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## First They Came for "The Most Famous Libertarian," And I Did Nothing, Even Though I Was He...

Nick Gillespie | August 27, 2010

Jeezus, it's been like almost a day since our last post about whether libertarians are any use, or should partner with liberals, or should propose a Vulcan mind-meld with the Suppository People of Uranus or whatever.

So here goes: Last night, in the middle of a good dream, I was deemed to be the "most famous libertarian" in the world (Hi, Mom!) by the Washington Examiner's Tim Carney:

In the wake of my column on the collapse of a liberal-libertarian coalition, an office-mate asked me who was the most famous libertarian. We struggled for 5 minutes, and came up with Nick Gillespie, at Reason Magazine. Maybe we missed someone, but we couldn't think of any prominent politicians who fit the bill.

Carney goes on to note that there are no "libertarian" politicians currently in Congress and that the most free-market-oriented pols (e.g., Rep. Ron Paul of Texas) are actually very conservative on abortion and other social issues. He concludes: "Makes you wonder — maybe there's something about the socially liberal agenda that draws someone away from economic freedom."

His whole bit is here.

Now maybe it's heroin I just injected directly into my eye, but WTF?

I mean, really. How exactly am I a *libertarian*, a term I didn't invent, have never used as a self-description, or even have a clear understanding of what it means? It is true that I believe in as much as economic freedom as you can stuff into your pants pockets during trips to the salad bar and that I am socially tolerant. Is being in favor of legalized abortion (which I am), the crux? Or in favor of treating pot the same as gin? Being in favor of gay marriage? None of those issues, which are not all championed by liberals, have anything to do with my rock-solid belief in economic freedom. In fact, all of them proceed from the same belief in the individual's right to maximum autonomy.

But this makes me a *libertarian*, plain and simple. I am libertarian, hear me snore! Yes on free trade, deregulation, legalizing drugs, opening borders, the state treating all individuals (even

gay Republicans) equally, getting the government out of education, and more. I do not own a beret and have never smoked a clove cigarette. I believe that my legs have a right of self-determination equal to my arms'. I could go on, but I think my meaning is clear: *Libertarian* is about "Free Minds and Free Markets" (subscribe, dammit!); it's a belief that life is too precious to be wasted on something as stupid as politics, so let's shrink the areas in which that sort of consensus is necessary to the smallest sphere possible. And then let's let folks live their lives basically however they want as long as they're not infringing on other's people rights to do the same.

The main pushers of the monicker liberaltarian are Reason contributors Brink Lindsey and Will Wilkinson, who are writing a book on the subject titled *The Free-Market Progressive: How We Can Use Capitalist Acts Between Consenting Adults to Create Justice, Peace, and Prosperity*.

*That* sounds liberaltarian to me and I wish them well on completing the manuscript and nothing but caviar dreams and champagne kisses when the book hits the shelves.

Now back to the book that I am writing with Matt Welch, which is tentatively titled (I shit you not), *The Declaration of Independents: How libertarian politics can fix what's wrong with America*.

And Tim Carney (a good friendly acquaintance and generally one of the best political writers around), can I get a kilo of whatever you and the office-mate were tripping on last night?

It's Go Time. #1 signing off!:

