

## Smoke & Objects in Mirror - Part 2

Written by Alex Baer

Saturday, 18 February 2012 17:29

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Hard to tell what is satire or parody in this life, as it does such a smash-up job with its special sweet-sour mash-up all its own. Life, poker-faced, says it's playing straight with us, dealing from the top of the deck.

We remain fantastically doubtful about that here. When we absorb our daily ration of information, insipidness, and fear, via newspapers, we hold them up to the mirror and read everything from there. This way, we don't have to look the news in the eye, not directly at it. We avoid the Gorgon's gaze. Plus, we are embarrassed for the news, at all the sludge and drivel in there. We handle newspapers with metal tongs, so we don't get any on us.

This one's still a howler, about a New York apartment just sold: A Russian fertilizer magnate -- *who could make this stuff up?*

-- bought this

*titantic*

penthouse apartment, just 88 million dollars,

*ka-ching,*

from who knows which pants pocket that change fell, from petty cash, maybe, or, emulating his CEO peers here, merely chump change from the coffee-and-retirement-fund out at work.

Maybe it came from locking out workers who failed to accept a 75% cut in pay, hiring scabs for a dime on the dollar, or creating multiple-tier payment schemes according to date of hire. *Lots of ways to go in building a fortune, don't you know. □ Could be all legit, who knows?*

Yes, for 88 million, that must be one hell of an apartment, and that must have been one unimaginable tower of manure to buy a spot like that, way up, so high up in the sky. This purchase by the world's 93rd-richest man is thought to be for his 22 year-old daughter.

And the rest of us, here on Planet Dullsville, were sometimes peeved or annoyed when some dad or other bought their graduating high-school daughters new Mustangs! Who thought a dad would both roll back time and bump up the ante, dig into the treasure chest, and pull out Barbie's Dream Penthouse?

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OK, we need to breathe in and out a few times here, let that one sink in.

For your assignment tonight, pretend you are playing along with the home version of that *hotnew*,

teevee game show,

*"Ain't Capitalism a Hot Blast in the Ass?!"*

hosted by some smug, self-important, inherited-wealth blowhard, one who cares not a trump about you or me in this card game of life, and your mission is this: Just from your own top-of-mind thinking, name other things that could have been done with that 88 million dollars instead.

*The contestant with the most items listed wins, and gets to go completely insane!*

As you know, this is not so tough an assignment. You'll be done faster than the time it takes us to consider the parallel universes that meet here on Earth, from time to time: Willard The Mitt, on one hand, collapses companies, guts them out, kills jobs, moves companies overseas, and fires people to make his money. The Quacking-Mad Donald, by comparison, pretends to be a businessman and fires people on teevee for the sheer fun and fame and fortune of it all. Both had their wealth handed to them. Both were born on third base, and both sincerely believe each of them hit stand-up triples in life. *We gobble this stuff up.*

OK, so -- welcome back, *Wow! Good for you!* In less than one minute, you made a list of 3,819 things that could have be done instead! You got the most listed!

*Congratulations! □ You win! □ You get to go insane!*

You are no longer required to focus on any of this madness in life! Here is your

*No-More-Thinking-for-Me*

card!

*Congrats on your clinical madness!*

*No more worries! □ How great to be you!*

Yes, well, critics will tell you 88 million doesn't go as far as it used to -- barely keeps a family of four clothed and fed, you listen to Newt or Willard. Newt alone appears to suck down half of that in food every day, in the time it takes to criticize people, as he says, *for being all □ lazy and on food stamps!*

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Well, who believes any of these liars and thieves, anyway?

*Inexplicably, some actually do:* The ones with the rusty straight razors perched in their hands, ready to cut a very deep line, ear to ear, all along their own throats. Why anyone would vote for any member of a party that has never once accomplished a single useful thing for the regular working person of this country is terrifying and astounding. Many still do.

Yes, there is definitely something wrong with these mirrors, they're not working right. Maybe the manure magnate broke them. Maybe it's all the stinging, hypnotic smoke accompanying the appearance of any Rethuglican candidate's latest idiotic pronouncement. So much smoke in these mirrors, hard to see anything of substance in there about these clown-show candidates. *Which is their precise intention of course.*

OK, here we go -- the commission on that apartment's starting to come in. The commission alone for the sale of this 88 million dollar, homey little, 7-thousand square foot shack, perched high atop Central Park West, is a crisp, breathy, three-and-a-half million American dollars, *thank yewverymuch.*

Even after violently shaking the newspaper repeatedly, and turning the bathroom lights on and off a few times, the story is still in there, clinging defiantly to the page, immovable and unshaken -- unlike ourselves here, who are very much moved inside, but slowly moving outside, shaking our heads, more than just a little bit shaken by the turn of things, today.

Maybe we accidentally got mirrors meant for One Percenters? Maybe we got one that takes all the humdrum details of life and puffs it all up to epic proportions and heights -- so over the top as to render, in effect, the entire universe topless and untoppable?

How do these people look themselves in the mirror, any of these One Percenters, any of those who swirl, pool, and eddy all around them?

Here's hoping the home version of that game has plenty more of those *No-More-Thinking-for-M*  
*e* cards left. Feels like

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we could use up half a dozen, just trying to get through the rest of today.