

Mike Stone

Mostly The Lonely Howls Of Mike Baying His Ideological Purity At The Moon

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Richard Stallman Is Back

23 Mar 2021

A little bit more than a day ago, Richard Stallman [announced](#) that he was returning to the [Free Software Foundation Board of directors](#). This announcement was polarizing, as is much when it comes to Stallman. I've been thinking about this since the announcement, and I thought put my two cents here.

For those who don't know anything about Richard Stallman, now is a good time to either hit up his [Wikipedia page](#) or find something else to read. I don't want to delve too deeply into the history involved here, though I'm going to touch on a couple events. Stallman has been part of the free software movement for as long as there's been a free software movement because he's credited with creating it when he launched the GNU Project in September 1983.

In 2019 things reached a tipping point for Stallman, and he was forced to resign from positions at MIT and the FSF due to public comments he'd made regarding Jeffrey Epstein. There are those that think that resignation was needed, and there are those that think it was a misunderstanding that was leveraged to force Stallman out. I'm not sure I care either way.

My opinion is that Stallman's return is probably a bad thing for the free software movement.

I think my friend [Key](#) said it really well in [his blog post](#), “[Stallman] is a neck-beard dinosaur and if the FSF doesn't do something drastic to modernise itself, it's going to be nothing more than a group of neck-beards discussing how evil proprietary software is.”

Lending substance to that opinion is the fact that apparently they couldn't even manage to create a video to announce the return. In 2021. Yes, really.

There's also the fact that Stallman's history and his continued acceptance in the free software movement damages all of us on a fundamental level. After all, we've placed an individual into a position of leadership who [has said](#) that *prostitution, adultery, necrophilia, bestiality, possession of child pornography, and even incest and pedophilia* is only illegal "because of prejudice and narrowmindedness", and that's "unfortunate". I know that Stallman pretty much created the free software movement, but that kind of sentiment is just too much for me to get my head around.

Update

It's been said that the reference I'm using here is bad and that I need to include a "better" one to support my statement. I'm not sure how I can provide a better reference than a direct quote from Stallman's own personal blog (including a link to the specified page). Also, apparently Stallman's archives are difficult to read and lack context? So, in an effort to make it easier for people to see what I'm talking about here, here's a screenshot of the page with the text in question highlighted.

- 28 June 2003 ()

Dubya has nominated [another caveman](#) for a federal appeals court. Refreshingly, the Democratic Party is organizing opposition.

[Reference updated on 2018-05-10 because the [old link](#) was broken.]

The nominee is quoted as saying that if the choice of a sexual partner were protected by the Constitution, "prostitution, adultery, necrophilia, bestiality, possession of child pornography, and even incest and pedophilia" also would be. He is probably mistaken, legally--but that is unfortunate. All of these acts should be legal as long as no one is coerced. They are illegal only because of prejudice and narrowmindedness.

Some rules might be called for when these acts directly affect other people's interests. For incest, contraception could be mandatory to avoid risk of inbreeding. For prostitution, a license should be required to ensure prostitutes get regular medical check-ups, and they should have training and support in insisting on use of condoms. This will be an advance in public health, compared with the situation today.

For necrophilia, it might be necessary to ask the next of kin for permission if the decedent's will did not authorize it. Necrophilia would be my second choice for what should be done with my corpse, the first being scientific or medical use. Once my dead body is no longer of any use to me, it may as well be of some use to someone. Besides, [I often enjoy rhinophytonecrophilia](#) (nasal sex with dead plants).

Here is the complete text of the comment made by Stallman:

*Dubya has nominated [another caveman](#) for a federal appeals court.
Refreshingly, the Democratic Party is organizing opposition.*

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There is literally no way I can provide more context or a better reference than this.

So, Stallman is back. My personal opinion isn’t going to change that fact and I seriously doubt Stallman would care what I think even if he were to read this. I don’t see that his absence hurt the FSF. I think his presence will be a lot more damaging to them in the long run. Or maybe it doesn’t matter either way. Maybe the FSF is just a relic of a bygone era and this won’t really matter to anybody in the long run.

Day 16 of the #100DaysToOffload 2021 Series.

Looking for comments? There are no comments. It's not that I don't care what you think, it's just that I don't want to manage a comments section.

If you want to comment, there's a really good chance I at least mentioned this post on [Fosstodon](#), and you can reply to me there. If you don't have a [Mastodon](#) account, I'd suggest giving it a try.

If you don't want to join Mastodon, and you still want to comment, feel free to use my [contact](#) information.

This site was created by [Mike Stone](#) using [Jekyll](#) and [Simple.css](#).

For those with minimalist tastes, here's the [RSS feed](#).

If you'd like to help keep the lights on at my house, you can do so [here](#).

Last modified: October 1, 2022.

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