



Retirement *Lifestyle* Advocates

RADIO PROGRAM

Expert Interview Series

Guest Expert: Jeffrey Tucker
Brownstone Institute

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Dennis Tubbergen:

You are listening to the Retirement Lifestyle Advocates radio program. I'm your host, Dennis Tubbergen. I'm chatting today with returning guest, Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. Jeffrey's been on the program many times. I always appreciate his perspective. He is the president and founder of the Brownstone Institute. The website is brownstone.org. I would encourage you to check it out. A lot of really good articles there and do a terrific job offering a truth perspective. And Jeffrey is also a daily columnist featured in the Epoch Times newspaper. So, Jeffrey, welcome back to the program and thanks for joining us.

Jeffrey Tucker:

It's always good to be here, Dennis. Thank you.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, your piece that you wrote and published on Brownstone Institute on June the 5th titled Twenty Grim Realities Unearthed by Lockdowns, and I'd encourage the listeners to go to brownstone.org and check it out. It's very well done. You know, you went through and pointed out a lot of realities. It wasn't exactly an uplifting article, but I found it to be fascinating and wanted to interview you about it. In the article you talk about the fact that one of the realities unearthed by the lockdowns would be surveillance and censorship by Big Tech. Three years ago you were a conspiracy theorist if you said that and now it is...

Jeffrey Tucker:

I know.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Without a doubt what happened, and it is reality.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Well, I'm particularly upset about this one because I had always been a champion of Big Tech. In fact, I thought technology and social media and all these platforms were going to kind of emancipate us from government. That was my theory. And now I realize that I kind of bought into a bit of a utopian view naively, thinking that just because these companies were starting new technologies and having to market them and play in a capitalistic marketplace, they would come to love capitalism and all the things I associate with that among which is privacy. That's not true.

What actually happened is that gradually and increasingly so during the pandemic, the tech companies cooperated very closely with government to share all of our data, to monitor all of our communications including private messaging companies like Twitter and LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, all of them became basically departments of government and departments of censorship and surveillance. And that is a shocking reality and that's why I listed it as the number one issue because the very thing that we thought was going to save us has actually become a source of oppression force. And it's very alarming to learn this, that when you're using these platforms, you know what? You can say what you might say. What you do say is being filtered by government priorities. And so during the pandemic, you couldn't criticize lockdowns or masking, much less the vaccine without bumping into the sensors, you would get your account deleted.

I mean, this is especially appalling for companies like LinkedIn because this is a platform that's designed for professionals to use to make themselves more marketable in the job marketplace. Well, a lot of people are losing their jobs because they wouldn't accept the vaccine. So imagine this. So you sign up for LinkedIn to extend your network, your professional network, and you've come to rely on it. And when your company comes along and says, you've got to get this job, well, you have some doubts about it so you refuse, and you post that on LinkedIn, unfortunately, I don't have a job anymore because I refused the vaccine because I think I didn't need it. Or I think it was dangerous or just it's against my conscience. And you post that on LinkedIn. LinkedIn then takes down your account. So the very time when you needed them the most, they were not there to help you. They were there to censor you and even take away your own professional network that you had trusted them to build.

And by the way, Dennis, it's much worse than we thought. It turns out a lot of these efforts were being directed by a thing called the Cyber Information Security Infrastructure Agency, something like that, or CISA. And CISA was the very agency within... I have to think about which department it's in. I don't quite remember right offhand, maybe HHS. But that's the agency that decided to divide the entire American workforce between essential workers and unessential workers, essential businesses and unessential businesses. They're the ones who did that. That same small agency that nobody even knew existed. They also operated as the censors, working very closely with social media companies the entire time. And we know this because the House of Representatives just released something like a 50-page report on the subject and it came out two days ago.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, if you're just joining me, I'm chatting today with the president and founder of the Brownstone Institute, Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. The website is brownstone.org and you can also read Jeffrey's work every day in the Epoch Times newspaper. Jeffrey, as you were talking, number three on your list is government propaganda by big media. And if you would've written something like that four or five years ago, you'd have had a lot of people out there say, well, wait a minute. This is not communist Russia. It's not communist China. What are you saying? But now it's really reality. Can you dive into that a bit?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Well, I think most of your listeners will understand what I'm saying here and I have to confess to you, I'm not sure. Well, first of all, I should say that yes, most news you get on big media is in fact government propaganda. And it goes in a strangely circuitous route. So Big Pharma works very closely with big government. Big Pharma... 70% of the advertising on major media platforms comes from the pharmaceutical companies so they do whatever the pharmaceutical companies want. And you also have direct FBI and CIA agents embedded very strongly. Obviously at the New York Times, but also CNN and MSNBC and so on and goes down the list to say nothing of NPR. And I think your listeners will relate to this in a way. This has become incredibly obvious to me. So I turned on NPR yesterday. I try never to do that, but I did it yesterday and it was overwhelming.

It felt like Soviet news. I mean, the very first news item was about the air quality in the Midwest right now. The hint of that is that climate change is coming and so the skies are dark and everything's terrible and that's why, because of climate change. And so the only way to cure climate change is to take away your freedom. That was within the first 20 seconds that I listened. Then they changed the subject over to Biden's infrastructure plans and his plans to restore the American middle class and blah, blah, blah. Well, the tone of the guy's voice became elevated and sincere and wonderful like basically the great Biden administration.

So I listened to just a couple of minutes of it and then they went on to a special interview over LGBTQ issues. I mean, it was just overwhelming just how obviously propagandistic this was. Part of what I don't know is if I'm just now seeing it and I'm just now aware of it or if it's actually gotten worse. I suspect it's a combination of the two. But nonetheless, it is the terrible reality. And this is why media all seems to be falling apart these days. I mean, we've got your show and the new Twitter of Elon Musk. So

many podcasts, so many great things going on these days. The old media does seem to be falling apart.

Dennis Tubbergen:

So, Jeffrey, on that line, do you see changes coming to the way traditional media is structured? I'm thinking about Tucker Carlson being shown the door at Fox. Their ratings have plummeted. It seems like they're kind of imploding on themselves.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah, I think so. We're in a transition period right now. I grew up in a time when there were three television stations, three news networks, and they all had the same thing every night and everybody trusted them and that was it. We lived in a normal time in a normal country, and that's just how we lived. But something went very wrong over the course of decades, or you could say it went right, but everything got decentralized. And now it's so decentralized today that there is no longer a national narrative. And I guess in a way, Dennis, that's good. But the problem is that it puts a real strong burden on everybody, all regular citizens, to do deep research, to not believe everything you read, to find new alternative channels of information and to really seek to find the truth on your own. We can't just trust anymore the three networks to tell us what's right. And that's a burden, but it's an opportunity too.

Dennis Tubbergen:

So, Jeffrey, we've got about a minute left in this segment. Talk about what motivated you to found the Brownstone Institute and maybe share with the listeners a bit about your mission.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Right. So, after the lockdowns in March of 2020, I was in shock. I couldn't believe it was actually happening to our country that the government at all levels, the state, local, federal, would all be united that we shouldn't have the Bill of Rights, that we shouldn't have free speech, that we shouldn't be able to move around, that our businesses have to shut. I couldn't believe it was happening. I initially thought it was just a terrible error, but then it just kind of went on and on and on and on. And ultimately it lasted two years and I knew that it was a turning point in history. And through these pandemic controls, a lot of other terrible things are going to be unleashed like business chaos and inflation and a health crisis, drug overdoses. The suicide ideation just went through the roof, a learning loss among new generations. So many things were unleashed.

And I realized that we needed an institution that could understand the root of the problem in order to find solutions and provide some interpretation for all the chaos going on around us and then also help provide some guidance to finding our way out of this mess. So that's why I started Brownstone. I didn't see anybody else doing that. And so that's why I started Brownstone. And we have meanwhile published, I guess we're at six books now and probably about 1,500 articles and we hold constant events and that sort of thing. So, it's been in a sense a major success, but I don't want to claim it's a success because there's just so much work to do in a journalistic way, intellectual way. A major job of Brownstone Institute is to provide a safe refuge for scientists who are losing their jobs or journalists who have been cut out from their old venues and that sort of thing. And that's a major part of our work is just serving as a kind of sanctuary for people, especially scientists and intellectuals in very dark times.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, I'm chatting today with Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. He is the president and founder of the Brownstone Institute, brownstone.org is the site, and you can read his daily column in the Epoch Times. I will continue my conversation with Jeffrey Tucker when RLA Radio returns.

Welcome back to RLA Radio. I'm your host Dennis Tubbergen and I'm chatting today with Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. Jeffrey is the founder and president of the Brownstone Institute. You can read the Brownstone Institute's published articles at brownstone.org. Jeffrey's also got a daily column in the Epoch Times newspaper. So Jeffrey, we are chatting today for our listeners who maybe are just joining us, about an article that you published the first part of June titled Twenty Grim Realities Unearthed by Lockdowns. And one of the items on the list really got my attention because I guess from my perspective, this is what I see as one of the biggest threats. And you list influence and power of the administrative state. And you go on to say that the constitution set up the three branches of government, but now we've got this fourth branch which contains a permanent class of bureaucrats that nobody elected. It is a big threat in my view and I'd like you to share what your thoughts are with the listeners.

Jeffrey Tucker:

I've been a lifelong, I guess you would say, libertarian or a champion of small government and individual freedom. And I don't think that for most of my life I fully understood what a threat the permanent bureaucracy is. I knew it was there, but I didn't realize just how much of a bite out of our liberties and our sense of democracy and self-government it had taken. But during the pandemic response, they were the dictators. Nothing that

happened to us in all this time was voted on by our elected representatives. And if you think about that, that's not the country we thought we lived in. We thought we'd go out and vote for people to represent our interests. They would go to Washington and reflect our interests in the formation of our public life. That's how we thought the system worked. But we learned otherwise is that there's this army of bureaucrats out there, more than 400 agencies that are arbitrarily ruling our life.

And we can do very little about it. They're there all the time. I mean, just the mask mandate on travelers. The fact you had to wear a mask on airplanes was mandated by the CDC. They had no legislative authority for that. They just did it on their own. And when they were challenged in court, their response was, we can do whatever we want. And this pertains to all these agencies. Like I said, we have more than 400 of them. And what you find the more you look at the structure, is that most of them are mainly controlled by various private industrial interests. So the Department of Agriculture is controlled by big, big Ag interests. The FDA is clearly entirely run by Big Pharma. The Securities and Exchange Commission is controlled by the largest players within the securities industry. Department of Labor is mainly influenced by labor unions and the biggest possible corporations and so on it goes.

Most of these agencies are entirely captured by large industrial interests and they use these agencies to kind of crush the competition. What's striking is just how much power they've accumulated over the decades. We didn't even have something like an administrative state from the founding all the way through the 19th century. It only started gaining power following World War I. And then the power would ebb and flow, but since the 1960s it has gotten worse and worse and worse, and now here we find ourselves in the 21st century and we've lost our rights of self-government. I've tried to demonstrate, many writers of the Brownstone have tried to demonstrate this terrible truth that in March 2020, it was something like a final coup d'état by the administrative state against the elected representatives. I mean, Trump at some point once he green lighted lockdowns, in effect, was not the president anymore.

His wishes, because he wanted to open up the country at some point, but he couldn't stop the bureaucrats once they took hold, once they gained power. There was essentially nothing they could do and nothing anybody in Congress or the Senate could do. And for that matter, nothing the courts could do. So it was a grim time and we're past those times, but I don't really believe that the powers that they accumulated over those years have yet to

be given back to the people and their elected leaders. I think it still rests with these large powerful agencies and the interest groups that control them. And that's a very disturbing reality. And I never would've believed it five years ago that we'd be in this situation, but that's where we are.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, a couple other things you point out in your article, and these I think are a bit related. You list the cowardice of intellectuals and the spinelessness of think tanks in that intellectual leaders, think tanks are designed to develop perspectives or as you stated in your article, they're supposed to be bold and principled, and yet they all kind of went along with it.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah. That was something I didn't really expect and it was taking me a long time to think through it. It turns out that people's willingness to speak out is very often connected to their careers. So part of the job of a professor or an intellectual or a TV commentator is just to keep the job and have a secure position and get a salary and not rock the boat. That's what most of them do most of the time. We don't like to think of it that way, but it's really true. And you know, you think of it this way. If you've got a tenured full professorship at an Ivy League university like Yale or Harvard and you say something that really rocks the boat, is contrary to the whole of the establishment, and people come after you and you lose that job, which can happen, there's nowhere for you to go. After a position like that, you're stuck.

So as a result, these high-end professionals are extremely risk averse in a career sense. And they make their living in the realm of ideas, but quite often they use their voices to reflect only the ideas that make their job safe. Now this is different from for example, the person who cuts your hair, the cashier at the local grocery or the person who's picking up your dry cleaning or the person who's coming in to fix your toilet. These people have different kinds of jobs where if they lose one job, they can quickly get another job. It's not a problem. It's what I call professional fungibility. Fungibility is a term we use in money to mean that it doesn't matter whether I have this dollar or that dollar, they're all the same. So, professionals outside of the realm of ideas, outside of academia, are far more, they're able to move around a lot better. And so they don't worry so much about being canceled. It's not a problem.

If your haircutter doesn't like his boss, he's going to quit and get a job down the street. That's not true for a think tanker in Washington or a professor at

a university. They simply don't have many options in life. As a result, they're not as free to speak the truth. So, when we need them the most, it turns out that's when they're useful the least. That's the terrible irony of it. We saw all this unfold. So, I guess my point is that you're more likely to get honesty and truth from your barber than you are from the local professor at the university. Sad to say, true.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Jeffrey, one more thing you list in your article, and this is a bit related, that the political left and the political right, you said both sides kind of betrayed their ideals. They didn't stick up for what they allegedly stand for.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah. This happened on the left. The ACLU had nothing to say about vaccine mandates or travel restrictions or text censorship or anything else. These are principles the left was supposed to agree with, freedom of associations, civil rights. That was all thrown out the window especially on the vaccine mandates. That was particularly disappointing. Now on the right, we're supposed to believe in the rule of law and constitutional government and that sort of thing. The lockdowns began under the Trump administration and that confused a lot people who were supporters of Trump. Why is he doing this to us? Why is he permissioning? Why is he standing there while my small business is being destroyed and I can't go to my father's funeral? Why is Trump presiding over this? Well, I think he made gigantic errors, but sadly for a lot of the people on the right, they kind of went along with it because they thought that to criticize Trump was, I don't know, was not a good idea.

They got confused. So as a result, and this is very critical here. This article covers essentially three years of history crossing two presidential administrations and a topsy-turvy control of Congress. What it means is that both Republicans and Democrats are implicated in this. The left and the right are implicated in this. Everybody's been compromised. My team, which I've always thought to be the libertarians, had almost nothing to say about any of this stuff that's going on, which is something pretty incredible if you think about it. So in a way was a kind of a perfect storm. So all the people who should have spoken out, just went silent.

Dennis Tubbergen:

So Jeffrey, time for one more. You talk about the corruption of public education in your piece and this is something that we learned as a reality. Can you in a couple minutes or so just comment?

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah. The corruption of public education. It was the strangest feature of the pandemic response to shut all the schools. Some were shut just for a few months, some for a year, some for two years. The public schools are things we pay for with our tax dollars and we expect them to perform for us. And that's just sort of part of American life and has been for the better part of 120 years or longer. And then they just all shut. And it was amazing because we knew from February 2020 that this virus was never a danger to the kids. Yes, they would get exposed, yes, they would get infected, and yes, they would recover. And no healthy child anywhere in the world died from COVID. That's just a fact. So why did they shut the schools? It was a panic or maybe the teachers' unions wanted all the teachers to have an extended vacation.

I don't know what it is, but you think about it. These are schools we all pay for with our tax dollars and they weren't there when we needed them. And as a result, we've got an educational crisis, we've got a cultural crisis. I don't think it's an accident that we've got gender dysphoria sweeping through a whole generation of kids. Tragedies all around. It was a real betrayal. And I don't think that this was good for the advocates of public schooling. It was very bad for them. And especially during the lockdown times, a lot of parents looked into what was going on with the curriculum of the schools and what they found they didn't like. They found Critical Race Theory and all sorts of gender weird things going on, and that created a lot of public anger. So people have left the public schools in droves over the last couple years, more so than we've ever seen in a hundred years.

I suspect that we're seeing a quiet revolution in educational services these days. People don't trust their public schools anymore. They're paying extra for private schools or they're homeschooling now. I've yet to see the data, but there's every indication that mothers with young kids have left the workforce. Many, millions have and are now just deciding to teach their kids at home. I mean, that's the consequences of this. You could say it's a good consequence and I suppose the silver lining in a way. I think it's good. On the other hand, the upheaval of the last several years has been disastrous for a whole generation of kids in primary school, secondary school, and in college.

Dennis Tubbergen:

Well, the clock says we're going to have to leave it there. My guest today has been Mr. Jeffrey Tucker. He is the president and founder of the Brownstone Institute. The website is brownstone.org. You can also catch Mr. Tucker's daily column in the Epoch Times newspaper. And Jeffrey, always a

pleasure to catch up with you. Thank you for your time. Love to have you back down the road.

Jeffrey Tucker:

Yeah, Dennis. We've got a lot going on, the economy, the whole world. So let's talk again real soon. Thank you so much.

Dennis Tubbergen:

We'll return after these words.