

Rants, the March for Freedom, Podcasts



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"Finding the Challenges" is an original column appearing every other Wednesday at Everything-Voluntary.com, by Verbal Vol. Verbal is a software engineer, college professor, corporate information officer, life long student, farmer, libertarian, literarian, student of computer science and self-ordering phenomena. Archived columns can be found [here](#). FTC-only RSS feed available [here](#).

Sometimes I will use this column, begging your indulgence, for an old-fashioned rant. My inspiration is beginning to lose its edge since I am not standing in some bureaucrat's line anymore. The real reason I am showing some restraint (I do not easily lay aside a rant) is that on leaving that bureaucrat's lair, I began to listen to a podcast in my vehicle which brought up items that out-outraged my prior complaint. So today I will write about two outrages in the man's inhumanity to man league (MIML), then I will give a few strokes to the one, now diminished, lesser complaint from the pain in the *derriere* league (PITDL). That's right it is a PITDL'ing rant.

I cannot pass this date without recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the fiftieth anniversary of his "I have a dream" oration. Then, coming back to podcasts, I will begin my continuing reviews and opinions of more-or-less voluntaryist podcasts and other WWW resources.

Rants

Today, listening to the Angel Clark Show via podcast, I learned two items that were, to me, absolutely appalling. Neither of these things are fast breaking news. The podcasts were made in June of 2013. I carry an iPod in my pickup truck, chockful of of libertarian, voluntaryist, and anarchist podcasts, but I make no particular effort to be current. If I were just interested in unresearched, half-baked content I could just DVR cable news 24/7.

The first story from Angel was that of a dog owner, maybe in New Jersey, as I recall, who came home to find his door smashed in and his dear dog dead and full of multiple gun shots (massively in excess of anything the imagination could possibly consider as necessary). The dog was chained and closed in a single room. Blood and bullet holes were everywhere.

You guessed it – that sad old refrain – cops plus wrong address. And no, the dog had not been smoking weed. The occupant of the residence now had to pay for a new exterior door, repairs for bullet holes, cleanup of blood, and disposal of his dead pet. All the police could offer was a recorded response about how they were sure the action had been justified, but that there would be an internal “investigation.” In other words, we have our minds made up, but we will spend taxpayer funds whitewashing the file.

One has to wonder how any action other than inaction can be “justified,” when the whole raid was in error? You know, I never could have imagined, when I was learning about secret police and death squads in other non-American places, that the real horror would be born of incompetence. We all know in our hearts that the pitiful response of saying, “if you’ve done nothing wrong, then you have nothing to fear,” is a complete and total crockful.

As Angel Clark said, “this is unacceptable.” As a voluntaryist, isn’t this unacceptable to you? Volunteer your opinion.

Now Angel Clark comes with her knockout punch. There is a body of evidence that newborn children in Falluja, Iraq, have higher than a 14% birth-defect rate. This is 14 times higher than Nagasaki and Hiroshima, she states. What are we doing? This trauma does not even include the legacy of unexploded ordinance that haunts every country with whom we war.

What was happening in Falluja to justify our ruining the lives in prospect of every seventh child who will be born in the near future? How do we explain this to parents and siblings? Do we perform another bureaucrat’s pirouette – do we say we are sure that it was justified, but we will be conducting a formal investigation? Isn’t this just a horrible instance of the Delphi Technique?

Now for just a few swipes at the little rant. One of my most often remembered concepts came from James Gleick in his book *Faster*, in which he pointed out that most apparent efficiencies are achieved through stealing productive time from others. The University of Kentucky administration has raised this to the level of high art. Fifty-one years ago, when I was a callow freshman there, I was astounded at the mountains of procedural ineptitude. But even more astounding is that the ineptitude persists today, under a gloss of technological wonders.

But little rants are born of the huge problems of central planning. Every process becomes *about* the process, not the goal. It is mind deadening. It is the deadness of the mind that leads to the bureaucratic insensitivity that leads to dead dogs and deformed babies.

Martin Luther King, Jr., Not a Statist

The historic “March for Jobs and Freedom,” took place in Washington, D.C., on August 28, 1963, fifty years ago today. It’s time to take a look back on the memories and thoughts of

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered his famous “I Have A Dream” speech at the event. Although there was plenty of partisan disagreement on his place in history at the time, it seems to me that that has mellowed in this half century.

Natural rights and civil rights are disparate.

... never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. — John Donne

Whatever may have been the instrumentalities of the coming about of civil rights (a political neologism of the time), Martin Luther King, Jr.’s mind was always on freedom and individualism, not collectivism and statism. Converting the dream into a politician’s grandstanding play was LBJ’s statist doing, not MLK’s. Dr. King’s target was the white, European society that practiced supremacy by ignoring the precepts of the law. All he asked for was the promise made, though never recognized, by the founding fathers, and he expected fulfillment from their descendents, from all Americans, not just the political class. The term “civil rights” was just a cover for the politicians who saw when the tide was turning and leaped in to claim the victory, and to screw it up mightily.

The continuing lack of mutual esteem between whites and blacks is a legacy of the incompetent statesmanship of the politicians who played CYA with real peoples’ lives. It is my contention that if it had taken another decade of suasion from MLK, along with the already factual failure of the political system, then we would have achieved Dr. King’s dream rather than an empty statutory description of that dream.

If he has followers today who do not understand that, then they need to reconcile with freedom. We who fight for freedom do not need to reconcile with statism, ie. the intellectually bankrupt idea that ends justify means. I believe that MLK believed in ends that were positive and means which were positive. But he was never a manipulator and therefore not a believer in politics. He was a very patient, persevering man.

When a good friend wrote “...given Dr. King’s call for more centralization of authority and control of the economy and his push for the federal government to provide health, education, and living subsidies...,” calling on me to concede that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a statist, I rejected the premise. I’m not willing to concede those givens. Only hindsight could possibly be woven into such a context. Because MLK did A, then because self-promoting usurper’s did B, therefore B was MLK’s goal all along? That pooch won’t hunt.

I see King’s vision as light years in advance of anything that happened in the 60s. In a way, I liken his presence to Jefferson’s position when the Louisiana Purchase became available. Regardless of what the shoulds were, we were talking about huge paradigm shifts. Furthermore, I believe MLK was saying the society needs to change its ways. I don’t care how you do it, just do it – do the right thing. If he had been a statist, we would still be drinking from separate water fountains.

MLK Was a Game-Changer, Not a Gradualist

Almost everything Dr. King did was a ground-breaker, and to put narrow labels on him now strikes a sour note. Because the state responded with the most punitive implementations of what MLK and other freedom champions sought, does not justify calling him a statist. Look at history. Whenever the state is cornered into an unavoidable change, the tendency is usually to implement it in the most draconian fashion possible, on the theory that the only way to get rid of a bad law (a redundancy, I know) is to enforce it rigidly. Thus we get things like busing and court-imposed reverse discrimination.

I would compare MLK's contribution to American history to the grandest turns of human affairs. His influence was in the range of Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase. It was a one-time deal, and it made all the difference. But neither was by the book. The book was written while the history was being made.

Fifty years ago, I undervalued the highly principled courage and consistency of Dr. King. I am still, and was then, a big jazz fan. In the jazz milieu I had been going through, and had become devoted to, the civil rights movement for six years already by the date of the march. I often attended performances in the nearby university town, in the black neighborhoods, and in hillbilly neighborhoods, I followed bluegrass music. I thought the segregation in both venues was pretty useless.

Many years before, my mother had defied the rules on Chattanooga city buses, doing a reverse Rosa Parks by choosing to sit in the back, along with us toddlers, my sister and I. I took the advance toward civil rights as a given. But in retrospect I see what champions MLK and Mohammad Ali and my favorite jazzmen were.

On the other hand, since no politician can give a thing without first taking it from another, I now realize that our net overall civil liberties are far less. This is the price we pay for asking government to solve our humanistic problems. Instead of imposing slavery through presumptions about race, we now impose it by presumptions about state power.

In any case, one of the great experiences of my life was being a student, from 1988, then a faculty member, in 1997, at Kentucky State University, the historically black college in our state. I felt that MLK was directly responsible for that wonderful opportunity.

Podcasts Galore

In my previous column I wrote that I was going to get around to sharing access to some of my favorite podcasts with you. That got me to thinking about the sharing idea, so I ramped it up. Last week I established a new Facebook page titled the **Libertarian Podcast Exchange and Directory**. There are already 67 fans of the page, and many have contributed listings. Why don't you visit, click on Like, discover and listen to a new podcast, and share some

recommendations on your favorite online media for voluntaryists?

I already clued you in to Angel Clark's Show, but let me tell you now in some detail about five more of my favorite sources. I tend to listen to audio only podcasts because I drive over 250 miles a week, six or more hours. My truck's radio is equipped to play MP3 recordings.

The list is in no particular order, but the first listing is my personal favorite:

- **Bad Quaker Dot Com** – I have mentioned Ben Stone's podcast before, but until further notice, he will always top any list of recommendations from me. If you were lucky enough to go to Porcfest 2013, you already know about Ben, but why wait until next Spring to hear him again? If you haven't heard him yet, there is no way I can describe him so that you will not be blown away when you do hear him.
- **Common Sense, with Dan Carlin** – This guy is a professional radio man and historian. His more famous – justifiably so – podcast is Hardcore History, where you can find in depth, multiple episode eras of history, such as the fall of the Roman Empire. But his product that really resonates with me is Common Sense, very appropriately named as it is on a par with the work of Thomas Paine. Dan cannot be narrowly labeled as a voluntaryist, libertarian, conservative, liberal, or anarchist, but he is certainly no statist.
- **Freedom Feens** – Michael W. Dean and Neema Vedadi's website describes their show as "fun 'n' feisty thrice-weekly chat syndicated on radio by Genesis Communications Network. All about true free markets, the digital police state, self-defense, real money, activism, DIY media, pets, rock 'n' roll, and finding your place in the world." Warning, they can be irreverent – but a breath of fresh air nonetheless.
- **Penn's Sunday School** – I have been a huge fan of Penn Jillette ever since I saw Penn and Teller's wonderful magic act live on Broadway in 1985. When I finally realized I was a libertarian, it came as no surprise that Penn was too. If you think the Feens are industrial-strength irreverent, then Penn is an acid bath of irreverence.
- **Mises Daily** – I expect all of the above to be around for a long time, but none of them are as firmly grounded and deep-seated sources of serious voluntaryist philosophy as this treasure trove from the Ludwig von Mises Institute (LvMI) at Auburn University. This is also a wonderful source for audiobooks, ebooks, traditional books, etc., either free or very reasonably priced.

Please let us know via the comments below, which are your favorites. Stay tuned for more.

This is my thirteenth column, which means that I have been at it for half a year now. I love having this opportunity to share my ideas with other voluntaryists. But I may have shot myself in the foot by giving you news about all the great podcasts out

there. How will you now make time for my little articles? Maybe EVC should start including podcasts soon. I think I will talk to our editor, Skyler Collins, about hosting a short audio version of "Finding the Challenges."

You may take some guff from friends and loved ones about your deeply held voluntaryist convictions, particularly when you rant. But it is all important. The more you may be rebuffed, the closer you are coming to striking a nerve. Resisting learning about things we wish to avoid is a natural tendency, but such avoidance aids the indoctrinators. Remember, Socrates said "The unexamined life is not worth living."