



Guest Says Libertarians Should Favor a Hillary Presidency

Guest: Michael Malice

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Michael Malice is the author, most recently, of Dear Reader: The Unauthorized Autobiography of Kim Jong Il.

WOODS: You're going to try to persuade me that what anarcho-capitalists should be cheering for in 2016 is a Hillary Clinton presidency. I would like to hear the case for that.

MALICE: Oh, desperately. And this is such a no-brainer to me that I am surprised that more anarcho-capitalists don't see it. So let's start with two facts about Hillary Clinton that are completely indisputable. Number one, when she was given her first government position in 1994, health care, she bungled it so badly that she caused the Democrats their first congressional loss in 40 years. That's number one. Number two—and this is kind of tongue in cheek—but it speaks to the truth: how badly in America do you have to blow the job interview that they give the gig to the black guy who doesn't even have a resume? This is what happened to her in 2008.

This woman is a walking calamity. Let's talk about what she did this year. She was on NPR with Terry Gross. NPR, as you know, is not particular amenable to liberty. Terry Gross is hardly a firebrand, but she's a doctrinaire, urban progressive, and she asked Hillary this, and the audio is online. This isn't some secret. This is on NPR. She asked Hillary, you know, you used to be against gay marriage, and now you're for it. How did your position change? Very natural and innocuous question. Hillary starts blithering about how America has evolved and so on and so forth and we need leaders, and Terry Gross just asked her like, yeah, that's great. How have you personally evolved? And Hillary said to her, Terry, you are accusing me of changing my position for political purposes. Now, how far removed do you have to be from reality to consider Terry Gross to be some kind of covert Republican operative or covert libertarian operative, and how tin-eared your political instincts have to be to accuse her of this on the air, to go after the reporter as the enemy? This woman is completely out of her mind, and once she is in office—I think states recede in power not through having good politicians—there's no such thing—but through the incompetence of bad ones. I think that's the only hope we have for any kind of political progress in terms of rolling back the state.

WOODS: All right, look, I could see an argument from the worse, the better, which is a Walter Block view sometimes, although he tends to—if he votes, he thinks in terms of which candidate is likely to be less bellicose, because he thinks that’s a big issue, but couldn’t you say—let me make the case for you get Rand Paul in office, and Rand appoints some people we’re going to hate, inevitably, but some decent people, some decent work gets done in the various departments. Maybe there is some rolling back of the state. Maybe there is some curtailing of the aggressive foreign policy. Maybe there is some movement in the direction of liberty. Maybe for four years. For four years people at least get the possibility of being exposed to pro-Austrian economists, a whole school of thought they have never heard of before. There’s at least a remote chance under Rand they’d get four years of education. That’s something, right?

MALICE: We’re getting eight years of education now through this show under Obama, aren’t we? It’s not like if Hillary Clinton is in office, all these views are censored. If anything, if Hillary Clinton’s in office, that’s further proof that the progressive movement is a failure, and people are going to be searching for answers, especially disillusioned, young women who bought into the narrative that she’s this great feminist icon, and when they see that she’s a complete incompetent, they are going to be looking for rational answers instead of some myth that just because this person happens to be a female, she’s going to save this country.

WOODS: Yeah, fair enough. But couldn’t you just as easily say that we should have expected that after two years of Obama—and many people voted for him because they thought it would be great to have the first black president in the same way that some people will vote for Hillary because she’ll be the first woman. Shouldn’t have they learned by the end of this seeing that—I’m sure none of them really believe that there is a major economic recovery going on. So maybe you would think at this point they would be looking for answers, and yet they’re all running around with their idiotic “ready for Hillary” signs. Maybe they don’t learn!

MALICE: What about the—I’m sorry, Tom—what about 2010 and the Tea Party and the fact that this is the first time that we had any kind of coherent, organized, pro-liberty—I am obviously not a Tea Party member—but any kind of organized, coherent, anti-government movement in this country for quite a long time? Are you forgetting about this? Are you forgetting about the huge rise in libertarianism as a function of Obama being president? And also, of course, as a function of George Bush’s incompetence and his completely destroying the Republican brand as a vehicle for spreading liberty even at home or abroad.

WOODS: Those are all wonderful things, and I will concede them to you gladly. On the other hand, I saw a recent poll that finds the older generation looks upon the word socialism unfavorably, but about 50% of the so-called millennials look favorably on the word socialism. These people are hopeless.

MALICE: Are you looking for democratic solutions for liberty? Is that what I’m hearing?

WOODS: I’m just telling you they don’t learn. Your point is that maybe they’ll learn after years of failure under Hillary. They don’t. They’re idiots.

MALICE: They are not going to—I'm sorry—I agree completely. They are not going to—okay, we're on the same page here, yes. I am more elitist than you. I assure you I have no hope of people learning; zero. My hope is I do not—when people ask me why I am an anarchist I say it in one sentence. I do not believe in political solutions to social problems. That's anarchism to me in one sentence, and I am sure you'd agree with that. So if she is in there discrediting politics as a mechanism for political solutions, her venality, her inability to—she lies about—you know she said that she was named after Edmund Hillary, even though he climbed Mt. Everest after she was born. The woman cannot help but lie. Not only that, she's Nixonian, but she's bad at it. So she uses the state to crush her political opponents and people she doesn't like, but she does it ham-fistedly and transparently. And the one thing that Republicans are good for—and it's not going to be cutting the budget, Tom—is taking out the knives and going after people personally. Darryl Issa and Peter King and all these others—they could not wait to start taking her apart and having these investigations and completely destroy her personally, and as a consequence her vaunted air of competence will be destroyed in days.

WOODS: Well, let me tell you another thing Republicans are good at: bootlicking. So suppose you get a Rand Paul presidency. I'm just playing devil's advocate here to make this fun. Suppose you get a Rand Paul president. All of a sudden it will be fashionable to be kind of libertarian. And these people are like rabid dogs. There's something fashionable that's being draped before them, they are going to leap for it.

MALICE: I don't think they're rabid dogs. I think they're not rabid dogs and that they follow the herd—they follow the pack, right? So, yes, there is a sense that Rand Paul, if he becomes president, that the Republicans will start singing libertarian tunes to a point. However, you also surely would agree that virtually all of these Republicans are beholden to some agency or some group, and they are not in a position via politics to implement libertarian ideas. They are bought and paid for, and there is no other alternative than to be bought and paid for, and this is why politics is not a mechanism for freeing a country.

WOODS: All right, let me ask you this. Now, this is sort of unfair because it's a state-level question, and on the state level, politicians can do somewhat less damage for a variety of reasons. But of course, we had the gubernatorial race in Kansas, and we had the election a few days ago, and Sam Brownback came out ahead even though the polls, most of the polls were showing him losing this election, and he came—

MALICE: Right.

WOODS: And for most of the night, he was losing. As the numbers came in, he was behind, behind, behind, and then suddenly he shot ahead. Now I like Keen Umbehr. I've had him over to my house. He was the Libertarian candidate. He's my preferred guy. But my view at the state level is that I don't go for this "the Democrats, the Republicans, are indistinguishable." At the state level, they are clearly not. Under Brownback I don't pay any state income tax anymore because he passed an initiative saying that if you earn self-employment income, that's not

subject to state income tax. Well, you know, that's—I got a 15-grand tax refund because of that. That's great. That means I don't have to fly around the country as much anymore; I can spend more time with my family. That's a practical way in which my life was improved because of this situation, and it would have been taken away from me if the pinko had been elected. So why should I not in that case say I want the Republican to win?

MALICE: I'm going to be glib and tweak your nose a little and say, Tom Woods, I look at the data, and I only look at the data, and you're not looking at the data. What the data says is when we have a leftist doctrinaire president, we have the most Republican governors in state houses in 100 years. Is that not what the facts say? Is this not a function of Obama?

WOODS: Well, maybe you scored a point, but I'm trying to score a point on an issue we haven't yet really brought up, which is the issue of voting versus non-voting. Now, I don't really take a dogmatic view on this. I voted for Ron Paul just because I felt like the guy is working so darn hard I would feel like I'm spitting in his face by not taking the two seconds to go vote, but yeah, I know, your vote isn't going to make any difference. If I voted, it would be just to feel like part of the movement. And there's almost never anybody I feel that I would want to vote for. But the point is the idea that, well, nothing is really going to change by voting clearly is untrue because my taxes are much lower now because voting took place for this particular individual, right?

MALICE: So if you hadn't voted, the outcome would have been different?

WOODS: Okay, I understand. It makes no rational sense for a given individual, but the collective entity—the collective process of voting—

MALICE: Are you advocating for collectivism?

WOODS: No, that's why I stopped myself—

MALICE: You mean you caught yourself.

WOODS: Yielded this outcome. The process yielded this outcome—phone banks, and organizing people, and getting them to the polls yielded you the outcome of lower taxes for me.

MALICE: Yes, okay, that's great. I want to abolish taxes. I don't want to just lower them. I'm not moderate like you, Tom.

WOODS: Okay, and we did—for me we abolished the state income tax, and I feel like we should extend this loophole to the whole state. I would like to see that happen. But I can't say to myself, well, all political activity is a waste of time because 15 grand tells me it's not.

MALICE: Where are you saying that I am saying this? All I'm saying is that what you're asking for is a consequence of a reaction—like I said earlier—

WOODS: No, I get that. But I am thinking about your *Guardian* piece about not voting. So I have unjustifiably thrown that into the mix without telling you.

MALICE: Oh, okay, well, I'm familiar with that article, having written it. So I will be glad to address it. So let me just talk to the audience briefly. Tom, what you're referring to is I wrote a piece for *The Guardian*, which is that far-left, British newspaper about why I personally don't vote, and one of the—there are two things in that article that I specifically say. Number one is I do not—I reject completely, and I think this is a function of progressivism that maybe you might not be falling into. I am very curious to hear if you are. The Kantian universalizability principle, which means the statement that if I am going to morally do something, it should be something that I can advocate everyone do, I reject that completely. A big function of hardcore progressive leftism is this idea that the personal is the political—that what I do should be replicated nationwide in the social sphere, and I think that's absolute madness. I don't agree that if you say, well, if everyone acted the way you do, then what would happen? I am an outlier. I will never be in a situation, even among an-cap circles where everyone acts the way I do. So I think it's a very false thing to say if I do something and therefore am advocating for other people to do or not do or refrain from this, because they are value-subjective, and they can live their lives however they wish.

WOODS: All right, well, then I guess, my follow up to that would be I have heard many, many times the case against voting, and again, in practice there's almost never anybody worth voting for. So it is partly an academic dispute we're having about the issue of voting, in general, which I know is not the topic we started, but I do want to hit on it because it is somehow relevant. But people say, look, you're never going to get what you want through voting, and that's true. I am not going to get the kind of society ultimately that I want through voting. The whole system is corrupt, and it's necessarily so. It's not just because bad people are involved. I totally understand that.

But what I don't understand is when people say you shouldn't do this, you're just playing the state's game, or you know, you can never get the masses to do the right thing. It makes me wonder: then what is your vision of social change whereby we do get what we want, and it doesn't involve politics? Now I could imagine a misanthrope, which sometimes I am, frankly, saying, well, look, there isn't one. There is no path to a free society. You've got to just carve out as much freedom for yourself as you can, and if the masses want to enslave themselves, then let them go do it. But what is your response?

MALICE: Well, first of all, I would just—the argument against voting, which I didn't touch in the *Guardian* article because I am very loath to give people advice on how to live their lives. I think that's a kind of inappropriate thing to do in general. But what I have problem with voting is the opportunity cost. Because if you want to—if someone wants to make a difference—that one hour it takes to go vote you can foster a puppy, you can mentor a kid, go to an old folks home where people are lonely and just spend time with them. There's a lot of things that one hour of time can do, but I think most people would rather be in some kind of mass movement than to

actually sit down and with minimal effort, increase utility in another being's life enormously. So that's why I would say I'm actually opposed to voting, not in terms of practicality, but in terms of opportunity cost. Now, in terms of what is the answer if it's not politics? In my view, the only progress that has happened in the last decade has been completely a function of technology and philosophy. It's been a function of decreasing the ability of the masses to control other people's lives.

Let's look at it this way. Let's say 30 years ago, 1984, it would be very easy to completely censor effectively, not legally, any sort of pro-freedom ideas because you had three networks and maybe PBS, right? Milton Friedman might be the only counter-example, if that. Now, you have a million networks, and you have the Internet. It is effectively impossible to hold these ideas censored and quiet, and in fact, this is I think a big reason why you have such a growth for freedom ideas because back when you and I were kids, Tom, that libertarian—that freak in high school that no one wants to talk to—and now you go online, and you're like, hey, you're not a freak. You're just an outlier who is pretty smart and got it figured out, and there's lots of other people like you. And that psychological need for community, which all humans have, has been met, and that fosters these ideas going forward, and technology I think is the only thing that's going to prevent the state because if it has a gun, there's no reason it's not going to use it.

WOODS: Last time you were on the program, we talked about your book *Dear Reader: The Unauthorized Autobiography of Kim Jong Il*. How can you bring North Korea into the mix when talking about U.S. politics? It seems like such a caricature of the state. Does it have anything to teach us at all here in the U.S.?

MALICE: Well, only in the last month, there's this whole—this a whole, big segment which I want to get into will this whole Gamergate nonsense and people are having their lives destroyed and their information made public, and there are so many people who are getting fired simply because of something they've tweeted or something they've written in a blog post eight years ago. And working in the North Korean space and growing up in a Soviet household, it only recently became apparent to me that this is something that Americans don't get but has beaten into me since I was a kid, which is when you grow up in North Korea, or if you grew up in a Russian household, you were taught, and I don't know if I was taught this explicitly or intuitively, but you were taught to always be aware of who has power over you and to always be aware that they will have no problem using it for absolutely arbitrary reasons. So there was a book written about me called *Ego and Hubris*. And there was an anecdote in there where I had kind of a minor discussion in business class in college, and the next day when I came back, the teacher had written me a letter saying until I apologize for challenging him about the nature of copyright, I would not be allowed to speak in class. And it was absolutely crazy. It made no sense because it's not like our voices were raised, or I was kicked out of the class. It was just a complete—and it was on topic—I wasn't attacking him personally. So I took that letter, and I sent it. I went to his boss, and I almost got him fired, but that's something that North Korea, someone from North Korea would never do. You don't put it in writing. So I think what people

need to understand, learning the North Korean lesson, is the NSA is watching. The Left is watching. You have to be very, very careful of what's going on. And things in this country are going to get a lot worse before they get better, and these people will use any mechanism they have to destroy you personally or politically or professionally, and I think a lot of libertarians are a little naïve because they are shocked when cops are doing these things, or people are getting arrested for arbitrary grounds, but that's the nature of the state.

WOODS: I want to ask a completely off-the-wall question that you didn't see coming, but I want to know how Michael Malice came to hold the views of Michael Malice. How did you get on this track in the first place?

MALICE: Oh, this is a great, great story. This is a great story, and you're going to laugh, and I'm fine with it because I understand the absurdity. When I was a kid there was a television show called *Family Ties*, and it had Michael J. Fox playing Alex P. Keaton. He was the only person on television who looked like me and reminded me of me, because he was snarky. He was also very smart, and he kind of was this little guy with a lot of guff to him. And I never could watch the show. I resented it enormously because they made a clown out of him. I felt moral umbrage that this character wasn't being put on a pedestal, and was treated sometimes dismissively. So he was my role model growing up. In second grade, I had an attaché case that I would bring to school, trying to look like a little yuppie. It must have been incredibly adorable in retrospect. And growing up in New York espousing these kind of—and they would certainly not be libertarian—conservative views is really a great way to be obnoxious and to be a punk because when you have teachers who are just indoctrinated in just thoughtless, progressive nonsense as opposed—there's plenty of thoughtful progressives that most of them don't become middle school, high school educators. And I would antagonize them constantly to my great delight, and they would not have answers for me because they weren't too bright, and this was a source of great, great pleasure.

So when I went to college, I thought I was a Republican, and then I started reading Rand. I don't remember who it was. I was in the student lounge and the Laissez Faire Books catalog was just sitting there, and I was like, oh, what's this? And I start looking through it, and there's Andrea Rich on the back sitting on a stack of books, and all these books looked very, very interesting, and I started reading them. And then I was into the bookstore in Manhattan's Upper West Side, and I was looking through the Ayn Rand books because the covers all had an art deco style; Nicholas Gaetano made them. And I thought they were very appealing, and I was reading the back cover of *Atlas Shrugged*, and it was described as: this is the story of the man who said he could stop the motor of the world, and did, and I thought this was a science fiction novel a la *Ghostbusters II* because *Ghostbusters II*, there's this literal engine underneath Manhattan that kind of has gears. It's like, okay, there's some kind of gears to end the world, and I was going to pick it up, and the guy next to me yelled at me. I didn't know who he was. He goes, no, you have to read *Anthem* first. If you like it, then you read *The Fountainhead*, and then you read *Atlas Shrugged*. And that's exactly what I did, and it really opened up my eyes, and then I

entered Cato, and I was still kind of a young Republican, and they knocked a lot of sense into me—not enough. And the older I got, the more I started reading about elite theory and kind of mob theory in social psychology, and that really made any kind of appeal to politics go by the wayside, and of course, North Korea completely solidified my impressions of the state and the nature of the state.

WOODS: All right, let me jump in with a couple of comments. First, on Michael J. Fox: I used to watch *Family Ties* regularly as a kid growing up in the '80s. What I found interesting later on, looking back on it, was how badly the left portrays conservatives. They don't understand what conservatives believe at all. They don't even take five minutes to try to understand. So they portrayed this young conservative as having a portrait of Nixon on his night table. Nixon? I could go on. I was trying to list them when I had Pat Buchanan who tried to make the case for Nixon. I was listing all his outrages. Why would a conservative support him? Or he does a term paper, Alex Keaton, does a term paper on why Hoover was a great president. That's not our view!

MALICE: Well, he's a conservative. He wasn't a libertarian. But let me just jump in here and circle back to what I talked about earlier. Look at everything that happened under Nixon for the Left. Are you telling me that Hillary Clinton and her psychology is not Nixonian to the core?

WOODS: Oh, and I agree. I thought it was an apt comparison. Now, on Ayn Rand, though, let me jump in on that. I actually—I read all of her novels, and I actually didn't like *Anthem* at all. The others I really did like. And I actually thought that my entry point was *We the Living*, which I think is overlooked too much. Of course, *We the Living* is set in the Soviet Union, where she herself grew up, and it's a very, very compelling story and shouldn't be missed.

MALICE: In fact, a friend of mine who owns Rothbard.com—he never read Rand, and he asked me what he should read, and I recommended actually *We the Living* because if he's already an an-cap, he doesn't need to be persuaded, but that story really it tugs at your heartstrings. It's very emotional, and it's very chilling because it's not at the alternate universe America like *Atlas Shrugged* is. This is real life, and this is what the state really means in practice.

WOODS: And there's an exchange in there I love. I remember it after all these years. I must have read that when I was 21, maybe, a really long time. That's a half a lifetime ago for me. But I remember an exchange in which the young woman is talking to the communist, and the communist is saying to her, "Let me guess. You admire my ideals, but you loathe my methods." And she says, "I loathe your ideals." (laughs) That's awesome.

MALICE: But I like your methods, and when Rand re-issued the book in 1959, she cut that out.

WOODS: She did? That's the best part!

MALICE: Okay, so let's talk about Rand a little. So originally, I think you can see it coming that this is a play on words, right? She goes, I loathe your ideals, but I love your methods. Maybe I wouldn't go as far as you. Rand struck that in 1959. So *We the Living* came out in 1936—1,500

copies. It started selling well, but the publisher, Macmillan, destroyed the plates, and it went out of print. They re-released it in 1959, and when they did that—this is after the success of *Atlas Shrugged* from 1957—Rand went through with a fine-tooth comb and made some edits, and this was one of the big edits that she made, and if you read *Journals*—look, I’m not a fan of the Ayn Rand Institute. I think they’re loopy beyond belief. But if you read a book called *Journals of Ayn Rand*, and this is actually a publication of her journal showing her thought process. It’s very interesting, and the editor—I believe it’s—I am looking at it right here. It’s David Harriman. He admits as he goes through with it that Rand was originally heavily influenced by Nietzsche, but as she grew up, all the Nietzscheanism dissipated like—she describes it as “water off a leaf leaving no residue whatsoever,” and I’m like, has this person ever met another human being? How is that psychologically possible for someone to have a profound influence on your philosophical development to leave literally no trace as you grow up? I think it’s just absolute madness. But that’s how they regarded her, you know? So I agree with you completely about *We the Living*. It’s an absolutely amazing book and very, very overlooked.

WOODS: All right, listen, we’re going to cut it off here because you and I could just go on forever as indeed we did when we finally met in person last month in New York City, and our lunch became two lunches because my wife was back in the hotel room, and you and I just go blah, blah, blah, the whole lunchtime, and I called her up and I said, “This guy is great! You got to come out for lunch with us too.” So you came—you were a good sport. You went out for a second lunch with us so that she could meet you, and we just had a fantastic time.

MALICE: I enjoyed it. I loved it, yeah.

WOODS: So I am going to, of course, look you up. I try to get to New York at least once or twice a year. So the Michael Malice lunch is now a fixture of my time there. Well, listen, thanks for your time today. Let’s get people to visit you over at MichaelMalice.com, and of course, you’ve got your social media links there as well, and people can catch you as a semi-regular, I think, over on *The Independents* on FOX Business.

MALICE: That’s right, yeah. I tweak the establishment in the states on a regular basis.

WOODS: Well, thanks again. I appreciate it—especially you were pinch-hitting for someone who fell through, and boy, this was great. I like someone who goes toe-to-toe with me like that. That was good. We’re going to do more of that.

MALICE: I love it, Tom! I absolutely love it.

WOODS: All right, thanks again.

MALICE: Thanks, Tom.