



Episode 818: Rothbard v. Rand? Michael Malice and Tom Discuss

Guest: Michael Malice

WOODS: So we're going to talk about this book, *The Betrayal of the American Right*. I'm linking to it on the show notes page, TomWoods.com/818. People can actually read it for free online, or if they prefer a hard copy they can grab it that way. This it turns out is the first Rothbard book you've read. Now, maybe you've read an article hear or there or you've done some other reading, but here's your first cover-to-cover Rothbard book.

And I have a unique perspective on this book, having been the editor of this thing. It was a manuscript that was in Rothbard's collection that a lot of people knew about, people had read over the years, and it had gone through various versions, and there had been various attempts to get it published. But for one reason or another it never did get published, but yet he still was working on it right to the end. You can see edits on the original manuscript pages from the early 1990s, so he did still have the intention of having it see the light of day.

And I'm sorry; I don't mean to just talk the whole time, but I just want to give a little bit of background. When it was up to me to write the introduction and do some editing on it, the main editing I did was really just to correct little typographical problems or whatever, but also to exercise some editorial judgment about what to do about a lot of the mark-outs that he had done. He had scribbled out a lot of text. And there was one person – I won't mention his name – who was urging me to revive that text and include it in the finished version. And my view is I think we have an obligation to be faithful to Rothbard's desires as the author, and if he crossed this section out then I think we have to honor that. So that was how I did it. I didn't put in stuff that he wouldn't have wanted published.

But anyway, it is as close to an autobiography of Rothbard as we're obviously ever going to get, but it's also a kind of an intellectual history of the American right during an important period. So having said that as background, give me your initial thoughts on that book.

MALICE: Well, let me give you a little bit of background. One of the things that – I know you are protective of Rothbard as I'm protective of Rand. And one of the things I resent that progressives do is they will critique a person with some one-sentence, but this implication is, Well, since this person did this one thing, therefore they should be thrown into the garbage can. They love to dismiss people and denigrate them.

So there's some things in here that I'm critical of. The book's great. I was resisting reading this for a long time, or reading Rothbard for a long time, because I come from the Ayn Rand school. And as you know, Rand and Rothbard had a very contentious relationship. At first when he was young he came into her orbit. Then he thought she was a crazy person. The feeling was certainly mutual. And Rothbard was pretty much the main reason she refused to call herself a libertarian. And later in his life, he wrote that satirical play about her called *Mozart Was a Red*, where he completely eviscerated her. So I didn't want to read him for a long time.

The one book I read about Rothbard was Justin Raimondo's biography called *An Enemy of the State*. And I got a very negative impression of him from that book as a person. But all my friends are anarchists. They're all anarchocapitalists. They're all Rothbardians. And I'm like, look, maybe I'm secretly a Rothbardian and I don't know it. Let me give this guy a fair shake, especially because so many people who I hate hate him, so he can't be all bad.

So the first thing about this book, it's really I think the best history of the libertarian movement I've ever read. The guy is such a good writer. He knows how to tell a story. It's absolutely superb. Was that kind of exciting for you to edit that and just read it as like a story?

WOODS: Oh sure, because it filled in details that I had always wondered about, because there weren't a whole lot of anarchocapitalists in the world at that time. So I always wanted to know how did he get from minarchism to there. What was it? Or just his background, a little bit of where he came from and his early years. There's a lot of that stuff in there. And then toward the end, as I'm sure we'll get to, he goes into great detail about his time interacting with people on the New Left, and that just – I mean, some of it made me want to pull my hair out, but some of his commentary about these people wanting to make "the meeting" – like all of life, we were going to make collective decisions on everything, and so we're going to have interminable meetings until we reach consensus. And he just thought, Okay, maybe I've made a mistake after all.

MALICE: Right. So one of the things that is kind of weird is he seems to have this idea throughout his life that, given the very poor choices in politics we are being faced with at any given time, it's important to make the right, I guess coalition or pick the right side, as opposed to I think, now that he's gone, most of us realize there is no right side, that both sides are going to be terrible in their own way, and this idea that – You know, he came out for Adlai Stevenson because Adlai Stevenson was less pro-war than Eisenhower. And then he's kind of surprised that Adlai Stevenson's not leading the way to anarchocapitalism.

And that's his theme. I want to pick your brain about this, because I don't know what you're going to say. He seems – Throughout his life his theme is he gets on board these alliances with these different groups, and he reads things into them that clearly aren't there, and is then kind of disappointed that they are in no sense anarchists or even libertarians.

WOODS: Well, I wouldn't say that he's surprised when it doesn't work out or when they do statist things. He knew all the flaws of Pat Buchanan, for example, but he thought,

All right, Pat is saying, look, let's stop waging all the wars; let's shut down NATO. No one else is talking like that, so I'll jump onto this particular wagon. I think that was his outlook. But we never got to see what Adlai Stevenson would have done. But —

MALICE: Can we guess? I mean, it's not going to be —

WOODS: Oh no, no, of course. No, no, no, that's true, but I think his view is: if I had to choose I think I would choose somebody who would be less likely to expand the warfare state. Now, I actually had this discussion with — I'd better not say who, but somebody who argued that it's more significant and important to deal with health care than it is with foreign policy.

MALICE: Okay...

WOODS: And his argument was — Oh now, doggone it, I can't remember how he made the case. And I kind of felt like, look, health care, the policy changes that can occur given the bureaucratic nightmare we live under and the competing fiefdoms at work, are going to probably be on the margin only, whereas with foreign policy it can be binary: yes or no, war or no war.

MALICE: Yes.

WOODS: Like, I can actually do that and stop that. And so I actually had somebody say, Yeah, I don't really care that much about where a candidate stands on foreign policy. I care more about domestic policy, because it's more lasting. Once we get a domestic policy in there — Yeah, maybe this was the argument. Once we get a domestic policy in place, it never ever gets repealed, whereas foreign policy, well, eventually they do wear out their welcome, they do wind down the wars, so I don't care so much about foreign policy. Eh. I kind of do, but yet not so much that I could say to myself, "Woo hoo, go Bernie," against Donald Trump or something. I would just have to abstain.

MALICE: Right, but he is saying, "Woo hoo, go Bernie," at different times, and it's very weird that someone who is probably the biggest anarchist innovator of — I mean, I don't even know who would be number two — of the 20th century is still looking to government for possible — that someone as cynical as him is still looking to government in some sense for possible solutions.

WOODS: Yeah, let's talk about that. The thing is that — I remember reading when Rothbard was arguing against the agorists, his argument in part was that there are some things that it's inconceivable they could be changed without government.

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: So he said, look, the Second Bank of the U.S. was not gotten rid of because the people rose up against it and refused to use the currency. It was gotten rid of because Andrew Jackson didn't renew the charter. Or the Corn Laws in England. We got rid of the Corn Laws because, well, Parliament reversed them. Or slavery was abolished by government fiat. I mean, these things did happen, and some things it's

not clear how you could do them simply through some kind of black market alternative or parallel institutions.

MALICE: Sure.

WOODS: You do need government for some things, was his attitude. You don't need them to provide services; you need them to un-provide services.

MALICE: Yes, and that's fair, but the people – To make actions like that – like, let's suppose to be an abolitionist – you have to have this kind of firm commitment to abolition. And I think it's – So throughout the book he's talking about, like, Oh, during this election libertarians had no choice but to join with Person A, and at another point he's saying, Well, at this point libertarianism is down to me and Leonard Liggio. So when he's speaking about "libertarians," I'm like, Does he just mean himself? Like, he talks about kind of being ahead of – It's implied that he's the head of this big group, but it also sounds like it really was just him and, like, three people.

WOODS: I think early on it kind of was him and three people, in the sense that – But obviously that's not to say that he wouldn't work with people. He had close friends on the right. Like for example, the godfather of two of my children is Roger McCaffrey, I've had him on the show a couple of times. His father, Neil, started the Conservative Book Club, traveled in Bill Buckley's circles, and was very close with Rothbard, even though they disagreed on foreign policy. They loved jazz, and they hated the left, and that was a pretty good foundation for a friendship. So he was willing to sit down and talk to and work with a variety of people, but when it comes to –

And his view also was you've got to be tougher on libertarians than you are on non-libertarians, because his view is I expect a libertarian to be a libertarian; I don't expect a non-libertarian to be a libertarian. So if he does a lot of things that annoy me, well, I knew he was going to do those things. So I think a lot of people got upset, for instance, when some of us were tough on Gary Johnson. "Well, he's so much better than A and B." But I don't expect A and B to be any good. I expect them to be bums. I'm going to hold Gary Johnson to a higher standard, because he represents this honorable tradition of thought, and I don't want him to screw it up.

MALICE: You know, that's the thing. People often attack Rand for weeding people out of her scene and going after them and kind of purging them, and he does the same exact thing as she did, but she gets that criticism and he doesn't, and I think he should get it just as much as her.

WOODS: Well, this basically is going to boil down to people who knew him personally, and I –

MALICE: No, throughout the book he's going after people and just kind of eviscerating them – I'm not saying unwarrantedly. But I'm just saying he does exactly what she does, and she is the one who is carrying the water for it often.

WOODS: Well, let's think about some specific examples. One of the major themes of the book is the rise of *National Review*, and basically it's Bill Buckley, Frank Meyer, James Burnham, who —

MALICE: I'm looking at the page literally right now. I have it screencapped, because I want to quote from it, but go ahead.

WOODS: Okay. These are all smart people, by the way.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: And he doesn't deny that. But his point is that he just does not see how the Cold War apparatus can be reconciled with libertarianism, particularly given the tendency of government policies to stay in effect long after they've served their alleged purpose, which is clearly the case. Obviously the U.S. military now doesn't even know what to do with itself, so it's searching around for things to do, because it never will end. What possible incentive would it have to end? So he's saying that this is not what we were about. And I think he can legitimately go back to the '30s and say the people who were anti-New Deal were also anti-Franklin Roosevelt on foreign policy, whereas these people are all cheerleaders for it.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: So I don't think he's looking for, Well, where do you stand on the privatization of lighthouses? I'm going to kick you out for that.

MALICE: Well, here's the question. Are you familiar with the term "red pill"?

WOODS: What, do you think I don't ever go to the movies?

MALICE: Well, no, in terms of politics.

WOODS: Well, okay, give me an example of what you mean by it.

MALICE: So "red pilling" is an Internet term that's kind of gained frequency in the last couple of years; that's why I asked. And it is a reference to *The Matrix*. And the point is, once someone is red pillled, they recognize that what they're taught through the media as the progressive narrative —

WOODS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, sure.

MALICE: — is a complete myth and an illusion.

WOODS: Right.

MALICE: Now, the line I always say — and if any of you listeners quote me you'd better damn give me credit, or I'll come to your house — "You're supposed to take one red pill and not the whole bottle." And I think at different times Rothbard did take the whole bottle, in the sense that once you think that a lot of what we're being taught is false

and propaganda and manipulation, you start throwing out the baby with the bathwater, and you get down some dark rabbit holes.

And let me just read a sentence from here that's exactly about *The National Review*, where he goes, "In the light of hindsight, we should now ask...whether or not the entire effort [of *The National Review*] was in essence a CIA operation." And he accuses Buckley and Burnham, who I love, as being CIA agents.

WOODS: But Buckley was in the CIA.

MALICE: But do you honestly think that *National Review* was some kind of CIA psyops movement?

WOODS: I personally don't, but I at the same time would not consider it crazy, given that — has the CIA not tried to influence thought in other countries? Has it not funded magazines, publications, broadcasts of various kinds in all different countries, communist and non-communist, to sway opinion in particular directions? No question about it.

MALICE: I'm not going to defend the CIA or deny anything you just said; I just think it gets tricky when you start musing out loud without really having anything to back it up that people are covert CIA agents.

WOODS: What do you think about this claim that Russia hacked the election of 2016?

MALICE: That sentence is, given the facts, nonsensical, as you know.

WOODS: So —

MALICE: They did not hack an election; they at the very, very worst hacked John Podesta's email account and Hillary's server. Hacking of the election is exactly what I'm talking about with red pill, is a lie, because that implies that they went to the voting machines and switched votes.

WOODS: Right, and that clearly didn't happen.

MALICE: And they're not even claiming that that happened. So that very phrase is designed to be deceptive and manipulative.

WOODS: Well, I would be willing to entertain speculation that — I mean, given that we've even read that the CIA pushed modern art as a way to screw with the commies and make their art look backward, because hey look, all the sophisticated people are doing this — I mean, the things that we've uncovered about the way they've tried to influence opinion are so overwhelming that founding some diddly magazine seems like child's play for them. But you're right; I can't demonstrate that, so I don't go around saying it.

MALICE: Well, there's a great book called *In Search of the Manchurian Candidate*, which talks about the CIA mind control techniques over the decades, which I just read

recently, and it's fascinating. The point that book makes unintentionally is that they're really bad at it, and which is not a surprise, that you have these government agencies trying to figure out how to brainwash and control mass populations. They're never going to be as good at it as Hollywood, and Hollywood isn't doing this necessarily with a gun to their head; they're doing this voluntarily because they have drunk the progressive Kool-Aid, and they know their marching orders. And I think that is a much more organic and coherent analysis of what's going on than this kind of psyops situation that Roseanne Barr talks about constantly on Twitter.

WOODS: All right, what else can we talk about, because we're getting pretty far into it here.

MALICE: Okay, so one of the other things he talks about explicitly – and this is something you and I kind of mentioned before – he explicitly says that – here's the quote: "[T]he United States (with the aid of Britain) was solely responsible for the Cold War, in a continuing harassment and aggression against a Soviet Union whose foreign policy had been almost pathetic in its yearning for peace with the West at virtually any price."

WOODS: Yeah, that's hardcore stuff. I agree, and I'm not sure I can sign on to that. I agree.

MALICE: Okay, yeah, so when I read that –

WOODS: But the same time – I'm sorry to sound like this, but at the same time, one can go back and look at Robert Taft's commentary about different Soviet moves. His view, for example, when Truman gave his speech outlining the Truman Doctrine and talking about Greece and Turkey, well, Taft's view was there doesn't seem to be any real Russian threat here. The Russians have not allowed the Greek communists to join the common front. They're basically keeping to the agreement they made with Churchill there. Yeah, Russia has always wanted access to the strait, so this is not some uniquely communist thing. And he just went and looked and said this is not – or if the U.S. gets oil concessions in Iran, is it so totally crazy and insane for Iran, so close to the Soviet Union, to be asked to give the Soviets some oil? In other words, you look at it collectively and just getting out of your head that it's run by a terrible guy and a terrible system that killed a lot of people – just looking at it objectively, it doesn't actually look like the foreign policy of a wild, insane lunatic.

MALICE: My point is there's plenty of blame to go around, and in any geopolitics it's never going to be this simplistic black and white, and to say that we are solely the bad guys when it comes to the Cold War – Obviously there's going to be a lot of blowback and the Soviet Union's going to react to the things we're doing. No question. But the idea that they didn't have this kind of expansionist ideology and weren't bloodthirsty, I don't think that's true.

WOODS: Yeah, I think they had an expansionist ideology, and I think they were bloodthirsty, but I also think they had lost 27 million lives during the war. I think after the war they were ripping up railroad tracks going into the heart of Europe that presumably they would want to use if they intended to launch an attack. So I think there was reason to believe that they were spent for the time being, anyway.

MALICE: Sure, but just because they weren't going to launch an attack, you don't have to be expansionist vis a vis war; you could be expansionist vis a vis propaganda and fomenting revolutions, which they did frequently. That was their technique.

WOODS: Yeah, that's true, and the result was they wound up with all these third-world, hellhole basket cases draining them. How did that help?

MALICE: I'm not saying it helped. Communism is stupid from beginning to end. The point is their goal was not this universal world of peace. Their goal was to spread communism. And he explicitly refers to the "uniformly peaceful and victimized policies of the Soviet Union." I mean, that's weird to me, and it's almost nonsensical.

WOODS: Rothbard was very much a student of the early Cold War revisionists like Denna Fleming, for example –

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: And okay, so taken that this is a point that would also seem jarring to people – And by the way, let me tell you: as I told you through email, I don't think *The Betrayal of the American Right* is your first Rothbard book, you in general. I don't think that's the one you start with, because it is full of a lot of things that are hard to take and that maybe you'll never accept, or maybe you'll accept only after hearing them 80 times and seeing the evidence laid out. It is a tough book.

Let's go into some things – I mean, I know there are some general things that you liked about it, but is there anything you learned from it that you didn't know before, major things that are going to help you in any of your own work?

MALICE: Yes. I learned that libertarian in-fighting has always been part and parcel of the movement, that this is nothing new, and it just gave me this – I mean, I read this to get an impression of Rothbard the man, because a lot of the things in this book have also been expounded upon and treated at greater length in, like, Brian Doherty's excellent for book, *Radicals for Capitalism*. And he really talks a lot about what he calls the paleocons, the Old Right, whose ideas I think are having a renaissance now in certain segments of the Trump campaign. So when he kind of – You know, for many people the Trump campaign kind of came out of nowhere, and this book is almost a bridge that says no, a lot of these ideas have had a history for 80 years, but they've been subterranean. So he really is superb at explaining how an ideology has morphed and shifted over time.

But at the same time, he tries to claim that he has been ideologically consistent, whereas every ten years he's jumping on a different bandwagon. I think his strategy has been very scatter shot, and that's another problem I think with libertarianism. Like, there isn't really a great working strategy that we've figured out yet, or else we would have a libertarian society.

WOODS: All right, I agree with some of that. I do think that it's kind of like Ron Paul. When he speaks to a group of evangelicals, he speaks to them differently, but he's still preaching the same basic message, just explaining it to an audience so that they can

get it. Rothbard was still extremely laissez faire. All through his time with the New Left he was trying to bring them over on this. And he did bring over Karl Hess for a time, anyway. He did reach some people that way. So you look at his output at that time; it's all gold standard stuff, and he also wrote about the corporate state and stuff like that so that he could have some things to talk about with these people, but I think he basically did hold more or less the same views.

With some things he admitted he changed later on, like immigration, but I think it was a matter of before the Internet these alliances really matter, because it's expensive to have a publishing house or a magazine or a newsletter or conferences. But now that we have the Internet and anybody can publish anything almost for free, it's not so important that we're aligned explicitly with this leftist group or that rightist group. We can just be ourselves, and we don't have to worry about the sorts of things that Rothbard, who's building a movement from zero and is necessarily going to make some mistakes here and there, had to worry about.

MALICE: That's fair, but I mean, when he goes after Goldwater and thinks that Goldwater is the worst thing ever it just seems very hard to kind of wrap my head around.

WOODS: Well, my view is that we got the foreign policy that Goldwater was likely to implement anyway with LBJ, you know? We got that same thing. We got the Vietnam War; we got all this stuff, so if I'm going to have the same foreign policy either way, then I'd rather have the guy with the better domestic policy, which is why I basically would have favored Goldwater.

MALICE: Right, but he's saying that he was —

WOODS: Oh, I know. I know, and I understand —

MALICE: Okay (laughing) —

WOODS: And I can respect people who take that view, who say that his foreign policy is just so bad that I just can't lend my name to this at all. Maybe I would have said that at the time if I were listening to him day in and day out.

MALICE: There was this famous ad that ran only once that Lyndon Johnson ran, the daisy ad, which shows —

WOODS: Oh yeah.

MALICE: — a girl picking the petals from a daisy and counting down, "5, 4...", and then it turns into a mushroom cloud.

WOODS: Yeah.

MALICE: And the point being: if Goldwater's president we're going to get nuked or we're going to nuke somebody else. And as someone who has been the victim throughout his career of horrific smears and of being accused of being everything from

a communist to a Nazi to a fascist to a clansman, for him to approvingly say, Yeah, that's right, if Goldwater's president it's going to be nuclear war, I think that is a bit much.

WOODS: Yeah, that ad was absolutely horrific, and I have a feeling that if I had been around then that ad would have sent me over the edge and said all right, that's it. Johnson has to be defeated at all costs after that.

MALICE: Yeah.

WOODS: Yeah, absolutely. All right, tell me some other things – Now, as may be obvious, we didn't rehearse anything. I just said, Let's see what you thought about that book, and then I'll comment. And I'm looking, and I'm talking way too much, just because I feel like I've got to defend Rothbard's honor on my show. I'm going to shut up more. I'm going to let you talk. I'm sorry for that.

MALICE: No, I want to – I didn't come on here to denigrate him; I'm just giving an honest impression of him, because he's a very – just like Rand, there's a lot there. So when someone is as prolific a writer as him, when someone is as involved in politics – See, the difference between him and Rand is Rand was in her ivory tower. She wasn't making alliances with people. She was pontificating on current events, but she basically kept to her own scene. Rothbard loved rolling up his sleeves and getting dirty and getting into the fray over 50 years, I think it was, so of course he's going to make some wrong choices just statistically. But it's also weird to see him defend those wrong choices in retrospect, as opposed to being like, Well, this was kind of stupid on my part. You know, when he's siding with SDS, that college free speech movement in the late '60s, thinking this is going to be the path to liberty, I mean, this is the precursor to the social justice warriors.

WOODS: Wait, hold on a minute. I am pretty sure by the end he does concede that much of his outreach to the left really had produced nothing for libertarianism. In fact, he almost says those exact words. It yielded nothing for libertarianism.

MALICE: Right, but the point is at that point he should have known better, and I can't even wrap my head around – Although, on the other hand, maybe "SDS was such a new phenomenon at the time that who knows what would have happened as a result of it?" would be his argument. But in retrospect, it's just baffling that he thinks the Black Panthers and the hippies – which is why Rand referred to Rothbard and his followers as "hippies of the right" – that these are the ones who are going to be libertarians.

WOODS: I assume he thought that they might be teachable, whereas the right wing was expelling everybody –

MALICE: Okay.

WOODS: – and he thought, Well, that's just hopeless. These people crave respectability. Nothing's going to come of that.

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: These people I'm meeting don't care at all about respectability, and they have some decent instincts that maybe I can cultivate, but what else am I going to do? I've been expelled from everything else. But yet I have a lot to say, so what else am I going to do?

MALICE: Maybe it's a testament to how bad things were and how much we take for granted now that he has to kind of fight for these crumbs, that everyone was so anti-libertarian, everyone was so pro-government that you've got to latch on to whoever you can in the hopes of getting any traction, and the fact that he kept rolling that rock up a hill for all his life I guess is a testament to his integrity and belief in his views, which are true.

WOODS: I think basically that is what it is. I think that's a very good way of putting it. All right, what else? We probably should limit this, but it's still fun to talk. What other things jumped out at you when you read?

MALICE: Well, I have to say I'm thankful I read this. I don't consider myself a Rothbardian, because he really has this very, in his view, government and big business are both kind of two sides of the same coin. And I don't think that I have as much animus towards big business as he does. He really thinks that they're the big, big villains and are almost in a sense inseparable from government. And I think that it doesn't have to be that way, and that's a very Rand point of view.

WOODS: Yeah, it's true that he does spend a lot of time pointing out this business lobbied for this and this one did that, and the emphasis is on the collusion between big business and big government. But probably – and I can't prove this, but probably as a corrective to what he thought was an uncritical embrace of big business on the part of the mainstream right, which there probably was.

MALICE: Absolutely, yeah.

WOODS: All right, okay. Especially in some of the things I write these days, I know there are some maybe left-libertarians who think I'm too pro-big business. I know their problems, but that doesn't mean they're always wrong, and it doesn't mean that I should cheer the enemies of civilization if they criticize big business. I'm not doing that.

MALICE: Right. It's like back in the day, one of the enemies of civilization in a certain sense was the church when you had church and state united. And then when you have kind of these bad popes in charge of armies, bad things happen. Then when you have separation of church and state, people can look to churches as examples of morality. So yeah, when you have government intertwined with any entity it's going to get horrible. But if you do have that separation, then businesses can go back to doing what they do best, which is producing things that we all need and want at an increasingly lower price and greater distribution.

WOODS: You know, part of me wants to say, well, "What did you think about this? What did you think about that?" But I really just want to know – you're one of the guests I can trust to know what's interesting. And I know you've taken some notes and

stuff. I know the big business stuff, that's a big thing. The foreign policy stuff, those two are actually huge. What else are you thinking about? Does he mention Rand in this book? I can't even remember.

MALICE: Once. He discusses basically that she and her — He's not dismissive, but he just kind of says it's really weird that she wrote this essay called "America's Persecuted Minority: Big Business." So he says, in contrast to Rand with her insistence on this, what I've come to realize is that business has always been pushing for these kind of progressive controls. And he's right. That is true. But the point is I don't think it's an inevitable function of business, and I don't think that's something that can't be worked around.

WOODS: All right, I think — Are we ready to wrap up? Do you have anything else you wanted to jump in with?

MALICE: I know we didn't really have a kind of clear point, but I mean, that's the whole thing. He's so many —

WOODS: We just wanted to think through — Yeah, just think through your impressions reading this book.

MALICE: The last thing I would say is I would highly encourage people to read him for the very reason that, a) he's a great, great fun read, and he will force you to think through all of your libertarian assumptions, and you'll see where you agree, and you'll see where you disagree, and you'll see where you really disagree with him.

WOODS: Incidentally, I would add that if you were to pick up *Man, Economy, and State*, his great economic treatise, which is, like, 1,000 pages long, if you were to read the prose in that you would think it was a different person.

MALICE: Wow.

WOODS: It is so dispassionate and technical that it does not read in any way like *The Betrayal of the American Right*. So he was able to seal that all off. That was almost like a pleasant diversion for him.

MALICE: Huh.

WOODS: When he was doing his academic work it was super precise and like a laser beam. You should just flip through at random to different pages in that book, and you'll agree with me that it is quite interesting to see that when it came time to do scholarly work that's what he did. And he didn't have any snide asides or whatever. He would say things like, "Professor So-and-So has overlooked the — " He wouldn't say, "This commie bastard has no idea which end is up." There's none of that.

MALICE: Right. And that's something Rand couldn't do.

WOODS: Yeah, that's true, but yet, you know, I appreciate them both, because in some ways I liked Rand's nonfiction at least as much as her fiction, because I would

read her demolishing somebody, and I would just think, "Good thing she never met me." I wouldn't want to be on the receiving end of one of these essays.

MALICE: (laughing) The vitriol is wonderful.

WOODS: It is unbelievable. It's incredible. But that makes it, to me anyway – and it's not everybody's cup of tea, but it sure is mine. I really was energized reading her denunciations of various kinds. And usually denunciations of ideas, like the New Left, the anti-Industrial Revolution.

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: These people protesting against the system that's done more than everything else put together to elevate people to some level of material dignity, and this is the thing they want to overturn? This is morally despicable. She has no truck with them at all. Not the, "But they're idealists and let's at least steer them onto the right path." No. No way. I'm not interested in steering them. Yeah, I'll steer them over this cliff. That's where I'll steer them.

MALICE: (laughing) Exactly.

WOODS: (laughing) And sometimes you need that, doggone it.

MALICE: Yes.

WOODS: I'm all in favor of people who want to play nice and go talk to people. That's great. And I do that sometimes. I have a lot of converts I can point to. But sometimes you've got to just come out swinging, and Rothbard and Rand, each in his or her own way, did that in just classic style.

MALICE: Oh yeah. I mean, when she passed away, someone in her circle said – they sighed, and they said, "The anger is gone." And it must be hard being angry all the time. I wouldn't want to be angry all the time. But boy, is it fun to watch someone who's angry for the right reasons just hitting people where it hurts correctly.

WOODS: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Anyway, very fun, interesting stuff. So read this book, but read Rothbard in other ways first – I'm telling the listeners. So what I'm going to do at TomWoods.com/818 is link to this book but also link to an article called "Read Rothbard" that goes through maybe his top ten things, and then you can pick through that. So you have to read at least one thing – so even if it's something small, like *What Has Government Done to Our Money?* Read that, then read *The Betrayal of the American Right*. And I'll stay on Malice to diversify his Rothbard holdings. But anyway, thanks a lot, Michael. Great talking to you.

MALICE: Thanks, Tom.