

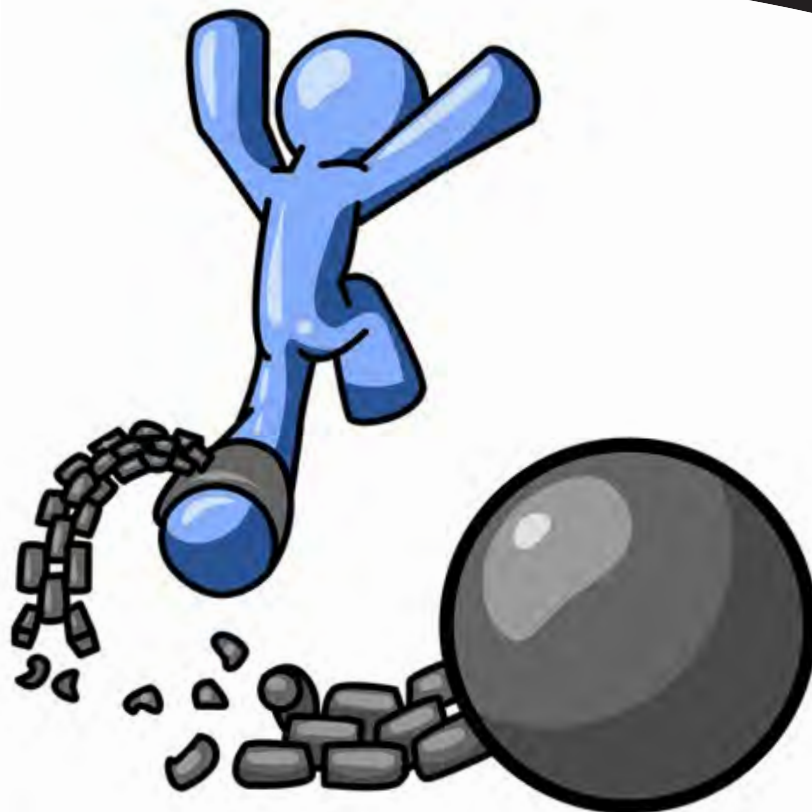


Liberty.me



# Voices of Generation Liberty

by Joseph S. Diedrich





### GUIDE 1.0

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## INTRODUCTION

About two years ago, I decided to talk to people. I set out to glean insight from conversation because I was tired of just reading words on a page. I wanted to engage in meaningful dialogue with well-known individuals who shared my love of freedom. After all, which sounds better: a woeful slog through a lengthy treatise, or a discussion with a friend?

The result of my endeavor became this collection of nine interviews — or, as I prefer, conversations. Throughout the conversations, similarities manifest themselves in ways beyond what you might imagine. For example, an impassioned love of music and art emerges time and time again. Many of my conversations were with accomplished performers, writers, and directors.

Equally important and just as thought-provoking are the subtle differences among answers to essentially the same



questions. Embracers of liberty share a mutual foundation, yet each individual expresses it in harmony with his or her unique sensibilities.

These conversations are meant to scratch the surface of libertarian ideas while adding the depth of personal character, wit, and charm. They're meant to introduce the world to freedom by introducing the world to people.

Many already know that Mark Thornton advances an airtight case against prohibition, but what is his favorite meal? Many know that Sheldon Richman is a world-class writer and editor, but what movies does he watch in his free time? Alongside questions of theory, ethics, and economics, these light-hearted yet deeply personal inquiries help forge a vignette of modern libertarianism.

These are the voices of Generation Liberty.



## JEFFREY TUCKER

I first met Jeffrey Tucker when he gave a speech in Madison. While his lecture was enjoyable and enlightening, it was the time that I spent outside the official learning environment that I learned the most from Jeffrey. Sipping a few drinks with him at the cigar bar, visiting the local haberdashery—that's what it's all about.

I find that this is the case with darn near everyone. Getting to know someone and gathering wisdom from that person is a process that unfolds best outside of structures and strictures—when we're just living life.

Jeffrey is the director of digital development at the Foundation for Economic Education, CLO of the startup Liberty.me, and executive editor of Laissez-Faire Books. He has written six books, *Bourbon for Breakfast: Living Outside the Statist Quo*, *It's a Jetson's World: Private Miracles and Public Crimes*, *Beautiful Anarchy: How to Create Your Own Civilization in the Digital Age*, *Freedom Is a Do-It-Yourself Project*, *Sing Like a Catholic*, and *Bit by Bit: How P2P Is Freeing the World*.

Born and raised in Texas, Jeffrey studied at Howard Payne University and Texas Tech University. He was a graduate student at George Mason University and is an alumnus of the National Journalism Center. Today, he is widely known and recognized for his omnipresent bowties.

### When was a time you felt absolutely powerless against the state?

I was arrested during Sunday brunch for failure to appear in court to pay a traffic fine, and then booked and put in jail. I felt pretty powerless because the people who controlled my life didn't care about me at all, and the people who did care about it either had no idea I was imprisoned or couldn't do anything about it. It's scarier than people can imagine. Jail is ghastly and dehumanizing.





## When was a time you felt powerful against the state?

I feel this every day in the normal course of my life, choosing and working and just living. The state is terrifying but its power and presence can be exaggerated, too. People must act as if they were free, else there would be no social progress, no economic development, no way to sustain civilization at all. I also like being at liturgy in a worship space that feels like a sanctuary.

## You used to direct a church choir. Has that influenced your political philosophy at all?

Gregorian chant and its tradition long predate the nation-state. It was created and preserved over countless generations through love and sharing. So, it is the embodiment of what the human imagination and determination can achieve. I would say that this is the connection. I also love polyphonic music because it is music without masters and slaves. There's not one part that has a melody and one part that has an accompaniment. Every part turns out to be extremely important to every other part. Each has its own unique role to play, but by itself it doesn't sound quite right, and it has to be integrated with every other part. No single line dominates consistently over any other line. That's what accounts for its beauty, mystery, and magic, and what makes it sound so completely different. I prefer to think of it as music in which there is no oppressor, no despot; nobody is required to serve anyone else. If you take the free market division of labor — the idea that everybody is contributing to something much larger than the sum of its parts — it's like that.

I was arrested during Sunday brunch for failure to appear in court to pay a traffic fine, and then booked and put in jail.

## Tell me more about your relationship with music. Do you play or sing?

I grew up in a musical family. My father was a composer and director. My brother is a music professor now. I played trombone professionally when I was in college. Then I burned out completely and dropped it for many years until I took up liturgical music. Then I fell in love all over again.



## Who is your favorite composer?

I would say that Thomas Tallis is my favorite composer. Additionally, in the past twenty years, I've come to appreciate pop music more for what it is. It is a market success. I think I was too quick to look down on it in the past.

## How did you come up with the name of your book, *Bourbon for Breakfast*?

It took a while, but then I remembered how alarmed I was when I was first served bourbon at 7 a.m. It shook me up fundamentally. This is what great ideas should do. They should make us rethink all our prevailing assumptions.

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## What is your favorite cocktail?

Oh, I love the Negroni. In fact, it is so good that every other cocktail seems pathetic by comparison. It is made of Campari, sweet vermouth, and gin. It has a flavor unlike any other. The funny thing about the Negroni is if you can drink the first one and it's slightly appealing to you, then its appeal deepens after the fact, and you find yourself thinking about it more and more the next day. And then if you order it a second time, you're hooked. If you like it, you come to love it. Plus, it grants you a long life.

## So, when did the bowties become your trademark?

I've been wearing them since high school because they seem much easier to manage than four-in-hand ties. Of course I oppose trademarks on principle so I hope I don't have that!

## Where is your favorite place you've travelled?

I dream of Spain. I spent some time in Salamanca and loved it so much. It really takes you to the middle ages in the most wonderful way. History is so accessible here. There is a liberating quality to being in a place like this. It reminds us of how temporary our times really are.





## What was your worst job?

Oddly, I can't think of one. I love working more than anything. I'm grateful for every opportunity to work. I marvel at the workplace and its social function. I consider it a great honor to have ever been entrusted, even once, with the difficult task of adding to a project more value than you take away.

I love working more than anything.

## What book has had a great influence on you — a book people may not expect?

A book that I read in about 1985 or '86 is a book by Mises called *Theory and History*. It's a book on the methodology of the social sciences. It was that book that kind of shook me out of my cookie-cutter conservatism that I accepted in those days. I'll always treasure that book in my mind.

If Bitcoin fulfills even a fraction of its promise, it could change the world.

[Another influential book was] Albert Jay Nock's autobiography called *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. People say that it is entirely fake. Maybe. Doesn't matter. It is what taught me to think like an anarchist. It caused anarchism to become deeply

burrowed within my heart and soul. You begin to think of yourself as an individual who has the right to see the world the way you want to see it — to see things as they are, not as they are made to appear by virtue of the prevailing assumptions of the civic culture. It's a bit shocking.

## What is the greatest invention of the last two years?

I'm tempted to say the app economy generally. Then there is 3-D printing that will smash the wholly ridiculous idea of intellectual property. However, if Bitcoin fulfills even a fraction of its promise, it could change the world. Innovations in money are going to lead to a complete separation between money and state, and if the state can't control the money, it can't control anything at all. I don't think states are aware of it; in fact, it's so terrifying to them, they can't even think about it, and there's nothing they can do to stop it.





## MARK THORNTON

Dr. Mark Thornton is a senior fellow at the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Alabama. He has been described as “one of America’s experts on the economics of illegal drugs,” and much of his work has centered on the topic of prohibited goods, including his career-defining treatise, *The Economics of Prohibition*. He has also written extensively on the business cycle, American history, and libertarian theory. Besides being a prolific author, he is currently the book review editor for the *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics*.

Mark grew up in Geneva, New York. In his own words, he was, “born and raised there in a family that was Irish in extraction, Catholic in religion, entrepreneurs by occupation, and thoroughly Democrat in politics. I now realize that by the time I left Geneva for college I was already a libertarian, a fact I credit to my family, especially my mother and father.”



After studying economics at St. Bonaventure University, Mark pursued graduate studies at Auburn University. By that time he was “already very much interested in Austrian economics.”

### What exactly do you do at the Mises Institute? What is your favorite part of the job?

I am a researcher, a book review editor, and a lecturer. I also help people with economic questions. My favorite part is working with students. We have all sorts of programs for students at Mises. The Mises Academy is available to students at a low cost to get access to professors who are teaching their favorite subjects. Then, of course, there’s the Mises University and Mises Circles. For graduate students, we have the Rothbard Graduate Seminar and Summer Research Fellowships. Furthermore,

During Prohibition, my great-grandmother was involved in the smuggling trade. A truck carrying whiskey would show up at her house and [whiskey] would be stored in there.



if you're investigating just about anything in economics, politics, or history, you can go to the webpage (Mises.org) and find some great resources. It's an amazing amount of material; you can listen, watch, and read. And it's free.

## People are most familiar with your work on prohibition and prohibited markets. Why has that been a great source of interest for you?

My mother's family was mostly bartenders and liquor store owners. My father's family was mostly pharmacists. Prohibition seemed like a natural topic to investigate. You could say it was the family's business. During Prohibition, my great-grandmother was involved in the smuggling trade. A truck carrying whiskey would show up at her house and [whiskey] would be stored in there. Then a person who smuggled it from her house to the various speakeasies would come after dark, get a case of liquor, and distribute it around the city. Apparently the police knew this, but didn't want to arrest her because she was a widow with nine children.

## How do you view politics in relation to libertarianism? Is the political world a relevant thing for libertarians to concern themselves with?

I was the first person in Alabama elected on the Libertarian Party ticket — I was a constable from 1988 to 1992. When I was campaigning, I got asked what my platform was; I said I wanted to abolish the job. I never ran for public office with the idea of winning. The only reason I did it was to be able to discuss things with the general public outside of my classroom. Without much money and energy invested, I received a lot of publicity. In that sense, I think politics can be a productive thing. That's the reason I was willing to run — to get attention for libertarian ideas. When I became a libertarian in college, nobody knew what that meant. That has changed.

When I became a libertarian in college, nobody knew what that meant. That has changed.



## Speaking of college, what is your greatest memory from that time in your life?

This is going to sound real geeky, but I saw the five-minute TV commercial for the Libertarian [Party] presidential candidate Ed Clark in the dorm and I finally had a political home. I had never heard the word “libertarian” before. After that, when I’d tell people I was a libertarian, they were stunned. They thought I was a communist. Today, being a libertarian is the cool thing.

## I’d like to ask you a few questions about you as a person outside of politics. What type(s) of music do you listen to?

I listen to many types of music from classical to classic rock. My tastes are very eclectic. Yesterday, I was listening to a series of albums by Dr. John. My iPod is full of all sorts of stuff. I like listening to all types of music, including live performances — blues, jazz, everything. Unless it’s really heavy metal, punk, or disco.

## What is your favorite cocktail?

Every once in a while I will make myself a Sazerac, which was invented in New Orleans more than a 100 years ago. It has absinthe. Of course, absinthe is a classic case of prohibition — government tried to prohibit it from being imported into the country until just recently. Now you can actually get absinthe in stores.

## Describe your perfect meal.

Oysters Rockefeller, Eggs Sardou with crabmeat, and chardonnay. Eggs Sardou is a famous recipe from a landmark restaurant in New Orleans called Galatoire’s on Bourbon Street. It’s like stepping back into the nineteenth century in terms of the elegance and the environment; all the waiters have tuxedos and you’re required to have a jacket. It’s like a window going back into America’s classical liberal time of the late 1800s. Plus it’s really good.



## And finally, what do you think has been the greatest invention of the last two years?

The coolest invention is the Google Car and the idea of not having to drive your car or being able to send your car home if there's no parking space. I've always been curious about what the next mode of transportation is going to be. That's just my natural curiosity.

## JULIE BOROWSKI

Julie Borowski was born in Maryland in 1988. She attended Frostburg State University, where she majored in political science with a minor in international studies. She also took a lot of economics classes, including some with Professor Bill Anderson, a well-known libertarian. It was during this time in her life that libertarian sensibilities took root within her.

At this CPAC 2013, Julie won the “Best Video Blogger of the Year” for her work as “Token Libertarian Girl.” Of her experience this year at CPAC, she says, “This was my fourth CPAC. In the past, I felt that [libertarians] were really separated. This CPAC, everybody liked or at least respected Rand Paul and his supporters, so I felt more welcome than in previous years.” After working as a policy analyst at FreedomWorks, Julie now runs her own website, [JulieBorowski.com](http://JulieBorowski.com).



## When and why did you start making YouTube videos as Token Libertarian Girl?

I started in summer 2011, I suppose for a lot of reasons. I kept getting rejected from television interviews. I knew that other liberty-minded people like Jack Hunter were making successful videos. I stumbled upon Jenna Marbles's YouTube videos. She was just recording herself talking to a video camera in her house. I thought, okay, I want to spread the message of liberty so let's give this a shot. I gave

I gave myself the name Token Libertarian Girl because I figured I shouldn't use my full name in case this doesn't work out and people think I'm terrible.



myself the name Token Libertarian Girl because I figured I shouldn't use my full name in case this doesn't work out and people think I'm terrible. Then after a while, I finally got used to being in front of the camera. But I still make my videos completely by myself in my apartment.

## Why do you think you've reached the level of popularity you enjoy today?

I don't really get it. But if I had to guess, I assume it has something to do with the fact that I am not afraid to let loose and get a little goofy. At the same time, I still want to convey an important message.

## You've both suffered criticism and garnered praise for your views on women in the libertarian movement. Share some general thoughts on this.

I believe many people put words in my mouth. I got tired of people saying that the reason for the lack of female libertarians is because women want to be taken care of. Or that women are less logical than men. I decided to offer a different explanation. My whole theory on the lack of female libertarians is that women tend to be more social than men and are less likely to embrace views outside the mainstream. Men are more likely to embrace views outside the mainstream, and nerdy culture. Men are more likely to be interested in comic books, anime, Star Wars, etc. And let's face it: libertarianism is not yet mainstream (though that is changing) and it is still pretty nerdy. When answering the question, "Why are there so few libertarian women?" one has to generalize. Of course, everyone is an individual. In my experience, libertarian women tend to be independent, strong, and care far less what people think about them.

## Let's take a step back in time. What is your greatest memory from college?

There are many great memories. I'm a huge fan of stand-up comedy. I remember one afternoon we found out that Daniel Tosh would be performing at Penn State University that night. We spontaneously decided to pack into the car and drive over two hours to Penn State to see him. We didn't have tickets, we didn't have time to pack, we didn't know where





we would be staying, and I don't think we even had directions. It was a pretty big gamble because it was a sold-out show. We stood outside the venue and someone was nice enough to give us tickets. We sat in the third row! I got to meet him and have my picture taken with him after the show.

## What has been the best part about your transition from college to professional life?

I think the best transition is that I had to go through a lot of classes — especially the political science classes — that I didn't agree with. There were a bunch of socialist professors, so I kind of had to censor my views a bit in those classes in order to get a good grade. The best thing about being out of college is that I don't have to censor myself anymore. I can be a full-blown libertarian. I get to do what I like to do all the time and write about what I want to.

## If you weren't doing what you are now (as a career), what might you likely be doing instead?

I would probably be doing something with dogs. I always wanted to be a veterinarian growing up. I've always loved animals. When I grew up we had cows in our backyard. I had a German Shepherd and that's where my love of dogs first came in. In third grade, my dog got run over and the vet saved him. So I wanted to become a vet. But then I learned I wasn't that great at science. I was better at writing and politics and economics and the social sciences. If I wasn't doing anything political, I'd love to do something with dogs. I just really love animals. Probably more than people.

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## How about a couple non-political questions? What is your favorite place you've travelled to? Place you'd most like to visit?

The coolest places that I have been to are Portland and Denver. I grew up in a small, conservative, dry town so I'm not used to these funky cities. I think they're just so different from what I'm used to. In Portland, everyone wore different clothes and acted a different



way, which is really interesting to me. I most want to visit Australia. I remember growing up and learning about Australia and all the animals there. I had a pen pal in elementary school from Australia.

## What was your worst job?

I don't know. I've cleaned up after dogs for a living at a dog kennel and actually liked it because I got to be around dogs all day. I've been a softball umpire and I was regularly yelled at and called names by aggressive parents for questionable calls but I still liked it—both of these jobs likely prepared me for a career in the political field.

## Who is your favorite president?

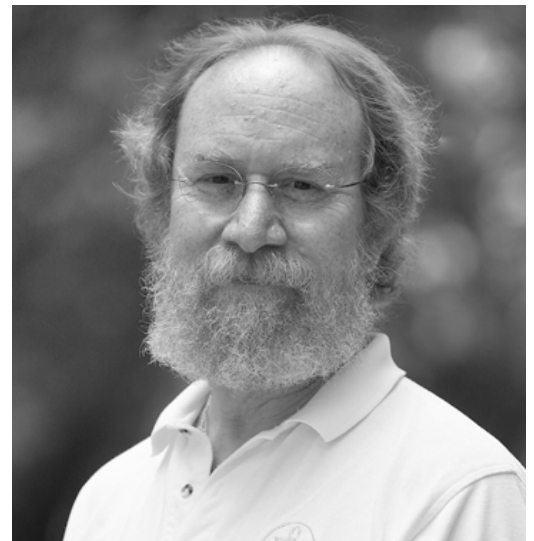
Thomas Jefferson. Yeah, yeah, yeah, libertarians will remind me that he did some bad things. They all did bad things. But I remember learning about Thomas Jefferson in elementary school and being completely inspired. Just that he had the guts to do what he did, to write the Declaration of Independence. It was so completely different from the entire world. [The Founding Fathers] could have written whatever they wanted to. They could have taken control over the people, and they decided not to.

## SHELDON RICHMAN

Sheldon Richman, a native of Philadelphia and an Arkansas resident, is a lifelong libertarian. According to him, “I was attracted to the idea of individual freedom from my earliest days. I met libertarians in my high-school years and realized I already was one.”

A 1971 graduate of Temple University, Sheldon has worked tirelessly his entire adult life to spread the message of freedom, mainly with his pen.

For many years, Sheldon was the editor of the *Freeman*, the flagship publication of the Foundation for Economic Education. Sheldon Richman keeps the blog Free Association and is affiliated with the Center for a Stateless Society both as chair of the trustees and as a senior fellow.







Sheldon is the author of *Separating School and State: How to Liberate America's Families, in which he proposes government should have absolutely nothing to do with education*. Instruction in private schools and homeschooling are better alternatives. In his own words, "I favor a free market in education and schooling, but I'm partial to homeschooling. My three children were homeschooled. I am partial to unschooling that is child-driven without curriculum. The point of homeschooling is not to recreate the school at home, but to exploit what that flexibility gives you."

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You often associate yourself with the concept of "left-libertarianism." What exactly do you mean by that? How does it differ from "right" or "neutral" libertarianism?

It's a matter of emphasis and nuance. I believe that the historical concerns of good-faith leftists regarding the poor, minorities, immigrants, and vulnerable wage-workers, which I share, can be achieved only by market-anarchist means. There's a story that reaches back into history. Frédéric Bastiat, a great favorite of libertarians everywhere, sat on the left side of the French legislature. This is where the terms left and right come from. The left were the people who were opposed to the old regime and were forward-looking. The right were the defenders of the old regime who wanted to restore the monarchy. Bastiat favored a forward-looking progressive view that the free market represents. If we jump to America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the most active libertarians were the people around Benjamin Tucker. He published the magazine called *Liberty*, including in it [the writings of] Lysander Spooner. They called themselves socialists — they saw the left as an umbrella for any opposition to corporatism or state favoritism to business. We have this heritage that comes from the left. What modern left libertarians are trying to do today is to reach out to leftists and say you can achieve your ends through market means. At the same time, we're trying to reach out to standard libertarians and explain to them that there is a leftist heritage which they're not aware of.



## You've been partial to libertarianism your entire life. Is there a book that has had a great influence on you?

Gilbert Ryle's *The Concept of Mind*. It clarified a lot for me — things I already pretty much believed. One of the things that Gilbert Ryle does in that book is clarify how you can think of human action (which is entirely consistent with Mises). It's the idea that human action is something you can analyze in terms of a mental component and a physical component, but that you can't — in the real world — separate [them]. In other words, it's not a particular frame of mind plus outward behavior. It's really something that cannot be reduced any further. I recommend the book. It's a very readable book. '

## Has there been a source of cognitive dissonance or inner struggle in your intellectual life?

My relationship to the religious tradition into which I was born and from which I've broken, Judaism. I dislike religion and, even more, tribalism. I am a universalist. I prefer Athens to Jerusalem. This brings me into conflict with people close to me.

## If you could meet any politician or economist from history, who would it be? Do you see that person in yourself?

Bastiat. I've long admired him. I still read him today. Yes, I identify with him.'

## Switching gears for a bit, could you share a bit about your affinity for the pipe? What's the story there?

My father smoked a pipe and introduced me to it when I was fourteen. It's a hobby — pipes can be beautiful works of art — and a method of relaxation. I smoke pure Virginia tobacco.

## Why Virginia tobacco? What's special about it?

It's a matter of taste. Like food or drink — why do you like that wine better than another wine?



It's not a flavored tobacco. There's a lot of artificially flavored tobaccos and I've never found them satisfying. It's not unpleasant for the people around me.

## If you're alone, what music are you most likely listening to?

Pink Floyd, Gilad Atzmon, The Cars, Gordon Lightfoot, Jimmy Buffett, or Billy Joel, Gilbert & Sullivan, Thelonius Monk and The Revolutioners, Hayes Carll, among others.

## When was the last time you cried?

Watching the credits of the Stanley Tucci's movie, *The Impostors*. At the end of the movie the entire cast breaks into an exuberant dance to Louis Armstrong's "Skokiaan," moving off the set while hopping and twirling past the busy stage crew. Why that reaction? I think it's because in that dance I see the cast's love, passion, and dedication to their work. That's my usual reaction when I think I'm witnessing that. "Skokiaan" alone is enough to get me tearing up.

## You grew up during the Cold War and the Vietnam era. What is your greatest memory from college?

Being a vocal anti war libertarian in a sea of statist, left and right. I was in college from '67-'71.

## Do you recall any particularly good stories from those experiences?

I spoke at a rally for legalizing drugs. After that, I was denounced by a Maoist for being in favor of drug legalization. He said it was a plot to get everybody high and [therefore] not revolutionary.

## One last thing. Do you feel there is a political issue that libertarians tend to ignore or not care about as much as they should?



Intellectual property. Great work is being done on it, but I don't think it's penetrated to libertarians generally. Many don't care at all about it, but it's very important.

## For those who haven't spent much time thinking about intellectual property, is there a book or article you'd suggest for them to start with?

On the pure economics of it — which I think is a common objection many libertarians have to the idea of getting rid of patents and copyrights — I would recommend the book *Against Intellectual Monopoly* by David K. Levine and Michele Boldrin. They are free market economists. Their book is online — you can read it for free. And they go through the economic case for getting rid of these laws. There's also the moral case, of course, which equally concerns libertarians. They wonder, don't you have property in your inventions and your novel ideas and also your music? For the moral case, I would suggest to Google Stephan Kinsella and read his *Against Intellectual Property*. Also see Roderick Long, as well as my own writings at FEE.

## JOHN PAPOLA

What does a former MTV production assistant turned Spike TV creative director have to do with libertarianism? Quite a lot, actually — especially when he uses his talents to produce intellectually stimulating rap videos featuring likenesses of John Maynard Keynes and F.A. Hayek.

The raps are just the tip of the proverbial iceberg for John Papola, founder of Emergent Order, a visual media content company with a proclivity for incorporating libertarian themes in many of its projects.

Born into an Italian family in Philadelphia, John relocated to New York to begin his professional career. After stints at MTV, Nickelodeon, and Spike TV, he — along with his wife and his lifelong friend — took an enormous entrepreneurial risk. Their company has been thriving ever since.



Beyond directing and editing in a myriad of genres, John also considers himself to be a “pretty



good writer.” As his career evolves (he’s only in his thirties), he hopes to make “great movies and TV shows that have some elements of classical liberalism underpinning them.”

## Tell me more about Emergent Order. What exactly do you do?

Emergent Order is a visual content development and production company focused on bringing complex and important ideas to life in entertaining, playful, and irreverent ways. We launched the company essentially on the viral success/impact of the Keynes vs. Hayek rap videos I co-created with Russ Roberts. We seemed to be the first people to bring classical liberal ideas to life in a way that was entertaining, scholarly, and uncompromising while remaining even-handed. The surprising attention and opportunities these projects brought to me personally seemed like an entrepreneurial opportunity that had to be pursued. In a world filled with screaming partisans, we feel that there is a need for playful and thoughtful content that tackles important subjects. Emergent Order exists to fill that void and to be a global leader in idea-driven content creation.

## Will there be more rap videos?

We’re working on a third installment of Keynes vs. Hayek. I’m also in the process of getting ready to relaunch the EconStories website. And I’ve got some other ideas about content types to expand the franchise.

## In terms of entrepreneurship, how much has the digital world changed the marketplace? Is its influence understated? Overstated?

The important thing to think about is that it’s very rare that a new communication form or a new art form eliminates prior art forms. You can still listen to AM radio. People who say the old media is dying oversell the change that is happening. The quality and quantity of alternative

The important thing to think about is that it’s very rare that a new communication form or a new art form eliminates prior art forms. You can still listen to AM radio.



media types is rising. And it's not coming at the expense of larger media; it's really adding to it. It's sort of like macroeconomics in a way. The focus on aggregates really masks the fact that it's the composition of media consumption that's really changing and being altered in fundamental ways. It's not that people are considering more media now than they ever did before, but rather are shifting to other forms and formats.

I think one of the benefits of the area that I'm in is that there's really no barrier to entry. You don't need any credentials or licensing. It's a free market environment. That's why we have such a vibrant media landscape. Anybody can hop in and produce. Anyone — rich or poor — can reach an audience with their message.

## Have your experiences in television media influenced your political philosophy?

What I learned at MTV was tolerance and plurality. Mine was surely a minority viewpoint in certain regards, which I mostly kept to myself in the early years. And in those early years, that was probably good, because my beliefs were pretty simplistic and, in many cases, just plain wrong. But as I started to develop my personal philosophy more in 2007 and 2008 and became more vocal online amid the rest of my peers, I was pleasantly surprised by how many people engaged with respect and curiosity. My broad takeaway is that while there are creatives who have fairly tribal politics amounting to little more than rooting for a sports team, there are many others who are intellectually curious and tolerant of diverse views. Building a strong personal relationship first helps to form a foundation for richer philosophical discussion as well. People are far less reactionary to radical ideas when they know you aren't a jerk.

## All right, how about a couple non sequiturs to close things off? If you could visit any time in history, when would it be?

As for time travel, I'd love to visit the 1950s. There's so much nostalgia for that time and I have a feeling it's mostly nonsense on both the left and the right. The world has never been more amazing than it is right now. There are more people living better today than ever imaginable before. It's without question just about everybody is materially better off today than in the 1950s. Certainly African Americans and women have tremendously more autonomy and opportunity and have reached levels of prominence and success that were unachievable under the social regi-





ment of the 1950s and 60s. I just think it would be interesting to go back and see what it was like and compare reality — a reality where all musical acts wore the exact same clothes and diversity was really frowned upon.

## What can the average person do in their everyday normal life in order to further the cause of liberty?

Solve a real world problem instead of talking about it. Be an entrepreneur. Too many people who become excited by these ideas spend far too much time talking about them and not enough time creating real output. I hope someday that it will be absolutely, universally, unquestionably preposterous for anyone to claim that libertarians just want to do nothing. We don't want to do nothing. There's plenty to do.

### NAOMI BROCKWELL

Bitcoin is more than a currency and more than a protocol. It's an idea. In order to spread, ideas need a communicator. They need a representative. In short, they need a face.

Bitcoin has found that face in Bitcoin Girl, the always-effervescent Naomi Brockwell. Born and raised in Australia, Brockwell leverages her intrigue and charm to craft educational, informative videos about all things cryptocurrency. Degrees in acting, classical music, and musical theatre, combined with a lifelong passion for economics, have prepared her to take on the role as an unofficial spokesperson for a revolutionary technology.

In addition to being Bitcoin Girl, Brockwell is a policy associate at the New York Bitcoin Center, a member of the advisory council of the Mannkal Economic Education Foundation, producer at the Moving Picture Institute, director of the new comedy news show *We The Internet* coming in 2016, and CEO & founder of Rainsworth Productions. She has produced multiple feature films including the Lionsgate film *Subconscious*.



Naomi and I recently had a delightful conversation about bitcoin, art, and freedom.





## When and why did you come to the United States?

I came to the United States about 3½ years ago to study opera just for a couple of months. But as soon as I realized what there was for me in New York, it became very clear that I couldn't go back without making the most of all the opportunities. Since then, my focus has shifted to film, simply because of the opportunities that have presented themselves.

## How would you compare Australians' perspective on bitcoin with that of Americans?

I go back to Australia twice a year. As far as I can see, bitcoin nodes are a good reflection of how well bitcoin is or isn't integrated into society. In the entirety of western Australia, there's one node. That's in stark contrast to New York. I can basically live within the bitcoin world here. I can buy my groceries with bitcoin. I can buy dresses with bitcoin. I can pay my lawyer with bitcoin.

I definitely see a big future for bitcoin in Australia.

I definitely see a big future for bitcoin in Australia. Australians have a very individualistic mindset. We're always looking for avenues that are outside of the government sphere and outside of corporate interests. I think the difference in adoption right now is an educational issue.

## Do you recall how you first became aware of bitcoin?

Yes. I was at an economics conference about two years ago. A friend of mine had a Casascius coin, which is a physical bitcoin. I had heard the buzzword before simply because of the circles I was involved in, but I had never had taken the time to really understand it. My friend explained to me what bitcoin was in detail.

It was and is exciting for me to see this new potential open up before my eyes. We've had a government monopoly on currency for a really long time. Suddenly, we have a competitive currency. We have a digital currency that's keeping up with the digital age and a global currency that's keeping up with our global economy. Our currency finally seems to be in line with where we're at technologically.



It worries me that there are attempts to integrate bitcoin into the existing financial system. If it were up to me, I'd say we should allow bitcoin to reinvent the framework. I'd like to see what blossoms if we were to just let it be.

## What do you think the most important event in the history of bitcoin has been so far?

The bitcoin world moves so incredibly fast. I just got back from the Toronto Bitcoin Conference. One of the founders of ethereum was talking about some aspects that they weren't unrolling for a really long time...you know, six months. To them, that's a really long time. This technology evolves so quickly. It's exciting to think about what the bitcoin landscape, the economic landscape, will look like in ten or twenty years from now.

## Over those next ten or twenty years, what do think the biggest challenge facing bitcoin is?

Like with anything new, you're going to have a lot of people trying to guard the past. New things are scary to people, and when you don't understand something, that's especially frightening. I think the biggest challenge is going to be overcoming the demonization of bitcoin, which the mainstream media and government have been perpetuating. We need to teach people what bitcoin actually is. It could be a vehicle for peace. It could be a vehicle for elevating people out of poverty. It could address many social problems. If people realize this, then we're going to see widespread adoption.

We need to teach people what bitcoin actually is.

## How can bitcoin empower artists?

Bitcoin can change an artist's process of monetizing what they do. Microtransactions play a huge part in that. iTunes recognized a market and said let's allow people to download music and pay per song. People want to buy in smaller quantities, so let's enable them with a really secure method. That's when you saw music piracy really go down. At the moment, you also have digital subscriptions to newspapers. You might only read the newspaper once a week, but you're still paying for the entire subscription. I think what we're going to start seeing more and more of is the ability to pay per article, especially in bitcoin. We'll also see donations for free content as a way of showing



appreciation for the work of writers, authors, musicians, and filmmakers. We're going to see more of that now because we finally have an affordable method of transferring value.

The Moving Picture Institute is very interested in bitcoin. They see its potential for lifting people out of poverty and as being a tool for freedom of speech. They're also interested in the technology and its ability to regulate itself. Working for MPI combines two of my loves—film and monetary policy.

## How long have monetary policy and economics been on your mind?

I've always been very interested in individual rights and freedom, and I actually started out studying economics. The passion was really sparked, however, when I moved to New York—the financial capital of the world. I became surrounded by brilliant minds who opened my eyes. Economics is the foundation of society and the fabric of civilization.

## What made you decide to become Bitcoin Girl?

I was heavily involved in bitcoin. I became Policy Associate at the Bitcoin Center when it first opened. I had been trading in the futures market for a while. There were huge changes happening. They were really starting to look into the holes in the Mt. Gox system. There were a lot of things going on that people weren't talking about except on written forums.

I recognized that educating people about bitcoin is so important, but the avenues that were used to discuss bitcoin were all very esoteric. Reddit isn't accessible to a lot of people. We needed a voice for bitcoin that was accessible to more people. Using video for educating people was and is necessary to combat the vilification and demonization of cryptocurrency. Bitcoin needs physical voices and faces. That's why I'm so excited about some of the bitcoin-related projects I'm working on with the Moving Picture Institute. They really recognise the power of film in educating people about important issues ([thempi.org](http://thempi.org)).

## What do you hope to accomplish as Bitcoin Girl?

Film is an incredible medium for communicating with people. I can use it to help people understand something I think is really important. That's what I hope to achieve.



## One last question. What can the average person do in their everyday life to further the cause of liberty and freedom?

I think that having strong principles, a lot of integrity, and fighting for what you believe in is the most important thing that you can do. Stand by your convictions. Be open-minded enough to hear other people's side of things. Don't be a fence-sitter. Become educated about things. Realize that if you don't fight for people who don't have a voice, then it's the same as persecuting them yourself.

**Stand by your convictions.**

### ANDREW KIRELL

As the editor-in-chief at Mediaite, Andrew Kirell prides himself on “chronicling the blowhards in political media.” Before joining Mediaite, Andrew worked on John Stossel’s production team at Fox Business and ABC News. Overwhelmed by journalistic magnetism, he forewent television production to pursue writing and editorial work.

Andrew, who was heavily influenced by his experiences at George Mason University studying under free-market economics professors like Walter Williams, Bryan Caplan, and Don Boudreaux, enjoys using his position at Mediaite to dish out some “equal-opportunity mockery of the Northeast Corridor’s worst bloviators.”



## How were you introduced to libertarian ideas?

I grew up with Republican parents who listened to talk radio and bought Rush Limbaugh joke reels on cassette tape. When I was in my early teens, I read books by the likes of Ann Coulter. But around the time of the Iraq War, I began to question my beliefs and become disgusted with conservatism. That process was expedited when I read John Stossel’s first book, which introduced me to brilliant minds like Friedrich Hayek, Frédéric Bastiat, and my future professor Walter Williams. Studying under GMU’s economics program only served to cement my libertarian beliefs.



## What is your greatest memory from your time at George Mason?

I went to George Mason University specifically for the libertarian economics professors, but in the pre-Ron Paul days it was not easy spotting fellow libertarians among the student body. One day I wore a “Free State” t-shirt to the mailroom and a friendly stranger noticed it. We became close friends, started a liberty-minded newsletter, and began an initiative of reaching out to find a bunch of all the other hidden libertarians on campus. Now? GMU is a stronghold for libertarian students.

## If you weren't doing what you are now (as a career), what might you be doing instead?

Not a doubt in my mind: I would be a musician. More than libertarianism or intellectual pursuits, music is my true love. I've been in several bands, but as I became more and more enveloped in my career I lost the time to perform and practice with friends. So now I just have a large batch of songs I've written by myself, waiting to play for an audience.

## So what type of music do you listen to?

It really depends on my mood, and I'm tempted to list a thousand artists, but my go-to musicians will always be: Bob Dylan, Tom Waits, Neil Young, Leonard Cohen, Johnny Cash, The Walkmen, Arcade Fire, Dr. Dog, Bruce Springsteen. I've also enjoyed hip-hop and R&B's recent creative renaissance with artists like Kendrick Lamar, Frank Ocean, Kanye West, and Miguel.

## In a society more influenced by libertarian ideas, how would art and music be different?

Old school music critics lament how we don't have a musical spectrum. It's sort of dominated by large artists that everyone knows. In a society that is freer and more robust, you would have more choice. You would have greater technological advances that would give more empowerment to individuals and reduce the influence of large, bureaucratic corporations. We already have a niche market for everything, and I think we'd have even more access to more choices.



## What period in U.S. history do you think was the most damaging to personal freedom?

Libertarians love to point to the New Deal as the most loathsome period of American policymaking, but I'd go with Woodrow Wilson's presidency. His adventurist foreign policy set the tone for many presidents to come, especially the George W. Bush administration and its trillion-dollar expeditions and experiments with what economist Chris Coyne would call "exporting democracy at gunpoint." Not only did Wilson foreshadow our current foreign policy with bloody, pointless warfare, but his civil liberties abuses like the Sedition Act of 1918 and the Palmer Raids were astounding, even by today's standards.

## And finally, could you share a personal story that you consider important to your development as an individual?

I've long struggled with depression and anxiety problems. It went untreated for a long time, but it all came to a hilt when one night I had a panic attack that landed me in the emergency room. While it was the most terrifying experience of my life, it forced me to confront my issues head-on and take control of my life. I feel I've become a much stronger person with a more confident voice and vision because of the therapy and choices made thereafter.

## ANTHONY GREGORY

By day, he writes about habeas corpus. By night, he plays in a rock band and cooks up a mean paella.

UC-Berkley grad Anthony Gregory is a research fellow at the Independent Institute in California. Focusing on civil liberties and libertarian theory, he recently released a book entitled *The Power of Habeas Corpus in America*.

In addition to research and writing, Anthony also coordinates the student programs at the institute, which include internships and summer seminars.







You recently authored a book entitled *The Power of Habeas Corpus in America*. While researching and writing, did anything surprise you?

The history of it is much rockier than most expect. Habeas corpus, as a judicial power, is itself tainted by the vagaries of politics and corruption. It arose largely as a way for judges to flex their own authority over others, and has been used to bring slaves back to their masters and centralize political power.

Many of the courts that first used it were royal courts, mainly to bring forth prisoners and scrutinize the authority of lower judges. In that way, habeas corpus was used for top-down judicial centralization.

In my book, I argue that habeas corpus definitely has a good side. But judges, politicians, and legislatures have worked together to restrain a lot of its potential to do good and have helped it do bad.

What period in U.S. history was the most damaging to personal freedom?

The Civil War was the most awful period for Americans while it lasted, including for most slaves who endured multiple sources of oppression. Internationally, U.S. entry into World War I might have had the worst international consequences, but World War II was more destructive to foreign and domestic lives. Truman is my least favorite president, but FDR, Wilson, Lincoln, and many others deserve honorary mention. We've had many presidents who killed hundreds of thousands of people.

What current political issue have libertarians tended to ignore or not care about as much as they should?

Perhaps prisons. For a long time, libertarians (and many others) were too quiet about war, immigration, and police abuses, but these areas are getting more attention. Overall, the prison system is probably the most inhumane and unjust enterprise within the United States.





Prisons are the ultimate deprivation of liberty. There are a lot of people in prison who certainly don't belong there, either because their offenses were victimless crimes or because their offenses were not proportional to prison. The prisons in the U.S. are, by and large, very inhumane. Solitary confinement, which holds about 100,000 Americans at any given time, is regarded by much of the world as torture. In a more humane world, the fact that we have over two million people behind bars would come up in every presidential campaign.

The prison system is probably the most inhumane and unjust enterprise within the United States.

The power to imprison is the power to destroy someone's liberty entirely.

Many individuals skeptical of libertarianism question how things like art and education would function in a free society. How do you think libertarian society would produce art and culture?

Artists would make the art, as they do regardless of what the state does, short of murdering artists like under the Taliban or Pol Pot. Art would flourish, of course. Culture also exists free of state violence, and will overall tend to evolve to be more civilized more quickly without government. Since it comprises the actions and memories of humanity, we each have a role to play in trying to move culture in a better direction. That will continue to happen, and a free society would require a broadly freedom-loving culture anyway. It's possible for things to go sour under statelessness, but there are some limits to the evils, and we libertarians and all humanitarian folk can do our part to address injustices outside of the state.

If all public schools were eliminated tomorrow, what would happen?

Education is a natural process. It requires curiosity and people willing to teach. So many folks are willing and eager to teach. The demand for real education won't go away. With modern technology, communities, businesses, organizations, families, co-ops, and social groups would begin quickly filling the gap, and before long children would have the opportunity to learn ac-



cording to their own needs and wishes. Young people would go into vocational training, and the basics would be there for anyone who wanted to learn. When kids learn in schools today, it is almost always despite the institutional nature, not because of it. Kids who can learn in the schools that exist now would continue to learn, but better, and millions would be liberated. It would be one of the greatest triumphs for liberty and humanity in history. Parents, unfortunately, support this system, and there's a long-term cultural change that needs to happen before children are treated more humanely.

## And finally, share some personal goals for the future.

I want to pursue higher academics (and by that, I mean grad school), have kids with my soon-to-be wife, write more books on a variety of subjects, work on neglected libertarian theory, record some albums, be in a play, and travel.

## WENDY MCELROY

Wendy McElroy, a Canadian individualist feminist author, has written countless articles and several books on topics ranging from anarchist history to sexual expression. Her most recent effort, *The Art of Being Free*, is an eloquent exposition of the state of liberty in our world. An emotional connection to the social philosophy she cares about so deeply shines brightly in every word she pens.



As the following reveals, Wendy holds nothing back, and her opinions are refreshingly uncensored. In the tradition of her intellectual role models Benjamin Tucker and Samuel E. Konkin III, her distaste for the state is matched in intensity only by her love of humanity.

## How does the reception of libertarian ideas differ in Canada from in the U.S.?

Canada is more muted about almost everything than the U.S. is, and it does not have the same



social dynamics or, at least, not to the same degree. This has some positive effects. For example, there are no pretensions of empire even though Canadian troops take part in United Nations campaigns. I think this makes Canada more receptive to libertarian ideas on some issues like anti-war. Thus, draft dodgers from the States were officially welcomed to Canada by the then-Prime Minister Lester Pearson.

On the other hand, there are negative effects. For example, Canada has a longer history of some socialist-style entitlements such as universal coverage of health care. The system here is a single-payer one with the government being the holder of the purse full of stolen money known as taxes. Anyone who argues against the health setup is almost immediately dismissed as a crank because most people have grown up with it, know nothing else, and are satisfied.

I write mostly for an American audience, however, as the political issues and atmosphere of the States have a marked tendency to spill upward over the border. I remember a contest run by the Canadian equivalent of *Time* magazine. The goal of the contest was to come up with a saying that expressed what it meant to be Canadian in a manner akin to the U.S. saying “as American as apple pie.” The winner: “as Canadian as possible under the circumstances.”

## What does being an “individualist feminist” mean? How is it different from conventional feminism?

In terms of theory, individualist feminism demands an equality of rights for both sexes under a just legal system. A just legal system is one that exists to protect the individual sovereignty of every human being and applies the law without bias. In the nineteenth century, the demand meant pressing for women to have the recognized ability to contract for their own wages, property, and equal custody of children. Today, it means advocating the elimination of laws that privilege women and disadvantage men, particularly in family court and in matters relating to affirmative action. Equality under just law means equality.

In terms of history, individualist feminism is distinct from the mainstream movement in that it views government as the problem and not the solution. For example, the free love movement was overwhelmingly individualist. It called for all personal and sexual decisions to be left to the conscience of the individuals involved — not to government, not to the church. Free love functioned under the banner of “Authority OUT!” By contrast, mainstream feminism appealed to government for laws and assistance in furthering their political goals. Of course, their goals



often involved becoming part of the political establishment in terms of voting and of being effective in implementing laws (e.g. prohibition, pure foods, child labor). Although individualist feminism might have agreed with specific aims (e.g. restricting child labor), as a general rule they did not appeal to government.

In terms of issues, individualist feminism stressed and stresses respect for the individual woman and her choices; all it asks is, “Do those choices involve consensual adults?” An example is sex work. Years ago, I conducted interviews and surveys with hundreds of sex workers, most of whom were prostitutes. I found it impossible to dismiss an adult, cogent woman who explained why she sold the services of her body as a prostitute rather than as a secretary. I disagreed and I disagree with that choice, but I also disagree with people who work as morticians or who perform autopsies. I couldn’t do it, but that’s a personal matter. My reaction says nothing about the propriety of such work. Of course, mainstream feminism dismisses the choice of sex work because it views women who make that choice to be victims of patriarchy. That is to say, they have been programmed by white male culture to embrace their servitude as freedom. As an individualist feminist, I respect women’s peaceful choices even if the choice is one I cannot imagine making myself.

## If you could meet any economist, philosopher, or libertarian of the past, who would it be?

I would most like to meet the nineteenth century individualist anarchist Benjamin Tucker. It is not merely that I have read every word he published over and over again, it is that I have important disagreements (e.g. on the labor theory of value) to which I would love to hear his answers, given the advances in libertarian economic theory since his day. Tucker knew every radical of import during his time and actively addressed every significant issue and event, such as the Haymarket fiasco.

I also have a hidden agenda. Tucker died in the stated belief that he had wasted his life in advocating anarchy. I’d like him to know that, one century afterward, there are people like me who are quoting his words and honoring him as a mentor and forerunner. I am sure he would be stunned by the knowledge. And I would like to be the intellectual brick upside his head that stuns him into realizing the importance of what he wrote and did for so many years for no other reason than a belief in freedom.



## What has been the greatest invention of the last two years?

The perfecting of 3-D printers has the potential of doing for manufacturing what Gutenberg did for publishing. That is, they could give individuals the power and the freedom to provide for their own physical needs or wants by setting up a device in their own garage. (Gutenberg provided individuals with the ability to provide for their own intellectual needs and wants.) Individuals could become independent of the big businesses that monopolize the manufacture of certain goods like cars. This would also give independence from the taxes and other government fees attached to those goods. Moreover, a 3-D printer in a garage allows the privacy required to own a gun without going through incredible harassment of state requirements. The printers are revolutionary because they empower the individual.

As an anti-IP (intellectual property) libertarian, I also hope that 3-D printers strike a severe blow to patents just as Gutenberg and Xerox printers struck a blow to copyright.

## Before Kinsella, Palmer, Boldrin, or Levine, you were making the modern case against IP. Who or what helped you reach your conclusions at the time?

Four people had a deep impact on my approach to IP. Samuel E. Konkin III (SEK3) and I discussed IP almost constantly at several parties in Anarchovillage, an apartment building in which he and several other anarchists lived. SEK3 was the first anti-IP advocate that I knew personally and he was quite patient because I had not given the issue much thought before our conversations.

At the same parties, the science-fiction novelist Victor Koman chimed in and one comment he made had a deep impact upon me. He said, “Whenever I hear an idea, it immediately becomes a different idea than the one expressed because I integrate it with my knowledge or ignorance, my psychology, etc.” The idea not only changes but also becomes an aspect of the listener and so to claim ownership of the idea becomes a claim of ownership over another person.

I credit Benjamin Tucker — the editor of *Liberty* (1881-1908) — for refining my approach and being extraordinarily good at drawing distinctions, such as the difference between patents and copyrights. Reading his many articles on IP was like taking a college course.

Oddly enough, I was also pushed toward anti-IP by Lysander Spooner’s radical defense of copy-





right and patents. I had and have a great deal of respect for Spooner and I was not willing to dismiss his “Law of Intellectual Property” lightly so I poured over it instead. Frankly, I found Spooner’s arguments to be so unreasonable that I came to agree with Tucker’s assessment that the work was the only truly foolish thing written by Spooner.

## What do you think is the greatest hindrance to the libertarian cause? The obvious answer is the state, but do you agree?

Actually, I don’t agree. An anarchist friend of mine, Ken Gregg, once observed that if the state disappeared today, it would be reconstructed tomorrow because there is a market demand for authority. The greatest hindrance to liberty is the belief entrenched within people that government is necessary. Even those who believe government is evil consider it to be a necessary evil or the lesser of two evils, the greater one being anarchy by which they mean chaos.

This may well be a chicken-and-egg problem. It is difficult to judge whether people believe in the need for a state because an existing one has brainwashed them into longing for authority or whether a state only exists because people have a natural longing for authority. I suspect the former is true but it would require the abolition of the public school system, from kindergarten to graduate studies, in order to get a real sense of how a generation without exposure to constant propaganda would respond. Of course, abolishing all public education is a noble goal in its own right.

But, dealing with the situation as it exists today, the greatest obstacle is the willingness or eagerness of people to grant legitimacy and utility to government. You see it in crowds that rise to their feet to pledge allegiance or sing the national anthem. These are the same people who will bludgeon those who remain seated. You hear it from voters who believe “We, the people, are the government.” These people will treat non-voters with contempt because, to them, participating in the electoral process is a privilege and a duty. You watch it play out in parades of war veterans who are deemed heroes for going into foreign lands to kill strangers who have done them no personal harm and all because politicians command it. Try being the person who cries out to the passing uniforms, “You were cannon fodder, you were lied to, you committed murder, you are a disgrace.”

Despite the above sentiments, I am a populist and I don’t share a common attitude expressed by many libertarian intellectuals; namely, the average person is a sheep to whom you speak in monosyllables. I come from a lower working class family and I think truck drivers have a better



grasp of economic reality than most university economists. But what's true is true. And people do manifest a market demand for the product that is government.

## What can the average person do in their everyday normal life in order to further the cause of liberty?

Whenever it is possible without incurring great inconvenience, the average person should avoid using government services and prefer private ones. I do not advocate eschewing the use of services such as public roads because there is no realistic alternative and people need to buy groceries, go to work, and the host of other travel that daily life, a rich life, requires. But if you can use email or a private delivery company, then do not use the U.S. postal system. Or consider sending your children to a private school or homeschooling rather than to public school. Not everyone will be able to do so but everyone is able to consider those options. At every turn, people should ask themselves, "Is there a private alternative to government for whatever task or good I'm seeking?" And, yes, one of the government services you should eschew is the police. The alternative there? Be prepared to defend yourself.

Do not volunteer information to the state. Never fill in a form without asking why the information is required and never give out more than is absolutely necessary. This is true of forms distributed by private businesses as well because the barrier between the public and private spheres is breaking down in terms of data sharing. Become a privacy zealot.

Refuse to vote in electoral campaigns. A political office is a position of unjust authority, of unjust power over others. You have a right to transfer your own life and well-being into the hands of a politician but there is no comparable right to transfer the person of an unconsenting third party. Do not participate in placing a politician, a thug, into power over innocent human beings. Do not vote to place anyone in office.

Voting in referendums is a different animal. I recommend against it because any voting whatsoever legitimizes the process through participation. If you feel the need to vote on a referendum, however, cast a ballot only to repeal a law or to eviscerate it. Do not contribute to placing yet another law on the books. Better yet, spend the time you'd use up in voting by playing with your children or reading a good book.





## How do you respond to someone who challenges your stance on voting by appealing to a lesser evil or other strategic argument?

Voting in an electoral process — not on referendums — is not a strategic issue for me. An elected office is a position of unjust power over other people. I have the right to facilitate a politician into a position of power over me in much the same way I can sign over legal rights to an attorney. But I have no similar right to facilitate putting a politician in control of other people. The argument of opting for a lesser evil is not valid. It is similar to my claiming I should help a third party break your finger because someone else will break your leg if I don't. The real issue is that no one — not me, not a politician — has any business initiating force against you.

Even if I did accept electoral voting as a strategy, however, I would argue against it as unwise. There are so many reasons but a key one is the legitimacy that voting lends to the political process itself. That's why politicians are desperate to have people vote in the first place. It cloaks the organization of force that is the state in the appearance of being voluntary, of functioning with people's consent and blessing. The state does not have my consent and never will.

## What issue have libertarians tended to ignore or not care about as much as they should?

Children's rights. I think they have been ignored because it is a gray area with which it is difficult to grapple. I have difficulty. Children — especially infants — need constant and positive care to survive. You can forge the libertarian position that it is a violation of rights to do them harm, but what about neglecting them? Do parents have any legally enforceable duties to sustain the life of a child they brought into being? I have evolved ideas on the subject but there are next to no forums in which to discuss them because children's rights have fallen off the political radar of libertarianism.

Children — especially infants — need constant and positive care to survive. You can forge the libertarian position that it is a violation of rights to do them harm, but what about neglecting them?

Strange, because in the '80s, it was a hot topic. But it included the sexual rights of children and that



may well be why the issue was dropped like toxic waste. It is a shame because children are human beings too, and they deserve human rights.

## What has been a source of cognitive dissonance or inner struggle in your intellectual life?

There are so many sources or points of cognitive dissonance that it is difficult to choose one. But here goes. My husband once asked me a question that has haunted me and changed my approach to libertarianism. He said, “What if we’re wrong? What if we create a society that is entirely voluntary and we find it so offensive that we don’t want to live in it?” After all, there are many, many activities that disgust me even though they are not a violation of rights. The torture of animals for pleasure comes to mind. I find it difficult to imagine that a libertarian society would not be as close to ideal as life gets, but there are no guarantees.

The question has changed my approach to libertarianism in a very specific manner. I used to argue issues only from the direction of natural rights; that is, I would say “Anything that is peaceful.” I still do, and I stand by protecting any and all peaceful behavior. But I also insert my ethical views and qualms because I’d like to convince people toward what I consider to be proper behavior. An example is drug use. I advocate immediate decriminalization of all drugs and drug use, but I advise people against the use of specific drugs that I’ve seen destroy lives. Years ago, I would have never inserted my ethical objections to peaceful activities, but today I argue not just for personal freedom but for the establishment of a civil society.

Today I argue not just for personal freedom but for the establishment of a civil society.

## If you could change only one thing about yourself, what would it be?

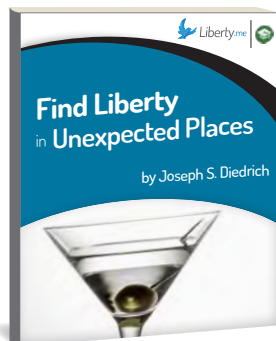
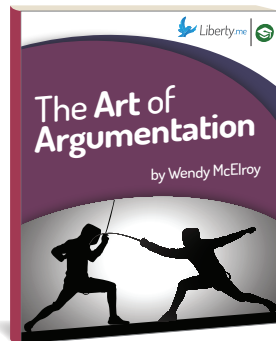
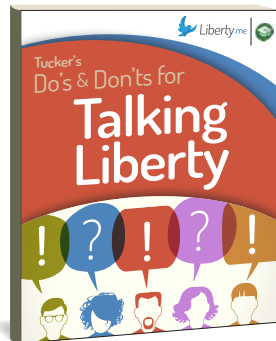
I would not worry so much about what might happen in the future. Most of my brooding is about things I cannot change or even influence, so what’s the point? The worrying only impoverishes the rich experiences that are right before me, waiting for me to be in a better mood. Once I have made all the preparations and precautions I can, I should let go of whatever may be looming on the horizon and get on with what Henry David Thoreau called “the business of living.”



# If you were writing your epitaph, what would you say?

"I was born, I lived by my values, I died. Now mind your own business."

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