not been areas that he's been interested in. And I think it's a great way to put it, that he doesn't fully recognize his significance, which is huge. I don't know if you read Obama's terrible speech in Greece about how we, people like Obama, need to guard against these sorts of ideas spreading, how they're very dangerous and so forth. And of course they are dangerous, they are spreading, but they're dangerous to the power. They're dangerous to the people who would like to rule the globe.

So we just have to see. I've always thought that Trump was not anywhere near as good as the Trump movement, just like Bob Taft, for example, was nowhere good as the Taft movement. So everything is not going to be solved by Donald Trump, but I think what's happened is a tremendous step forward. He is, after all, a politician, and as libertarians we have to remember always we can't fully trust somebody who wants

power over the rest of us. I don't care what his alleged intentions are. Maybe his intentions are good, but once you put on the ring, everything gets very different.

So we just have to praise him when he's right, condemn him when he's wrong, and continue to uphold the banner of freedom, decentralization, secession, non-globalism, America first. It was great of course that he used that phrase in the campaign. As Pat Buchanan said, that should be the Trump Doctrine. People in NATO of course are pushing him towards being more belligerent to Russia. I noticed John McCain sort of wagging his finger at him and saying, Don't you dare make peace with Russia. So it's always good to have the war criminals giving you moral advice. But we just have to see.

I think this whole worldwide movement is only beginning. Will Marine Le Pen win in France? Possibly. Will the Italian establishment referendum be defeated? Probably. Will Britain actually get out of the EU? I certainly hope to goodness, but I don't trust Theresa May and the rest of those people. But nevertheless, no matter what bumps are ahead in the road, no matter what troubles are ahead, I think this revolution, the worldwide revolution, is only beginning, and Trump is just a guy. He can be a leader. He can be a very historically significant figure in himself, as well as what he called forth. He may just end up being the catalyst, but it's good to have a catalyst in these kinds of situations. I hope he'll be more than that; we'll just have to see.

But again, we don't have any people being named yet, and just historically with transition teams, one of the ways that you reward your supporters whom you do not intend to appoint to some big position is to have them mentioned as possible Secretaries of State, Secretaries of the Treasury, etc., because of course that's a big plus in Washington if you were considered for such a position, even if you didn't end up getting it. So again, we have to wait and see who is actually appointed. We'll have to see who the Democrats want to filibuster. Republicans can't, at least according to the current Senate rules, overrule their filibusters. Will they filibuster Steve Bannon, for example? Is the chief of staff – I'm sorry not to know – does it require Senate confirmation? If he does he may not get it.

WOODS: I thought Reince was the chief of staff and Bannon's just an advisor.

ROCKWELL: Sorry, [inaudible], yes.

WOODS: Yeah, so I don't think he has to get – He can just do what he wants. I think he's like Colonel House in the Wilson White House.

ROCKWELL: He doesn't actually need an official position. If Bannon is chief strategist and senior counselor, which was the position I think Ed Meese had, the unfortunate Ed Meese, in the Reagan administration. It's a very powerful position. But he doesn't need to get a government salary. He's a wealthy guy. He could simply be an unpaid advisor without holding any position, except the president's trust in him.

So there are all kinds of things ahead. This revolution is not going to be stopped. I think the people who've been stirred into action, into mental action most importantly, among Americans and all over the world, have only begun this. And I think this is what

the opposition knows. They're not under the impression that, well, they'll get Elizabeth Warren in in four years and everything will be okay. They don't believe that. They know. They know what's going on. This is why they're hysterical, why they adopt violence, smearing, lies. I mean, there was somebody holding a big sign in front of Trump Tower saying "Rape Melania," and I noticed Twitter didn't censor that, although they're very quick to censor allegedly everything calling for violence.

So these people are really despicable, and we have to remember that. We have to remember that they're the enemy. Of course the state is always the enemy. So this is – We weren't promised a rose garden. This is a fight. It's always been a fight. It will continue to be a fight. But we should be of good cheer. I think many wonderful things have happened. My guess is some more wonderful things will happen all over the world. And if Donald Trump is not part of that, or if he's not a significant leader in it, that's certainly too bad, but he's not necessary.

WOODS: I want to bring up something David Stockman said. For a little over a year I've been doing a second podcast just once a week with Bob Murphy called *Contra Krugman*, ContraKrugman.com.

ROCKWELL: Yeah, great one.

WOODS: Thanks. So we had David Stockman on, and that was our first episode after the election, and we wanted to get his thoughts. And one of the things he said, especially in light of the intensity of the opposition to Trump – Now, he's got intense support too, but he's got more intense opposition than any victor I've ever seen. It seems like that gives the Democrats, even if they're not in a majority, it gives them a lot of power to stand up to him, when, for example, the next debt ceiling increase debate comes up. And Trump's going to need that increase, and the Democrats will say, Fine, we'll give you the increase, but don't take away Obama's global warming initiatives or don't dismantle Obamacare. Like, they could really have him over a barrel.

ROCKWELL: Well, David Stockman is very smart, very knowledgeable guy. He ought to be the Treasury Secretary or some similar position in the Trump administration, not his personal finance chairman who used to be at Goldman Sachs. But you know, I trust David's – David is very politically knowledgeable. Of course he was Reagan's head of the Office of Management and Budget. He was a congressman for a long time. And you know, he's right.

On the other hand, Trump has got vast support, and it would actually be fun to have him say, Okay, we'll work with no debt increase. That means we're going to cut X, Y, and Z. That's what I'd like to see, because I don't believe that debt increase is actually necessary. Unfortunately, Trump wants to spend a lot more money on so-called infrastructure, pork barrel spending, as it used to be called. So I guess maybe it will be necessary for him, but it's not actually necessary for the country or the world to increase the amount of Treasury debt. So I'd love to see him say, Okay we're going to work with that, and here's what we're going to have to do. And here's what by executive order I can do. Let's bring a lot of the troops home. That would cut the cost.

WOODS: Yeah, sure. I mean, if he's getting decent advice, he would do stuff like that. I asked David if he would consider being appointed Secretary of the Treasury, would he consider that office. He's certainly got the qualifications and the experience, so they can't say it's just some nobody. And he didn't expressly say, "No, I would not." He said it's not going to happen, but he didn't say — But what he did say is, You know, I think given what we're facing, the Department of the Treasury, it's not that it doesn't matter, but it's not nearly as important as the Fed. The Fed is where the action is.

ROCKWELL: Of course that's right.

WOODS: He said, I would be very happy to be a staff researcher at the Fed if I thought I had some chance at affecting policy. That's where the action is. Interesting point.

ROCKWELL: Well, also, Trump may be able to make three appointments in his four years to the Fed board. I think there are two vacancies right now. How about David Stockman as Chairman of the Fed if it can't be Ron Paul or Jim Grant? The slight problem I have with David is he actually believes in the central bank, although a much different one from the current one. So that would actually make confirmation easier for him. I don't know, but will the Democrats block all kinds of confirmations like that? Even though in the past they've always said the president should get his choices, unless there's some radical thing wrong with the person, in terms of corruption.

WOODS: Right. Yeah, we're going to have to see how they stick to that.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) I think we know.

WOODS: Yeah, yeah. Well, interestingly, though, although David isn't a completely "end the Fed" guy, he's pretty darn close, because he wants to abolish the Federal Open Market Committee, which is how the Fed carries out monetary policy. So that would still be a challenge. But I'd love to see Jim Grant get into something, simply because even if there were a hundred hostile reporters, he'd still come out on top. It would be fantastic.

ROCKWELL: (laughing) Yeah.

WOODS: All right, so what am I missing here? What else should we talk about regarding the days since the election?

ROCKWELL: Well, I think just the organized hate, all these people who were telling us that they're in favor of love and Trump is in favor of hate, I think we can't concentrate on that too much. We have to worry about the neocons trying to worm their way into the Trump administration. I was disturbed to see that Mike Pence brought in Frank Gaffney after getting rid of all the lobbyists from I guess the Christie era in the transition team, and I certainly don't oppose that; these were business lobbies and maybe not the most ignorant people around. But Gaffney is a lobbyist for war. I mean, he's just a total neocon monster, so we have to watch something like that.

On the other hand, there's always in this atmosphere, it's six of one, we had Eliot Cohen, who had said, well, we people really concerned about national security should

agree to serve in the Trump administration. We would sacrifice to do that. And so he then applied to the transition team, and they tossed him out. Of course, he was one of the real Trump haters, a terrible neocon creep of the first water. So then he sent out a tweet: eh, stay away from the Trump administration. They're horrible; they tell you, We won and you lost. They're arrogant; they're terrible.

So I mean, there are good things happening, bad things. I must say I don't trust Mike Pence. On the other hand, Trump will make the final decisions. How much will he be influenced in these areas that he does not have deep knowledge of? I don't know. He needs the right advisors around him. He needs a populist movement, as Murray Rothbard always said, needs intellectuals to help guide it – populist intellectuals, needless to say. So that's missing, and a guy like Eliot Cohen certainly doesn't fill the bill, or Frank Gaffney. So we just have to keep our fingers crossed. But I think we should watch everything.

I think it was great that Rand Paul denounced Bolton. I'm glad to see him apparently pulling back from his all too balanced foreign policy when he was running for president and becoming a little bit more like his dad. That's a wonderful development. So I think it's good to speak out. I don't think people should feel they have to stay silent for reasons of – unless they're staying silent for reasons of preferment, they should speak out; they should criticize in a respectful way, obviously, if you're a Republican congressman or senator or a Republican party official, a state chairman or whatever. If you don't like what's going on, you should say so. Most of course of the people in the Republican establishment are evil, but there are a number of them who have turned out to be not so bad, so people should speak out; good people in the media should speak out. Certainly the bad guys hesitation.

It's wonderful that Ron Paul is speaking out and giving great advice on foreign policy and the Fed and other areas. We should emulate, as usual, Ron Paul, and I talked earlier about the fear, that you have to distrust anybody who wants power over us. Ron Paul's the only guy I've ever heard of who's an actual candidate for president who actually did not want power, who wanted to free us and let us live our own lives, make our own decisions, free us from constant war and constant taxation and all the other evils that government brings us. So there's only one Ron Paul, but to the extent that Trump can be nudged by the right people in the proper direction, that's a victory. He's not our guy, but on the other hand, Hillary was our bitter, bitter enemy, and certainly a bitter enemy of Christians.

Obama's a bitter enemy of Christians. You remember he has specifically condemned them for clinging to their Bibles and their guns, bitterly clinging to their Bibles and their guns, rather than going along with his program. And of course, through executive order and through other means, he's brought about some terrible – I mean, just all this bathroom stuff and everything, this is all part of an anti-Christian agenda on the part of these people, whether it's all the rioters. So there was a good article that I saw recently pointing out, look, it's really not a surprise that Christians, Protestant and Catholic, voted heavily for Trump. It's not because they approved of what he's done or the way he talks when he brags; it's because they didn't want to go into the catacombs again, and that really their ability to raise their children in their faith was under attack in a very, very fundamental way by Obama, Hillary, Soros, all these people.

So I think we have a little breathing room there. That's good. Nobody can relax, because these people are bitter, bitter enemies of Christianity. This is why of course Soros is introducing and subsidizing the entry of so many anti-Christians into Europe. So he has an agenda, and it's not just Soros. There are plenty of these people, his apparatchiks, as well as his fellow oligarchs. I'm not going to mention the name, but the only oligarch I know a little bit and have actually met has a bitter hatred of Catholicism especially, but Christianity in general. This is not untypical; it's true of many of them.

So we can be glad, again, we have a little breathing space, but we can't relax obviously ever on those grounds. And maybe Trump won't seek to destroy a little baker, because he doesn't give into some activist setting him up for a crime scene to destroy him. So we have to talk about those kinds of things; we have to criticize the administration where they're wrong, praise them where they're right. My guess is we're not going to have too many opportunities for that, but there's hope. We just have to see. Trump has been willing to be politically incorrect. Let's hope that was not just a trick and that he continues to use it.

So I think we can be mildly optimistic. We certainly can be, in the Rothbardian sense, tremendously optimistic in the long term. This worldwide populist movement is just the first threat to the power elite in a very, very long time, and boy, do they take it seriously. So we have that going on. I think we can be very mildly optimistic about the near future; we just have to keep working and hoping.

WOODS: Well, with that, I'm going to urge people to check out of course LewRockwell.com if you're not doing that already. I have a lot of new listeners now, and some people may not know what the cool people do every day. Well, one thing they do when they wake up is they read LewRockwell.com. And in particular, Lew's got two blogs, and my favorite is the one Lew does all by himself, and it's Lew Rockwell's *Political Theatre*, so make sure you click on the *Political Theatre* blog while you're there; otherwise you're going to miss out half the fun of LewRockwell.com. Well, Lew, obviously you and I are going to have an awful lot to talk about in the coming year, so let's make this a regular thing.

ROCKWELL: That would be wonderful, Tom. Thank you.