

I Dream of Anarchy

Literally.

Last night I dreamt (whoa, spellcheck doesn't like "dreamt". This prompted Googling. Apparently some do not accept this spelling. Weird.) that I was at some event somewhere, and some guy showed up. He was there either as a maintenance man to fix some kind of large trailer, or he was there to interview the attendees. It was a dream, so maybe he shifted between both roles.

Anyway, he made some comment about libertarians being recalcitrant. I asked what he meant. The rest of the dream was a discussion between us. I told him the classical liberal tradition is long and broad. You might begin at Hesiod, then Aristotle. You might include interesting figures most have never heard of, like Auberon Herbert, as well as luminaries like Adam Smith and Milton Friedman.

As any good conversation about liberty ought to, it turned to the question of anarchy. Not in the positive, bomb-throwing sense. Anarchy simply meaning society without a political ruler, or without the initiation of violence. I shared with him a deep and rich body of thought, from Linda and Morris Tannehill, to Lysander Spooner, to Frank Chodorov, to Roy Childs, to David Friedman (Milton's son), to Spencer Heath MacCollum, to Murray Rothbard, to Leo Tolstoy, to Leonard Read, to Randy Barnett, to John Hasnas, to Bruce Benson, to Robert Higgs, to Edward Stringham, to Peter Leeson, to Jeffrey Tucker and more.

Then we discussed the lived experience of a great many societies at a great many periods in history - some long, some short. We talked about the Hanseatic League. We talked about free market money in Scotland. We talked about the *not so wild, wild West* in the U.S. before government and military arrived to "civilize" it with violence. We talked about the nearly three-hundred years of peaceful anarchy in Iceland.

We talked about every major function of the current government - from police, to courts, to rule-making, to defense, to infrastructure, to money, to education, to health care - and discovered how every one of them emerged as a market function that was only co-opted by violent monopolists late in the game, and that the monopolized version is in every way morally and practically inferior to its voluntary foundation.

I haven't had an ideological debate or attempt to persuade anyone in years. I've moved into the world of action through entrepreneurship, trying to build a freer, better, more peaceful world through voluntary exchange instead of arguments. But this dream was a ton of fun. I woke up with my mind reeling through all the other stuff we didn't even touch on. My intellectual and experiential journey to anarchism took nearly a decade and thousands

such arguments, books, lectures, observations, points, and counterpoints. It felt like I crammed a few years worth into a single conversation in a dream. It was kind of a rush!