



Made in America Panel Warns that the Surveillance Capitalism Practiced by Social Media Giants Undermines America's Personal Freedom

Amazon pulling out of Queens and dropping 25,000 jobs; the growing political power of social media giants; the perils of surveillance capitalism; the ongoing attempt by unions to reverse the Janus Ruling; the progress being made by America in tariff negotiations with China; and the damage that the Amazon debacle could have on New York Democrats, were among the topics tackled by host Neal Asbury, co-host Dr. Rich Roffman, and a panel of experts on the nationally syndicated "Neal Asbury's Made in America" show on Radio America (aired by almost 100 affiliates and the Armed Forces Network).

Neal and Dr. Roffman began the show by expressing disbelief that Amazon backed out of investing in a \$3 billion facility in Queens that would have employed 25,000 workers.

"Considering that Jeff Bezos is a friend of the Democrats running New York, things really went off the rails. This has the potential of alienating New Yorkers, who may choose to drop support for Democrats or even leave New York, the way that Californians are leaving that state," according to Dr. Roffman.

The first guest on Made in America was Roger McNamee, an American businessman, investor, venture capitalist and musician. He is the founding partner of the venture capital firm Elevation Partners, and the author of *Zucked: Waking Up to the Facebook Catastrophe*, which examines the journey into the dark heart of Facebook, especially the blatant disregard of Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg to right wrongs, which have resulted in the loss of privacy for people throughout the world.

"Facebook and other social media giants were founded by really smart people who made a lot of money, and with it, accumulated a lot of political power. Now they have the loudest voices in the public square. Though not elected they yield much control over many lives. They expose small children to inappropriate content, allow teens to bully each other, and cause adults to make unintended choices, all the while collecting personal data that they use to make money," proposed McNamee.

Dr. Roffman recalled his days as an executive with Blockbuster, which had a great deal of information about the habits of their customers, but would never have sold this data to a third party. "This kind of behavior has unintended consequences."

"We grew up around the gathering of data from customers, but now we are actually doing surveillance; collecting data on your buying habits and selling it. Even if you don't use Google, they have information about you that they can sell to

others. This is not American or the way we value personal freedom," maintained McNamee.

Neal characterized this as surveillance capitalism, where large social media companies use their platforms to support their political causes, most often supporting Democrats. "It's a sinister ideology."

"Any person can be manipulated by social media. They use micro-targeting, sending you specific messages that get a rise out of you, which will cause you to spend more time on their sites. It's not surprising that Russia is being joined by China and Iran in trying to manipulate Americans. Americans need to recognize that we need to be working for the common good if our economy is to grow," noted McNamee.

Dr. Roffman is concerned that algorithms allow social media giants to determine which media outlets you will see.

"No corporation should get between us and the facts. Apple has made some attempt to give us access to the sites you want to see. We can't let a few corporations control the public square. Anger drives the platforms, and this has economic ramifications. We have to fight back. We have more power than we realize," concluded McNamee.

The next guest on Made in America was Daniel DiSalvo, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and an associate professor of political science in the Colin Powell School at the City College of New York-CUNY. He weighed in on *Janus v. American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, Council 31*, where the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state laws obliging nonunion employees to pay fees to the unions that are their "exclusive bargaining representative" are unconstitutional on First Amendment grounds. DiSalvo examined what impact the ruling has had.

"Unions have lost revenues from agency fees. However, membership in public unions has not declined dramatically, and some unions have even increased their membership. In addition, new state laws, executive orders, and court decisions have restricted the access and ability of outside groups to communicate with public employees about their legal rights. And new state laws and union policies seek to limit union members' ability to leave unions except during narrow periods of time during the year. It's gotten to the point where new state laws allow unions to withhold employment benefits—such as life insurance or legal representation in grievance proceedings—from nonunion members, thereby making union membership more attractive," noted DiSalvo, who added that the most draconian measures taken by unions is "exclusive representation," that gives unions the sole power to negotiate salaries and working conditions.

The final guest on Made in America was Jeff Ferry, Chief Economist at the Coalition for a Prosperous America, who revealed that trade data published by the Department of Commerce indicates that the Trump Administration's tariffs may finally be improving our balance of trade.

"The sharp reduction in our China deficit suggests the tariffs could be biting. This is backed up by the numerous companies that have said publicly they are beginning to move production out of China (usually to other Asian locales) to avoid a trade dispute that looks like it could continue for years. Further, iron and steel imports, which have been up slightly over 2017 for most of 2018's data, actually declined 9 percent in November," maintained Ferry.

Dr. Roffman suggested that the proof that tariffs are working is that China's economy is taking a big hit after years of leveraging their growth on the backs of American consumers.

Neal reminded listeners that more than half of all American imports are used for manufacturing U.S. products. But Neal believes that the tariffs are doing more harm to China than to the U.S.

"You have to remember that although China controls 51% of the steel market, the steel tariffs have hit China hard, which allowed American steel to experience resurgence. And the U.S. solar panel industry has recovered," noted Ferry.

The show ended with Neal and Dr. Roffman revisiting the New York Amazon debacle, suggesting that if states want to entice corporations to invest in their state, they have to do a better job selling their state. "When you send a message that you don't like big corporations, you aren't going to get any," opined Dr. Roffman.

Each week Neal Asbury's Made in America provides Neal's insights into the week's top news stories and their impact on the worlds of entrepreneurship, small business ownership and the overall economy. Neal's analysis, together with co-host Dr. Richard Roffman, a veteran 30-year publisher with extensive domestic and international experience, takes a non-biased approach based on real life experience in business as an American manufacturer and exporter. Made in America airs nationally each Saturday from 7-8:00 PM on Radio America. Link to Made in America at <http://www.nealasburysmadeinamerica.com>.



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