

Sample Interview Q&A

These questions are linked in a somewhat linear sequence but can be rearranged as desired. Any individual question can be expanded on in discussion. The general topic of each question is in parenthesis.

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION OF BRIAN VANYO

At a time when many Americans are frustrated by the overbearing nature of federal power, our next guest shows how we can reclaim our command over government in his new book, *The American Ideology: Taking Back our Country with the Philosophy of our Founding Fathers*.

Brian Vanyo is a former Navy F-14 Tomcat Radar Intercept Officer and veteran of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. He's a Naval Academy graduate; he has a masters degree from the U.S. Naval War College and a law degree from the University of Virginia. He has worked as an analyst at the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Defense Intelligence Agency. And now he joins us [here/in the studio/on the line] this [morning/afternoon/evening]. Brian, thanks for being here.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. *Tell us about your book.*

The American Ideology is really for anyone who is frustrated by politics and the direction in which our country is headed. The book is written in a very objective, nonpartisan, historical way and answers three important questions. First, how did we get to this point – where our federal government has become so overbearing in our lives? Second, where are we headed? As time passes, our government expands in size, regulations increase, and our national debt grows larger. Where does this lead us and our children if we do not change our ways? And finally, what can we do to restore our command over government and preserve our liberty going forward? The conclusion that I came to in my research, and I think anyone would come to after reading this book, is that we have to restore the fundamental principles that made liberty possible in the United States. We have to renew our faith in the American Ideology.

2. *When you say “American ideology,” what do you mean by that?*

Our nation was founded on the idea that our rights to life, liberty, and property come from God, not government. And this is really Natural Law theory, which has been around for many centuries, but I place the American tag on it because for the first time in the history of the world, the American people took these principles and reduced them to practice in government. Our Founding Fathers designed our Constitution, not so that the federal government could control everyone's life, liberty, and property through taxation and regulation—they didn't create government so that politicians could redistribute private property or force us to buy health insurance, for example. Our Founding Fathers instead created the Constitution to unite a free people in society under laws designed to preserve our natural rights. That is the American Ideology. That is what defined us as Americans at our foundation. That is what made us so exceptional as a nation as we grew. And in this book, that is what the reader will discover we need to restore if we hope to pass on a free country to our children.

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3. *How did our country depart from the Founders' course?*

We departed the course set by our Founding Fathers in two ways. First, about 100 years ago, we started giving in to the progressive idea that the federal government can serve as a benevolent provider for the people—that, if we surrender our liberty to empower government, then it would care for us and better manage our concerns. And that's just not true. But by giving in to progressivism over the years, we have effectively allowed federal power to grow far beyond its limits in the Constitution. And as government has grown, so has waste and corruption. So here we are, 16 trillion dollars later facing a fiscal cliff, thanks to the progressive idea that centralized government is the answer. It's not.

And the other cause for our diminishing liberty is our acceptance of judicial supremacy, which is the idea that the Supreme Court is the final arbiter of constitutional meaning. Our Founding Fathers rejected this idea. They created a republic, not a judicial oligarchy. They believed that we the people have the final say on constitutional meaning. And so if the Supreme Court happens to rule in an arbitrary way that we find unconstitutional, then we can assert our understanding of constitutionality through our political representatives. For too long, we have accepted the Court's rulings as final, even though it has struck down many constitutional state laws and upheld many unconstitutional federal laws. The Court has effectively paved the way for the rise of an autocratic centralized government in America.

4. *So where do you think this all leads if we don't change our course?*

Our Founding Fathers warned us that centralized power leads to tyranny. And I explain in the book exactly what kind of tyranny this is. Alexis de Tocqueville also wrote on this subject his famous book *Democracy in America*. He warned that if the United States ever gave in to centralized power, then we “would come to know a despotism more intolerable than any that has ever existed in Europe's absolute monarchies.” Centralized power is growing in the United States, and so this threat is very real. And if we hope to save our children from a more repressive authority tomorrow, then we have to change our course today.

5. *What do you think we need to do to get our country back on track?*

Well, for starters, we need to educate ourselves about our founding philosophy and why it is so important for us to uphold the Constitution's limitations on federal power. I wrote at the very beginning of the book that only by knowing the basis of our rights can we act with boldness to restore them. Thomas Jefferson said that education “is the true corrective of abuses of constitutional power.” And James Madison once wrote that “a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.” So for us to turn our country around, we must understand the basic principles that enable liberty. This book provides that understanding. And with that understanding, we'll be empowered to reclaim control of our government once again.

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6. *What prompted you to write this book?*

The real catalyst for this book was the debate over Obamacare that began in the summer of 2009. Like many Americans at that time, I was very frustrated by those in Washington who showed such little regard for our Constitution as they tried to push the Obamacare legislation through Congress. It became clear to me that so many people, in government especially, just don't understand what the Constitution is all about and why it is so important to uphold its limitations on federal power. So, I decided to write this book to inform, not just about the Constitution and its design, but also about the governing philosophy that the Constitution was meant to preserve and how we have since abandoned that philosophy.

7. *Do you think it's still possible to make the right changes, or is it too late?*

I am an optimist, so I have to remain hopeful about the future. But the one thing I fear is that our time is running out. The longer we put off the necessary changes that we need to make, the harder it will be for us to reverse our course. And the first thing we have to do is at least recognize that we're headed in the wrong direction. And that's why I wrote this book. I wanted to show the course that our Founding Fathers set us on, and I wanted to clearly demonstrate how we have lost our way. If this book accomplishes anything, I think it will at least inspire a sense of urgency among the people to reverse our nation's course, or at least put the brakes on, because we cannot continue to forward down a path that leads to our own destruction. It's just not fair to future generations. So, I think we can change, we need to start taking action.

8. *Endorsements: Rick Santorum, Dr. Laura Schlessinger, U.S. Senator Mike Lee, U.S. Senator John Hoeven*

9. *Where can people go to get your book?*

The book is available everywhere online, and if you'd like a signed copy, just go to my website at brianvanyo.com for more information.