



Episode 988: Private Responses to Hurricane Harvey

Guests: Brent DeRidder and Gret Glycer

WOODS: Now, you are – I'm looking at the notes here. You're with the Libertarian Party of what state?

DERIDDER: I'm with the Libertarian Party of North Carolina. I actually –

WOODS: That's what I thought. North Carolina, yeah.

DERIDDER: Just got elected secretary, yes, sir.

WOODS: Okay, great. So in other words, you're coming from a distance, or you're – in other words, you're not a native Texan. You're telling us about this as somebody from another state.

DERIDDER: Right, yes, sir. I'm working virtually from North Carolina to coordinate the effort.

WOODS: Okay, so tell me about the effort in Houston and then what your long-term ambitions are.

DERIDDER: Well, right now, the Liberty Coalition for Disaster Relief, we actually just got started on Sunday and we've put it together pretty quickly. We've got – it's built of individuals and organizations, so when I say "we," there's really no telling who we're talking about. We could be talking about a small team or just an individual or an organization that's on the move. But we've got people in Texas now doing rescue, pulling people out of their homes that are stranded. We're coordinating volunteers on the ground to distribute and collect different donated items. There are items being donated from across the country and shipped and driven in. We've got teams already there, teams on their way down there. Austin Petersen's campaign has sent a few people. I know Adam Kokesh's people have sent some folks down. And we've got a lot of other individuals involved. We're also taking donations on a GoFundMe. We've raised over \$3,300 I think in less than 24 hours. And mostly just a lot of people coordinating the efforts from wherever they are via our social media group, our Facebook group and Facebook page.

WOODS: All right, so you're hoping that this is something that, as you say – just started a matter of days ago and we are probably hearing about it on this show for the

first time – that this is something that could blossom into a significant, lasting institution and approach to disaster relief. Is that what the aim is here?

DERIDDER: Yes, sir. It was certainly not our aim to begin with. It started with my 12-year-old, Emily, and I just deciding to do something for Texas, and we started working with Anarchist Ambassadors, which is a group I helped to found that works directly with the public doing outreach projects, and it kind of blossomed from there. And we've been asked if we're going to stick around, and we're definitely going to stick around. This will be one of the liberty movement's answers to that question: without government, who will provide disaster relief? Without government, who will help the needy? And the answer to that is we will.

WOODS: So far, obviously again given that it just got started and people barely know about it, it's a modest effort right now. But the idea behind it is absolutely tremendous. And you were just sitting around with one of your children and you were thinking about, well, we talk a lot about how people can solve problems, but how about we actually do it? And I get so many people saying to me, "How do I help the liberty movement? Should I go work in a think-tank and write another public policy report?" Maybe, but marginally, I don't think one more public policy report is going to do anything. But marginally, what you're doing I think has tremendous potential to make people think in new and healthy and encouraging ways.

What's the relationship between what you're doing and this so-called Cajun Navy we're hearing about?

DERIDDER: You know, I'm not positive. I'm looking at our list of hosts and it's over 20 long, mostly liberty advocacy groups involved. But the Cajun Navy I know was involved in Katrina and, speaking as a redneck, I'm super proud of them. It's just a bunch of rednecks riding around in their boats pulling people out of the water, distributing supplies. And as I understand it, a few of their members have decided to join the coalition, and we seem to be coordinating some volunteer efforts together.

WOODS: All right, that's great. How can people support you?

DERIDDER: Our GoFundMe is up. There are lots of ways to get involved. You can volunteer physically, go into Texas, let us know what you're doing and we can send you supplies, we can send you money, we can try to help out. You can go on our Facebook group. Just search "Liberty Coalition for Disaster Relief." We've got a Facebook page. Share those things. Donate to our GoFundMe, share our GoFundMe. One of the ways you can get involved right now is we need coordinators for different projects, so if you can go into the Facebook group, find the project coordinator post and try to help out in some way. If you have any organizational skills or managerial skills, those are desperately needed at the moment.

WOODS: All right, so I'm going to link to that – that's hard to find, GoFundMe and Facebook pages, sometimes, so I'm going to link to everything you just said at TomWoods.com/988. That's where these links will be. And then maybe when everything dies down, maybe you'll have a website or whatever. But right now, the situation is quite dire and extremely urgent. And you know, I'd been hearing reports of course that Harvey was coming, and they said, *Yeah, this could be severe*, but I guess I

just don't remember — maybe because I live in Florida, and last year, it was just hysteria about, I think it was Hurricane Matthew. Total hysteria. And so that's become my benchmark. If it's not that level of hysteria — and by the way, nothing came of Hurricane Matthew for us at all. One tree fell over. Like a small tree. Like it looked like Charlie Brown's Christmas tree fell over and that was the end of that. So when I didn't hear that level of hype, I just didn't worry. I thought, *Well, they'll get some rain. No big deal.* This is — the sights that we're seeing come out of there are just absolutely devastating. So the people that you're working with, are they all people who are coming from safe places in order to come help, or are some of these people right in the heart of it?

DERIDDER: Our first volunteers were people that were already in Texas that were trying to prepare their own homes when they found out what we were doing and got out there. Crystal Byrd — I hope she doesn't mind me mentioning her — was one of our first volunteers. She's involved in the liberty movement, and her husband was, when I talked to her, he was already out pulling people out of their homes doing rescue.

WOODS: Okay. Well, this is very, very — I mean, it's tremendous what you're doing. And when people say, "What can one person do?" well, you came up with a great idea and you're coordinating something great and you're bringing together a lot of great people who want to do good for their fellow man because it's the right thing to do. How about that? Can you believe that that's possible in this world?

DERIDDER: Well, I certainly appreciate it. It's definitely not me. It's a huge team effort. I had an idea and a lot of really smart people ran with it, really motivated people. So there's a ton of liberty advocates killing themselves all day and night trying to get this thing organized. They're amazing folks. I'm super impressed by the liberty movement.

WOODS: That is amazing. It's extremely heartwarming to hear this, especially on my show, where so often I have to talk about things that are frankly kind of gloomy. So I'm glad that I don't have to do that today, that there is a — you remember George H.W. Bush and his "thousand points of light" phrase? Well, you guys actually are a point of light and how great that is. So I hope people will get in touch with you. Again, I'm going to put all the information in the links at TomWoods.com/988. Well, Brent, I'm going to hop over now and talk to Gret Glycer from DonorSee, but thanks so much for your time and best of luck with all the good work you're doing.

DERIDDER: Yes, sir, thank you so much.

WOODS: All right, let's turn now to Gret Glycer, who is the creator of the amazing DonorSee app, which we've talked about in a couple of episodes of the show before. It's a tremendous mobile app that allows you to donate to various on-the-ground causes that are vouched for by reputable people and institutions, and you can see — hence, DonorSee — you can see in real time the effects of your donation. You get a video update. You get photographs. You get whatever. It's an amazing thing that I've used myself, and we're going to talk to Gret about how he is using it and continues to plan to use it in the wake of the hurricane. So Gret, welcome back.

GLYER: Hey, it's so good to be back. Thanks, Tom.

WOODS: I was on DonorSee the other day to see what was up with regard to the hurricane, and of course you're on top of it, which is great. And there are several videos from you on the subject of Houston, and just before we went on, I was ribbing you about the fact that, in the background, you've got this big shelf of VHS tapes. I said, "What is this, 1983?" Explain yourself.

GLYER: [laughing] Yeah. Okay, so when I was younger, my uncle used to send me just boxes of VHS tapes for me to watch, to do whatever with. And so what you saw is a fraction of my collection of VHS tapes. And I just have them. I've always kept them. I don't know what I'll do with them. I don't use them; I don't watch them, but they're nice decoration.

WOODS: Okay, well, fair enough. They are indeed. All right, so tell me about what DonorSee is doing in connection with Hurricane Harvey.

GLYER: Definitely. So what we've done is we – I spent the – you know, over the weekend is when we got the news about what was going on down there in Houston, and I spent Monday kind of racking my brain trying to figure out exactly – and talking to all my network, all my contacts, trying to figure out what's the most effective way that we can help, because with DonorSee, one of the things we pride ourselves on is being the most effective – like having the highest impact per dollar whenever you give. And we've done that in a number of different circumstances. We did this back with Hurricane Matthew last October, and I believe I talked to you about that. But yeah, right now we're looking for the highest impact way that people can get involved.

And we came across a group of people down in Houston called the Cajun Navy, which is – I mean, they might as well be a libertarian movement based on what they're doing. And they saw all of the people who were stranded in their houses and they took their personal boats, their personal pontoon boats, and they're using Facebook and Twitter to find the people who are stranded and in the most danger, and they're using their boats to go rescue them. So I thought that that was an amazing thing. It's a completely grassroots effort, and I wanted to support them, these guys called the Cajun Navy. So I started talking to a bunch of different people, and I got in contact with a guy named Josh Hanson, who's kind of our point guy down there in Houston. And Josh was telling me that one of the best things that we can do is provide gas for these people. They're using their personal boats, their personal time to go rescue these people, and the one thing that we want to do is provide their gasoline so that their rescue missions are taken care of.

WOODS: All right, so that's the major project going on at DonorSee with connection to that. Refresh people's memories as to what DonorSee is all about.

GLYER: Definitely. So DonorSee is a decentralized way to give your money. We don't have a huge hierarchy. Whenever you give, you're not paying for someone's air conditioning bill. You're not paying for a CEO. You're not paying for an accounting department. The money is going directly to the people in need. So people will post projects – The way I like to describe it is it's like a two-side marketplace. People post projects on DonorSee, and then people who want to give in a more compelling way and want to see where their money goes when they gave, we bring those two people

together. So in this case, we've got a project with Houston and we're trying to corral a bunch of people to give to these different projects.

WOODS: And the idea of DonorSee, "see," is that the donor will actually literally see the effects of the donations.

GLYER: Exactly. That's exactly what happens. So and sometimes when you're in like a third-world context, that might mean you provide hearing aids for a girl living in the remote parts of India, and then you get to see her hearing for the first time. With what's happening in Houston is – what we're doing is we're taking raw video updates of the rescues happening, of the victims coming back onto dry land and of the Cajun Navy guys, we're getting to learn a little bit about them. And they're really cool guys. If you watch some of the videos on DonorSee, I mean, they're talking about how, like, *We just felt like we wanted to help. We wanted to be a part of this thing that's going on.* And they're really great guys, so you get to be a part of all of that with these raw video updates that we're posting from the project.

WOODS: Well, we can hope of course that there won't be much need for rescue missions after a while, that the things are going to die down, return to normal. But there will still be a lot of devastation to cope with, so how do you envision DonorSee's role in the hurricane aftermath changing?

GLYER: Yeah, so we're taking it day by day to figure out exactly what's the most effective way that we can help, given the current circumstances. So for example, on Monday, the prediction was that the rains were going to come and just pour down all the way through Friday. But we woke up this morning and it's a sunny day down in Houston and some of the rains are starting to dry up and there's a good chance that these people who are stranded will not need rescue because the water in their house is not elevating anymore. So we're going to take a look at the situation and, going forward, we're going to find out different ways. But if you want to be a part of that in any way whatsoever, I'll give you the link to the DonorSee project that we've got going on for that, and people can give to that project, and that money will go towards the Cajun Navy rescue efforts. But then we'll also transform that into future efforts where, you know, one of the things that we found out is – during these hurricane devastation circumstances, one of the things that happens is babies don't have diapers, so we might provide diapers for babies and things like that. But we're going to take it day by day and figure out exactly what people need as we're kind of coming out of this aftermath.

WOODS: Well, in the meantime, people can be checking out DonorSee, both on their computers and as an app on their devices. DonorSee is the name of the app. You can visit it at DonorSee.com, isn't that right?

GLYER: Yep, DonorSee.com. And then if they download the app, the Hurricane Harvey project will be at the very top of the app as soon as they sign it.

WOODS: Okay, so I'm going to link again to DonorSee at TomWoods.com/988. I'll link to the previous episodes where you and I have talked about it at greater length. I've donated, you know, a fair amount of money through DonorSee myself and –

GLYER: Yeah, and your community has done quite a bit. In fact, this guy Josh Hanson, the way that we got connected, the guy down in Houston who's kind of leading the relief efforts down there, the way we got connected is he's a fan of your show. And so that was several months ago, we connected through that.

WOODS: Oh, that's absolutely great to hear. I'm thrilled, and I know that my folks have been very responsive and I'm glad that I've got such a good, decent group of people here. As I think I may have said in a previous episode – Actually, I don't know if I told you this. Maybe I emailed this to you. But anyway, around Christmas time, we used DonorSee, and I don't remember what country the project was in, but it was a number of children who needed Christmas gifts or something like that –

GLYER: Yeah –

WOODS: – a Christmas meal and a gift. It was something like shoes that an American kid would feel like he got gipped if he got shoes.

GLYER: [laughing]

WOODS: But I have five girls, but four of them are old enough to kind of understand what's going on, so we found four children who were, each one was roughly the age of one of mine, so that they could each have one they could sort of identify with and kind of adopt in a way at that Christmas. So we sent something to each of those, and then we got a beautiful video response and it was a very fulfilling experience. So if you have not checked out DonorSee, you really should.

GLYER: Yeah, and if I recall, I think the country was Uganda, and if I recall, I checked that out and I believe they even said your name in the video to kind of –

WOODS: Yeah, isn't that something?

GLYER: Yeah.

WOODS: Yeah, isn't that something? Yeah, so it's not even – so the authenticity of it can't be denied, because very often – in fact, when my listeners banded together to build somebody a house, the video there mentioned all their names. It was really amazing.

GLYER: Yeah.

WOODS: And I thought, *Boy, this person making this video is bold trying to pronounce half these names*, but they were all in there.

GLYER: [laughing] Yeah, yeah, that was fun. Yeah, so I can't thank you enough for all of your support, and to all of the Tom Woods listeners who have downloaded DonorSee or who have used the website at all ever before, thank you guys so much. It's been awesome to have your support.

WOODS: And let me say one more thing. I know there are other podcasters who listen to this show. If you have a podcast, small or large, get Gret on there to spread the word about DonorSee, because your listeners are going to love it, it's a day that you don't have to devote to doom and gloom. Gret's a good, hardworking guy, and it's a valuable project, so what reason would you have not to do that? If they did want to contact you for that purpose, how would they do that?

GLYER: I would say the best way to do that would be through Twitter or admin@DonorSee.com. We have someone who takes care of that account and will sort through those emails.

WOODS: Okay, good, good. I hope that generates a little traffic for you. All right, listen, thanks for checking in with us and best of luck with the important work you're doing. I'll keep an eye on DonorSee and we'll try and kick in a bit ourselves here in the Woods household.

GLYER: Okay, thank you so much, Tom.