



Steve Bannon Hates Libertarians?!

Paul Meekin

March 28, 2017

According to a recent *Reason.com* [article](#), Steve Bannon thinks libertarians are shallow and don't live in the real world:

“(With) Republicans, it’s all this theoretical Cato Institute, Austrian economics, limited government — which just doesn’t have any depth to it. They’re not living in the real world.”

In the interest of fairness, Bannon ‘slammed’ Democrats too:

“Democrats are fundamentally afflicted with the inability to discuss and have an adult conversation about economics and jobs, because they’re too consumed by identity politics.”

Even though Bannon didn't mention libertarians by name, nor did *the New York Times Magazine* story *Reason.com* cited – Bannon using the terms Small Government and Austrian economics could be taken as an attack on libertarians.

But he's also not wrong about either party. Democrats and 'the left' do tend to focus on identity politics – social justice, equality, making as many services available to as many people as possible – regardless of cost, or how those programs could cause the disadvantaged to have less an incentive to -sigh- ‘pull themselves up by their bootstraps’. They are well intentioned but often short cited.

Republicans – and libertarians, have a different problem – they're all about the big picture, and tend to miss out on details. Libertarians are about business and economics – but they have an unrealistic amount of faith in people to do the right thing and to survive on their own after being coddled for years.

The expectation is if you eliminate the welfare state, government subsidized healthcare, most federal regulations on business and the environment, everything would more-or-less sort itself

out in due time – which is questionable when you consider human nature for a moment. These are extreme policies that do ultimately result in a fair and just society, but there would be incredible growing pains if they were implemented immediately.

Even if a libertarian candidate was elected President and did all the things libertarians wanted in a Trumpian abuse of power via executive order after executive order – the people who suddenly lost all those delicious entitlements, would vote in someone to give them back.

The same thing is happening now regarding some of the social protections President Obama put in place – regarding hunting, transgender bathrooms, and healthy school lunches. A pendulum always swings back toward the center.

Bannon is currently in the business of making real government policy with real lawyers and is seeing how federal sausage gets made. And we can agree the sausage machine ain't the sharpest or cleanest in the world...and it's worth questioning the quality of the meat he has to work with, too.

So, when Bannon makes a political observation I would hope we take his word for it. Say what you will about him. He's a bigot, white nationalist, socialist -whatever – he's not dumb and his opinion holds value.

But *Reason's* Editor-in-Chief, **Nick Gillespie**, took Bannon's comments as a direct attack and launched into a full-throated defense of libertarians while claiming Trump (and Bannon) don't live in the real world – citing Trump made up facts about terrorist attacks, rallies, and other things.

President Trump is so famously post-factual that he cites riots that never happened as pretexts for executive orders, invents crime statistics out of thin air, and insisted for years that Barack Obama was born in Kenya. But it's libertarians who are nuttier than a squirrel's turd? Sure, why not

He too, is not wrong. Yet, this is the political equivalent of "Takes one to know one!". It's more noise. The sub headline states "*Economic nationalist*" *Trump adviser blasts people foolish enough to believe in "Free Minds and Free Markets."*

But Bannon didn't say that. "Free Minds" or "Free Markets" don't appear in either article after that sub-heading. He questioned the depth of an ideology beyond its theory – which is fair.

Look, it's clear *Reason's* Editor-in-Chief is smart and a dangerously provocative writer, but he's unloaded a double barreled shotgun of vitriol at a guy waving a pointy stick of fair criticism. What the hell happened to the non-aggression principle?

The irony is that libertarians are being called shallow by Bannon, and Gillespie launches into an attack we've heard a million times before. Cover songs get old, sir.

Regardless, should we expect Nick Gillespie to take Bannon's comments seriously and to engage in a thoughtful, introspective exploration of the libertarian platform's pros and cons, and how the

platform can be galvanized to effect change in the real world? To take Bannon's comments as a challenge and not an attack?

We should.

But in the real world, it appears unreasonable.