

**WWE's Kane: Libertarian**  
**Guest: Glenn JACOBS (Kane)**  
**October 28**

**Glenn JACOBS is the enormously popular professional wrestler Kane.**

**WOODS:** Glenn, I'm afraid I'm going to be asking some questions that you've probably answered a million times, but not everybody has heard the answers. And then I'm going to ask some that you haven't been asked before. But the first question that everybody wants to have answered involves how you become a libertarian. What was the path?

**JACOBS:** It was sort of a big circle, really. I remember one of my first memories when I was a kid was my parents talking about the evils of eminent domain, so maybe from the very start I was destined to be a libertarian. But then as I went through school and got to college, by the time I was in college, I'd been indoctrinated into socialist thinking. Then I got out into the real world. I'm like, man, someone has to actually pay for this stuff, and it seems to be me a lot of the time. But I sort of went between, "Am I a liberal? Am I conservative?" And back and forth. The problem was that I agreed sometimes with what quote, unquote, "both sides of the political spectrum" said, but on the other hand, I disagreed with various things that they said.

And then a friend introduced me to the term *libertarianism*, and I'd never even heard of that before. This would have been in the late 1990s, and I just started doing some research. And I was like, man, I actually agree with like 90 or 99 percent of what these folks are saying. And at the time, I looked at liberty more as an *ad hoc* thing. Libertarian philosophy that is. I agreed with some issues, and maybe I didn't agree with another issue per se, but I agreed with most of the issues. Then I realized it really is a philosophy that we're talking about, the nonaggression axiom, that the government should be bound by the same moral laws that the rest of us are. Once you realize that, your entire world opens up, and your entire paradigm changes.

Then of course along the way I discovered Austrian economics, and that changed the way I looked at the world too, because I discovered that everything is about economics. And there is no way to sort of compartmentalize human liberty into "Okay, I have social liberty and I have economic freedom." No, they're the same thing. If you don't have economic freedom, you don't have personal liberty. Vice versa—if you don't have personal liberty you don't have economic freedom, either.

**WOODS:** So who were some of the people, the books, that played a role in formulating your thinking?

**JACOBS:** There were a lot of folks. Harry Browne was very influential on me. Then of course Ron Paul, John Stossel, Peter Schiff, Tom Woods.

**WOODS:** Thank you.

**JACOBS:** And then I discovered a guy named Murray Rothbard, and once you come across Rothbard, it's all over. The arguments he makes are so logical, and they're so faultless that you really can't disagree with him.

**WOODS:** Now, I want to ask what people on Facebook and Twitter have been asking. Do you talk about this sort of stuff in the locker room? Do you talk to other wrestlers about this stuff? Do you find any of them are sympathetic? Or do you say, "That's my personal life, and here's my business life, and they don't meet."

**JACOBS:** Well, we're around each other so much, of course we do talk about various things. It was actually a co-worker, Shawn Morley, that introduced me to the term *libertarianism*, and I do talk with the guys. More so, they actually seek me out now, because they know that I'm into economics and finance. So they'll come and ask my opinion about various things, because I've sort of become well known as the libertarian guy in

the locker room, I guess.

**WOODS:** How well do you know Jesse Ventura?

**JACOBS:** I've only talked with Jesse a couple times. I actually gave him Ron Paul's *End the Fed* book personally, but I've only talked with Jesse a handful of times.

**WOODS:** Okay, tell me: I didn't know anything about this, but somebody again on Facebook brought it up—thank heavens I outsourced this. I said, all right, we've got the great Kane coming on, what shall we talk about? And somebody told me about this IP lawsuit years ago against what was then the WWF by the World Wildlife Fund. Do you know about this? The World Wildlife Fund wanted to be able to use WWF. They didn't want you guys using it, and the wrestlers lost. What do you know about that? What are your views on that?

**JACOBS:** When the Internet was really coming into prominence, I think what happened—and I could be wrong about this—is that basically both organizations wanted [www.wwf.com](http://www.wwf.com). And I think, actually, World Wildlife Fund owned the copyright for WWF, and there was an agreement with us, with the wrestling company, and the World Wildlife Fund that they would allow us to use that. And then of course we both wanted the domain name [www.wwf.com](http://www.wwf.com). So we ended up switching our name to WWE, so we could have [www.wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com). I could be wrong about that, but that's my understanding of how the whole thing went down.

**WOODS:** What do you think about this? What are the rights and wrongs of this?

**JACOBS:** I don't know.

**WOODS:** I don't want to get you in trouble with the World Wildlife Fund.

**JACOBS:** I know one thing: the panda bears beat us, which is quite ironic. The whole deal with intellectual property and all that—people can come down on either side of it. Then, of course, it is a bit of a property rights issue, because the Internet domain names are a scarce resource. I just don't know the ins and outs of it enough to really be able to comment on it that much.

**WOODS:** All right, that's fair enough, but I figured I should bring it up. Of course, the other thing everybody wants to know—and again, I'm sorry to burden you with it, because you get it all the time—is whether you have any political aspirations, and if so, what are they? And if not, why not?

**JACOBS:** I don't know if I have any political aspirations or not. We'll see what the future brings. People are always trying to get me to run for office. I think a lot of the reason for that is the success that Jesse Ventura had. I don't know if that is going to be my particular course. I think that the political system is irrevocably broken, unfortunately. I do not think that change is going to come from participating in electoral politics. I do believe that electoral politics offers a tremendous bullhorn and a great platform for people to get out and express the ideas that we express. I don't know. In fact, I doubt at this point in time if change for the better will actually come through electoral politics. So I concentrate more on education and more on outreach in that way, and really on marketing.

And sometimes we use the term marketing, when you think about it, in a less than noble way. We think of the sleazy marketers. Well that's not the case at all. Marketing is pointing out to individuals why they would benefit from a product. I think we don't do a good job of that. We need to convince people why everyone benefits from liberty, and we often make the great logical arguments for liberty, but we don't make the emotional arguments. And I think that's something that we need to concentrate more on. So I don't know. It just depends on what the future brings. As the Austrian economists say, "The future's unpredictable." So I don't know where I'm going.

**WOODS:** I completely understand and respect that, and I also fear—especially if you were to run against Lamar Alexander, which would of course be fun to watch. I mean it’s easy for me to say, “Go ahead, Kane, I’m right behind you.” It’s easy for me, and of course, you would be smeared like you would not believe. It would be horrendous. Of course, you’re a big, tough guy. I’m sure you could get through it, but it would be a really tough thing. I’m not saying you shouldn’t do it, or you should do it. But all the same, my feeling is that, yes, it doesn’t seem likely that there is going to be a political solution. But then I’m not totally sure then what the theory is according to which we can solve our problems without politics. Can we really ever imagine that enough people will just withdraw their consent from the system and it simply collapses of its own weight? I understand that politics is not going to solve the problem. Then what? What else is our alternative?

**JACOBS:** Sure, and that is a great question. That’s something I struggle with myself. My main thing is trying to change the things at a local and a state level, because I think that’s where you can have more impact. I think you would agree with me that the federal government is lost. There are too many special interests that control the electoral process, that control the politicians, and the states have to once again become that buffer that interposes themselves between the federal government and the residents of the states. That’s something that I’m trying to concentrate more on, is getting people to look at state and local politics, and I’m not for a strong government at any level. However, trying to strengthen the state governments at the expense of the federal government—de-funding, downsizing the federal government. And again having the states interpose themselves, which is the way that our system of federalism is always supposed to have been, but unfortunately at some point in time it got lost.

**WOODS:** Can I draw out from you the word nullification? Are you okay with that word?

**JACOBS:** Yeah, I think nullification would be a very good thing, and frankly the states are starting to do it to some extent. And they’re talking about it. Even blue states with their marijuana laws are talking about it. So certainly I think if we say that people should have the right to self-govern, the right to self-determination, that would necessarily then introduce the idea that when the central government does something which is contrary to the wishes of the people of a certain state that the people of that state should be able to do something about it or to say something about it. And with this whole Obamacare deal, this thing is an abject failure already. It’s already collapsing under its own weight. I don’t think it can actually be implemented because it’s just so clumsy and just so awkward. But you know that would have been a great opportunity for the states and hopefully some still do, to step forward and say we’re not going to participate in this, and we’re not going to make our residents and our citizens participate in this particular program.

**WOODS:** All right, I want to get back to your own situation. You endorsed Ron Paul in his two presidential runs. Had you already sort of come out, so to speak, as a libertarian in the public eye, or was that the moment at which you did it?

**JACOBS:** No, I had already come out before that, but that was sort of what really raised my profile. Because, of course, Ron Paul—his impact on our movement has been amazing. It’s been spectacular. I think that he has converted more people—and I shouldn’t use the word *convert*—he has made more people realize that they are libertarians perhaps than anyone in history with the Ron Paul Revolution, all of the things that it launched. So for me it was maybe a bit of a springboard into the public consciousness a bit more.

**WOODS:** How did that come about? Did you contact them and say I want to endorse, or did they come to you?

**JACOBS:** I contacted them. It’s funny the way the world works, Tom. You meet one person, and he knows this guy, and they know this person and this person knows this person. That’s sort of what it was. I met some folks that actually knew some people in Dr. Paul’s office and from there, I started meeting all sorts of folks in the libertarian world.

**WOODS:** I have a question that comes to me right from the producer of this program: “In my experience, professional athletes are easier to bring to the ideas of liberty and free-market economics, perhaps due to the high degree of self-sacrifice and excellence that is demanded in their profession. Has this been your experience?”

**JACOBS:** One advantage that we have, and I’m sure it’s true of other athletes as well, is that we’re independent contractors. If you listen to the liberal media, that’s the worst thing in the world, because we aren’t provided with health care and retirement funds and all this various stuff. But I think it’s great, because I can actually determine what I do with my money. It’s up to me. I get to make those decisions. The other thing is that we are not subject to tax withholding, which if there was one thing that I could do if I ever became president for a day and could repeal one act it would be the tax withholding.

We actually have to write a check out to the IRS four times a year, every quarter, and that will make you find religion real quick when you’re the one writing the check as opposed to not seeing the money that you don’t get because it’s on the bottom of your paystub. So in that way, I found a lot of our guys, they know how much they pay in taxes. They know exactly how much they pay in taxes. So they may pay a bit more attention to how the government wastes that money than folks that don’t actually know how much they pay in taxes taxes and celebrate when they get a refund, because they don’t realize that it was their money to begin with.

**WOODS:** Of course, in my profession, where I don’t have a fixed salary from any source, I am in exactly your position. I make the payment every few months, and it’s just painful. It’s huge amounts. I’m basically opening the window and throwing it out.

**JACOBS:** And you’re looking at it going, “Man, what could I do with that money that would be constructive, not only in my own life but—reinvest it in business or do all sorts of stuff that helps other people? And I’m not wasting the money, because I’m doing it to benefit myself. The only way I can really benefit myself is by helping other people.”

**WOODS:** Of course I could just simply spend more time with the family.

**JACOBS:** That too.

**WOODS:** I could have more leisure time and not be doing interviews and stuff. Of course, I don’t earn anything from this podcast, but I’m driven constantly. And I still work even when I’m not feeling well and everything. It’d be nice to take a break from that, and I could if I didn’t have to pay so much in taxes. When someone tells me we’re undertaxed as a country, I just want to belt that person, but then I remember I don’t believe in that.

**JACOBS:** What is it? Medieval serfs paid about 25 percent of their crops to the estate lord, to the manor of the lord, and Americans are paying 50 percent in taxes by the time you figure in income tax and then all the various state and local taxes. And to think that we’re not overtaxed is insane. And then the whole idea, the whole premise of taxation needs to be examined. It’s based on theft. No matter what the leftists may say and what government officials say, I don’t have that much choice in the matter. The money is expropriated from me whether I like it or not. And if I don’t pay, I get fined or I go to jail, or I may be killed. So we have to examine the whole idea, the whole premise upon which taxation resides. Once you do that you realize that any tax rates are actually overtaxation.

**WOODS:** Can I ask you—now I’ve got two tough questions in a row that you may not want to go on the record on, but we’ll see how you feel. The first one is: would you describe yourself as a Rothbardian in terms of a totally no-state person, or are you more of a minarchist, a Founding-Fathers kind of guy?

**JACOBS:** I would be a theoretical Rothbardian.

**WOODS:** Nice, okay.

**JACOBS:** I think for practical purposes in our lifetime, of course, it's going to be very hard to get there. I would welcome opportunities to downsize this, but from a theoretical level, I think that that is the most moral system. And also I do believe that it's achievable.

**WOODS:** The other question involves steroid use. We see congressional hearings regarding steroid use in other sports. What is your view about all that?

**JACOBS:** First of all, the federal government shouldn't be involved in that. It's not in the Constitution, so they shouldn't be involved in a constitutional paradigm. I don't take steroids myself. I never have. I think that they do pose a health risk. The WWE has a very strong drug policy at this point, which I applaud them for. I guess, Tom, philosophically I look at it and my deal with sports is I've always been attracted to the story. I remember when Kirk Gibson hit the home run that beat the Oakland A's. The Dodgers were these massive underdogs against the A's in the World Series, and Kirk Gibson hits this home run, and it's like a miracle. Then the *Rocky* movies—they have this underdog who works harder, and it's about the human spirit. Unfortunately, I think that we've taken that aspect out of sports, and sports has become just like a video game. I mean, you've got these athletes who are great athletes, but the idea of competition and the idea of working towards a goal and the idea of overcoming, which was always what attracted me to sports, have been somewhat lost at this point.

**WOODS:** What's the typical retirement age of somebody in the WWE?

**JACOBS:** It really depends. Because our business is based a lot on drama, you can keep on going for quite a while. A lot of it's self-imposed. I mean the guys have enough pride when they reach a point where they can't perform maybe to the level that they would like to—that's when a lot of the guys decide to hang it up. But it really does vary by the individual.

**WOODS:** Just for my own curiosity's sake, can you tell us what your workout regimen is like, what the workout regimen of a professional wrestler is?

**JACOBS:** I work out five to seven days a week. I do a lot more cardio now than when I was younger, because I find that I can put weight on really easily. But it's hard for me to keep the fat off, especially as I get older. And what I do is I train one body part with weights per day. That varies. Sometimes I also do circuit training, where you train your entire body like every other day. When I was younger, I lifted heavy all the time, and I still probably go heavier than most people would in the gym. But I don't go as heavy as I used to, because my joints can't take it anymore. I think the main thing is just getting into the gym and being consistent, and not only for my profession but also for my life in general and just trying to take care of myself, not only in the gym but also with my diet and all that sort of stuff.

**WOODS:** Where can people read your libertarian articles?

**JACOBS:** At [LewRockwell.com](http://LewRockwell.com) I have a number of articles and also I write about every two weeks for [DailyCaller.com](http://DailyCaller.com), and these aren't necessarily—The Daily Caller is more of a conservative website, but it has very strong libertarian leanings. So those might be considered a little bit more on the conservative side, but I try to weave in threads of libertarianism when I write for them as well.

**WOODS:** Nice, well, Glen Jacobs, I can't thank you enough for doing this. You're a ridiculous hero of mine. I can't help mentioning, of course—and I wouldn't put you on the spot like this if it weren't for the fact that you mentioned this on the air when you and I were on the radio together in Tennessee not long ago—that you actually are a member of [LibertyClassroom.com](http://LibertyClassroom.com), which is awesome. You're the most famous member we have.

**JACOBS:** I have to tell everybody this story. So Tom is nice enough to come onto a radio show in which the host had allowed me—this is the biggest talk station in Knoxville—and the morning host had allowed me to bring on some of the luminaries of the libertarian movement, so I asked Tom if he would come onto the show. And he was kind enough to do so. And then at the end of the show, he gives a discount for the Liberty Classroom, a significant discount if they type in KANE, my wrestling name, in all caps to the discount window on Liberty Classroom. Well, the thing was, I told Tom, I was like, “I’ve been a member for months. I don’t get the discount. What are you doing?”

**WOODS:** I’ll just say right now that Kane gets a free lifetime membership to the site. If I just remember to implement it he’ll get it.

**JACOBS:** And by the way, Liberty Classroom is great. I’ve learned more from the various courses that you have there over maybe the two weeks that it takes me to listen to the podcasts and read some of the other material than I ever did in high school or college, so you are providing a great service. Liberty Classroom. I think it’s absolutely awesome.

**WOODS:** Well, that’s very generous of you to say, and your being such a high-profile person who is fearless in advocating the principles of liberty, we’re very much in your debt. Thanks again for being here today.