

The following is a transcript of [an interview with Penny Freeman by Adam Kokesh](#) on June 8th of 2012. An audio version of this interview is available as a [free downloadable podcast](#).



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Adam Kokesh (AK): Ladies and gentlemen, our guest tonight is Penny Langford Freeman. She was political director for Ron Paul from 1998 to 2007. Quite an old hand in the liberty movement. She has really has done an incredible job from behind the scenes, supporting so many liberty candidates. She works now as a political consultant in Texas, but she is the show tonight because of her understanding of *Ron Paul, Inc.* and is going to help answer a lot of the questions that people in the Ron Paul movement have about what's going on with the campaign, Ron Paul's *personal* implications for that, as well as his family implications, and what it means for the movement going forward, given that we have seen such turmoil in *Ron Paul, Inc.* as of late. We've seen the outing of so many leeches around Ron Paul: Jesse Benton, John Tate, Doug Wead, all of those involved in the campaign. She has some very unique insights to share as to what maybe behind all of that, and we're very grateful for her coming on *Adam v. The Man* for her first media appearance on this subject. Penny, I don't know what else to say in introducing you, but I'm so grateful that I have this opportunity to share your wisdom and your perspective and your insider information with the rest of the movement.

Penny Freeman (Freeman): Thanks, Adam. The reason for me coming on (I like to stay under wraps) and I don't make a habit of talking about or destroying hope or taking people down, I like to build up people and give them hope, but there is a lot of truth here that needs to get out, because I don't want the movement to be fractured. I want us to be a cohesive family and there are a lot of things going on that truthfully need to be explained. From my perspective, living down here and seeing what's been going on for several years now, it needs to be explained, so that people can move forward with truth. Usually, when something like this happens, people take it like it's a devastation blow, and on face value, it may seem that way right now, but I can see that there are things going on with our growth in the movement that these things need to happen. We need to see who is going to carry the message consistently, we need to see who is going to fall and cave in to the Establishment, because it is a very real and very lucrative heady power game that we're playing with here. So, go ahead and ask me what you want to know.

AK: Well, first, when you say, “devastating blow,” do you mean Ron's concession after having seen so

many mistakes in the campaign and seeing so much potential squandered, or are you referring specifically to what happened just last night? Rand Paul going on *Sean Hannity* and endorsing Mitt Romney?

Freeman: I think that's been going on for a long time. People have been wondering why is Jesse Benton coming onto the media and saying "we know Ron's not going to win," or "we're doing this to build the party," or "we're not going to be campaigning in Florida," or "we're not going to spend anymore money on the campaign." Those things have raised a lot of questions and those things are not conducive to, and even giving your strategy to the world is not conducive to a true grassroots decentralized campaign.

AK: Hold on, I have a feeling we are going to go on a little trip back in time here in political history and have a real examination of everything that's gotten Ron Paul and the movement to where it is today. Let's sort of do this in reverse chronological order then, starting with the most recent. Why did Rand Paul endorse Mitt Romney?

Freeman: There's a lot of political capital to be gained and to be given. You have this multimillion dollar list that his father has accrued over time and it's very valuable. The neocons and the Establishment want that, and if they can't have that, they want that power to be neutralized because the very first thing that a candidate has to have is an ability to raise funds. If you neutralize that ability, or if you water it down, then you co-opt the movement and I believe that is what is going on here. If you see the movement of the RNC after Rand won that primary, and how they sent Trygve Olson in, and Justin Raimondo wrote a very, very good article talking about Olson as his....

AK: Very important background, [the link to that article will be in the description](#).

Freeman: Well, people need to understand that. Here we are fighting a megalith government...

AK: Hold on, Penny. Before we get to Trygve and the background here, you're still avoiding the central question here for Rand. Why? Why did he make the choice then to side with the Establishment? I don't want to say "over his father," 'cause I think it's assumed that this was done with some planning and coordination (obviously, it wasn't a spontaneous thing), but certainly against the movement.

Freeman: Why? Political capital! I mean, he's got his foot in the door.

AK: So, you're saying that Rand Paul, unlike his father, is willing to either compromise his principles or doesn't have the same principles, in order to further his political career?

Freeman: Sure. Who wants to be senator when you can be king?

AK: Ok, and that's all you think it is for Rand, that's he just simply not just not at the same philosophical standard of his father, the same ethical, moral liberty principled stand as his father, but he's also not as honest or committed to whatever his own principles may be, that he is a typical sell-out.

Freeman: I don't think he's *typical*. I think that [inaudible] Olson had set out to do. If you have an enemy, you find their sweet spot, their weakness, and then you go in and you neutralize it by watering down their abilities to raise funds and give a clear message.

AK: Ok, working back in time now, how did Trygve Olson come into the picture?

Freeman: The RNC sent him there, when he won that primary.

AK: So this is back to Kentucky, 2010. Rand wins his primary against the former Democrat/GOP Establishment choice, and they send Trygve Olson to be “the adult in the room” (their words, that was what was actually published as their strategy for why they sent Trygve Olson in), but why him in particular?

Freeman: Because he is the neocon regime change specialist. He has worked in countries all over the world to do this. He is their guy.

AK: On behalf of whom?

Freeman: On behalf of the neocon Establishment, the military-industrial complex. Those who will have their wars.

AK: Ok, so for our viewers, be more specific, if you would then...what is it about Trygve Olson's resume that puts him in a different category, that has you condemning him outright?

Freeman: Because he has worked for the Bush regime, just about every one of these neocons, going back for decades. He has worked for them. We don't have time to lay it all out, but if people go to that Raimondo article, he lays it out, and if you go to his consultant....he's a “political consultant,” and his consultant firm's name is *Viking Strategies*, he worked for Rand; and then, Olson is the one who suggested Rand bring in Jesse Benton, because he is part of Ron's weakness, his family.....

AK: Hold on! This is a new angle I didn't really understand before. You're saying that Trygve Olson was sent by the Establishment to Rand Paul, essentially *before* Benton came on, and what he did was convince Rand to grab Benton out of everything else he was doing for Ron, make him the campaign manager, and has been blowing up and promoting Jesse Benton to Ron in order to make that weak link, that weakness of Ron Paul's own nepotism (Jesse Benton being the grandson-in-law), then that has been part of his grand plan. That it wasn't Jesse Benton as the primary actor here, that it's really Trygve Olson is the meddler behind the scenes, and in a sense, Jesse Benton is a pawn of Trygve Olson.

Freeman: The patsy.

AK: Certainly, a corrupt individual, a greedy and self-serving individual, but you're saying the man behind the plan to subvert *Ron Paul, Inc.* and to take away its non-interventionist message's teeth was Trygve Olson.

Freeman: Yeah, he's the guy who knows what to do and how to neutralize power. Jesse Benton is like, he didn't even know who Ron Paul was in '07, ok? I don't know anybody on their staff who actually knows how to run a truly decentralized grassroots campaign. Let me give you an example. 30 years of experience and name ID. 10% in his own state. Debra Medina ran for governor, first time she had ever run for anything besides her own county chair, and got 18% in the state, with \$880,000. Got over 250,000 votes because she ran a true decentralized grassroots campaign. Ron Paul getting 10% in his own state with 30 years of political capital, and a massive amount of money; Debra Medina came in, ran for governor, her first time ever, got 18% in a state, got 250,000 votes with under a \$1,000,000 (\$880,000). That's about a \$1.71 per vote.

AK: We're gonna come back and get your take on Ron, whether he was running to win, given some obvious perspective like that, but to just get back to the Trygve Olson thing, because there's one other major part of this that we haven't covered yet. Trygve Olson has now received over \$200,000, at least through *Viking Strategies*, from the Ron Paul presidential campaign. Are you suggesting that Trygve Olson blew up Rand Paul, more importantly, blew up Jesse Benton and gave Jesse Benton credit for the victory in order to get Jesse Benton taken on in as high a position as possible within the presidential campaign so that he could bring Olson in as a payback and allow Olson, perhaps with or without Jesse's knowledge, to subvert the Ron Paul presidential campaign?

Freeman: Yes, it's been a conduit. Jesse has been his conduit. If you think back to that primary in Kentucky, that was a grueling race. Why would they take the campaign manager that brought them through that grueling primary, knowing that Jesse has never run a campaign (he had only been a media advisor), and then put him in a leadership role in that campaign? Jesse has only worked in lobbyists and think tanks. His first campaign ever was [as] the media contact for the '08 Ron Paul campaign, and he now he's getting paid more than Karl Rove.

AK: Let's go back in time though, for a bit here, and look at Jesse Benton coming onto the campaign in 2007. He's living with another woman, he ends up on the campaign trail meeting Valerie Pyeatt (Ron Paul's granddaughter), ending up marrying her. Is there some failure in judgement on Ron's part, and then giving Jesse Benton all of the promotions that he got, even back in the '08 campaign?

Freeman: Of course, 'cause a candidate always calls the shots. He is the one that okays the checks, (even though it's your granddaughter's mother-in-law who is writing the checks), he bears the brunt...the buck stops at the top, but also you have to remember that the people who had been around him for many years, working through those 12 terms of congressional campaigns were for the most part, gone. Kent Snider had never run a campaign before. In '88, I believe he delivered signs for his presidential campaign. There was very little long-term, there was no strategist, there was basically no experience on the team. You've got a bunch of young guys who think you can win a campaign with Google Ads, which is not realistic. These guys who Ron is thinking smart now are instead of providing contact with the outside information, build a wall around him and tell him what they want him to know. This is why you see some of these really strange endorsements by Ron Paul in 2010, endorsing these...

AK: By these "strange endorsements," we mean unexpected endorsements of non-liberty candidates, his dealings with the Republican Party in Texas (or the Republican Party in general) agreeing to not support anybody who is running against an incumbent Republican.

Freeman: Right. For years and years, we had a policy in that office of non-entangling alliances and do no harm. You don't go in and make endorsements because it sounds good. You might do harm to people who have donated to your campaign and been carrying your message if you make these endorsements in a primary because you can't know the heart and the message of each one of those. So, that was our consistent policy. Just like Ron's consistent foreign policy, "The only way to be fair to all of these countries is to not give them any money," and it is the same thing with these candidates. You don't go in and pick and choose your endorsements, 'cause you don't know if one of them is CIA or Goldman Sachs, like [Ted Cruz](#) is.

AK: Ted Cruz being the most offensive recent example, but also Ron endorsing Lamar Smith in 2010 was rather disturbing.

Freeman: All of those incumbent Republicans who have no clue and no will to vote for liberty.

AK: Do you think this is Jesse Benton selling those endorsements behind the scenes?

Freeman: I absolutely think that, because people offered me money.

AK: Ah, so not proven, but clear evidence you do get paid off in some form or another if you make these endorsements. If a candidate takes charge and does it, and understands the deal, then hypothetically Ron could be benefiting from all of this, but if they're bribing Jesse Benton saying "just send us an endorsement from Ron," then obviously it's not in Ron's best interest. Now we're back to 2007...

Freeman: Adam, let me go a little bit further on that. Not only do you make these campaign aides (or whatever you want to call them)...not only do they make a down payment into some consultant firms (which we know Jesse Benton has two of them), but if you do fundraising for them, you get a percentage of your fundraising ability as well. Say, if Ted Cruz used the list, the multimillion dollar fundraising list of Ron Paul, and an aide makes a deal to get 10% off of the top, you can see a very lucrative business deal.

AK: Absolutely. Now we're back to 2007, when you stopped working for Ron. I just have to give you the chance to answer the devil's advocate question here. How do we know you're not just some disgruntled former staffer, like Eric Dondero? And feel free to say whatever you want to differentiate yourself from Eric Dondero.

Freeman: For many years, Eric Dondero was like my archenemy; we did not get along at all. I kinda felt bad for him, because he had....he was, I don't know, you know people you kinda pity, right?

AK: Just for the audience here, Dondero was actually fired by the Ron Paul campaign a long time ago, and he used to work for his office in Texas, and has since come out condemning Ron Paul for not being libertarian enough because he's not aggressive on foreign policy. The guy is really pretty twisted; the epitome of a disgruntled former staffer who thinks that it's libertarian to police the world, but that's kind of an aside here. Penny, tell us about how your formal working relationship with the Ron Paul campaign in whatever capacity you're involved with came to an end.

Freeman: Early on, we had a staff meeting and there were gonna be 4 consultants for that presidential bid. When Kent Snider told me openly in a meeting that "Ron Paul can't win, they will never let him win, we're [just] gonna spread the message," I told him that I don't get paid not to win. I don't do that. If I am going to join a campaign, if I'm gonna work on a campaign, it is going to be to win, because "getting a message out" is not what we are getting paid for. Respect for the donors, just like taxpayers that pay a congressional employee, respect for the taxpayers means that you set out a goal, you have a strategic plan to carry out that goal, and you go in and you win it. I would not participate in a plan that did not have a strategic goal to win. I was very disheartened and very sad but I couldn't participate in it. I saw a great potential if we actually had a true, decentralized (and that means, not top-down, it means bottom-up) grassroots campaign, we could have rocked this country, because "getting a message out" is amplified ten times over when you're running to win. It is not a byproduct. It is not your main goal to "get a message out," it is a byproduct of a win.

AK: Anything less is deceptive to campaign donors. Let me ask then about the nature of your personal relationship with Ron, 'cause you're still in touch with him, you're still in contact with him. What do you think is going through his head right now? How *aware* he is of all this? 'Cause that's one of many

million dollar questions here, is how much of this corruption around him within his organization is Ron Paul actually aware of?

Freeman: I don't know that. I don't know what he knows, but I do know there is an insulation. I do know that anyone trying to get ahold of him hits a brick wall with Jesse Benton and there is a reason for that.

AK: Well, he's protecting him. Hold on, just a second here, in terms of Jesse Benton's relationship with Ron Paul, I wanna ask ya, how much does he really have his ear? People have likened this to the king from *The Lord of the Rings* who has the evil sorcerer whispering in his ear and has him under his spell. Is that really the kind of power that Jesse Benton has over Ron Paul at this point?

Freeman: A man who has been in the campaign meetings has told me that Trick Fielson always sits by Jesse Benton, whispers in his ear, and then Jesse pipes up with something that you know couldn't have come up from his brain.

AK: *chuckles* That is a nice way of describing the limitations of Jesse Benton's intelligence, but also the family, the Paul family, what is their take on all of this?

Freeman: I know that there are members of the Paul family that call Jesse Benton, "the idiot-in-law." I know that there are members of the Paul family who were amazed and disheartened by the endorsement of Ted Cruz. I know there are members of the campaign staff that are disgruntled and amazed that so much power and influence has been concentrated into one human being. I know that the people of [District 14](#) have been left floundering with two neocon Establishment candidates to replace Ron Paul. There's just a lot of things going on that you really can't know how much Ron knows. I hope, and I pray, that he knows very little about this, because the implications of him *knowing* are not good.

AK: What are they?

Freeman: The implications are that he has been participating in a scam of his supporters.

AK: Do you think that is true? Do you think that he was never running to win and was deliberately deceptive in that, and has allowed all of this to go on?

Freeman: *sobs* I don't know. I know that his portfolio has grown.

AK: Well, that really is the million dollar question, isn't it?

Freeman: Yes, it is.

AK: Are you confident that he was never running to win? Even as an outside observer (in the sense of relatively outside), this is probably why most of the mainstream media didn't take him seriously. They saw so many failures in campaign organization and wrote him off in as sense, as they should have, as someone who is running an educational message (or fundraising campaign on behalf of Jesse Benton, and of course, himself and the cause), as opposed to running to win.

Freeman: I think that there wasn't quite the confidence necessary in the message. The message is so powerful that he was always so surprised (and still is; you can see it on his face), that he's always so surprised when he gets so many people in the room. I think that he underestimated the power of that

message when he first was thinking about running in '07, I told him, “This is the message that people live and die for. Do not be surprised when you have people that are willing to take your back and to cover you back and die for this message, because that's what the Founders did. This message is what those students in Tiananmen Square died for, and so you *cannot* underestimate that power.” Words are very powerful, and he said, “It is time for this idea.” So, if you have that message, and you get out there and you run on this message on a national stage, then you have to have the confidence and the ability to portray that message consistently. He's done that for years and years, and I love him for that. I've loved him like a dad, worked 18 hours a day to further that message and have his back, but you have to stay consistent, and you have to have a no compromise policy. You take no prisoners. You can't carry a message forward that has been no compromise and then all of a sudden, move it forward on compromise. It has to be *no* compromise all the way, and that means take no prisoners, and that means *win*.

AK: Hopefully, Ron himself will have a chance to watch this video, if it gets through the curtain around him that Jesse Benton has lowered in attempting to isolate him from hearing things that challenge this (Tom Woods, just as another example of someone like myself who was thrown under the bus of *Ron Paul, Inc.* simply for [criticizing in a very open, positive, constructive way what Jesse Benton had been doing](#)). What would you say to Ron, if you had his undivided attention right now?

Freeman: He hasn't been able to look me in the eye for a long time. If I had something to say to him, is “You grab your son up, and you tell him, that you built a movement on this message, and you never compromise this message.” If Rand is going to be the man to carry this message forward, then you teach him *no compromise* on principle. That's the *only* thing that's gonna move it forward.

AK: You don't think it's already too late for Rand? I don't think he's anywhere *near* his father in terms of his commitment to his principles, or let alone his understanding of libertarian philosophy.

Freeman: You're right, maybe not, but he has the political capital passed down from his father. He has his lists, he has his organizations, and if he is going to be steward of that, if he is going to maintain it, if he is going to get the movement behind him, he's gonna have to have the principle of his father. Otherwise, we will fracture and we will start working on local only.

AK: I think that is already the case is that Rand has demonstrated at least by his endorsement of Romney last night, that....

Freeman: That may be the blessing of this endorsement that people will stop having such an idolatrous affair with national politics and look to their local. I think that is going to be the blessing of that endorsement.

AK: It could also be that its made it clear that Rand Paul is in no position *whatsoever* to even *attempt* to carry on the legacy of his father. He may inherit some of the mechanisms, he may *inherit* this list, but the list is worthless, a list of liberty lovers who would donate to anything that Ron Paul puts his name on will not support his son who is now a war-monger and has endorsed Mitt Romney.

Freeman: You would hope not, but there are sheeple out in the voting public and there are sheeple within the movement. Anything that Ron or Rand says, that's their god. *They're not thinking*. They can't use their common sense and say, “If you lay down with dogs, you wake up with fleas,” or “If it looks like a duck and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck.” They're not thinking in those terms, because it's in there innate humanity to want to follow instead of lead. Those people who will say, “I'm not gonna

participate in this,” you want to think that that is the mainstream (or the bulk) of this movement, but is it? There will always be a segment of this movement that gets an email from Ron Paul and sends in their check.

AK: And those will be the ones who will support Rand just because his name has the similarity, and he is on that list. In closing then, Penny, let me give you a chance. What is the lesson to be learned from this? What is the ultimate takeaway, and what is your message to the rest of the movement?

Freeman: The takeaway is never let [the] failures of others steal your joy; there is a lot of joy to be had. Don't put all of your faith and all of your hope in man, because men are fallible; they have weak spots. You have to look towards doing something *yourself*. You have to constantly be diligent in searching for knowledge, don't close your mind to what your possibilities are. And for God's sake, don't do what you're *fuckin'* told! Do not take orders from *anybody*. You think for yourself. You step back and look at the knowledge that you have, and try to gain more, and do what you think is right. *Do not do what you are told*. You are not a robot. Use your brain.

AK: Amen, and if you still need a leader, you *might* not be ready to be a part of the freedom movement. Ladies and gentlemen, Penny Langford Freeman, all the way from Texas, thank you so much for joining us. Please check the link to the Justin Raimondo article in the description below for the full backstory on Trygve Olson. Keep lovin', keep fighting, we'll see you in Tampa Bay, Florida.



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