

## The Home Runs and Bunts of Money & Messaging

Written by Alex Baer

Wednesday, 28 November 2012 18:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 28 November 2012 19:30

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Money is the price of admission to this circus called life. It's mandatory, not optional. Without money, diddly squat gets done. Money's what greases all our skids and connects up all our dots and our lives, like it or not.

Money is, and can be, many things. However, most rational people would agree that one thing money should *not* be, is a club -- a weapon, pulverizing and penalizing people in pursuit of basic, daily needs.

If you agree, you'll instantly see the beauty of The Rolling Jubilee. It describes itself as a bailout for the 99% *by* the 99%. It uses the moves of banksters against them, like jiu-jitsu.

Where banks seek profit by buying people's debt obligations, spending pennies on the dollar for the right to harass debtors for full payment, The Rolling Jubilee does something unexpected: Using donations, it buys the debt -- then *retires* it.

- **Poof! No more debt. ☐ Completely legal.**

For every dollar donated, the group says they can buy up, and then retire, \$20 in debt. They've already raised more than \$400,000, enough to retire almost \$9 million in debt.

It was founded by a coalition of Occupy groups and kicked off November 15 in New York City with a variety show and telethon. All proceeds go directly to buying people's debt and then canceling it. It's growing, with groups in the UK, Spain, and France.

Simple, elegant, insightful, creative: There's probably no end to the words of praise one might find to describe the effort. Perhaps you'll come up with a few words of acclaim of your own -- maybe, even a couple bucks this season, and forego that latte, just one time this week.

Who knows -- the debt you help forgive may be your own.

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Now, if that one doesn't help warm (and/or locate) the cockles of your heart, and help you shed some of the cockleburs of capitalism, there was another fine development over Thanksgiving, one I'm just now catching up to.

Florida Representative Alan Grayson spent some of that time at Walmart, handing out turkey sandwiches to employees. Also in the paper bag for each person was a bag of chips and a letter explaining their right to organize.

The store manager had police escort Rep. Grayson from the store, but not before showing employees a little moral support, and showing them they were not alone.

It's always damn impressive, I think, when someone does the right thing -- especially someone in office. I am not sure if that is a sign of the times -- that so often the right thing never gets done -- or not.

But it sure makes me remember a presidential candidate who said, a bit more than five years ago, something rousing and inspiring:

"And understand this: If American workers are being denied their right to organize and collectively bargain when I'm in the White House, I'll put on a comfortable pair of shoes myself. I'll walk on that picket line with you as President of the United States of America. Because workers deserve to know that somebody is standing in their corner."

Well, Mr. President: You missed many opportunities in Wisconsin not that long ago. But, I understand there are Walmarts just about everywhere.

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In fact, sir, there are two, about nine miles away from the White House: one's in Alexandria, Virginia, and another's in Landover Hills, Maryland -- if that helps any.

\* \* \* \* \*

Finally, a couple moments for lopsided grins and grimaces have presented themselves. In one, yesterday, a federal judge has ruled that tobacco companies will have to cough up some of their own money, and spend it on advertising admitting they did nothing but lie for years to consumers.

That's triggered another round of kibitzing, of course, regarding the amount of money to be spent, the exact wording of the message to be used, and so on. No surprise there when so much money could go up in smoke.

Tobacco companies must by now be hyper-reactionary with their legions of lawyers, ready to spring on any greeting of "good morning," ready to line up a parade of meteorologists and psychiatrists to wrassle the scope of what constitutes a "good" morning, and, exactly what you *meant* by that remark.

I think this ruling opens a vast expanse -- a whole new frontier in honesty, advertising, and, well, truth in advertising.

In my dreams, I see ad after ad parading though livingrooms, airports, electronics stores, and anyplace else there's a teevee blaring, with hosts of oil companies and banks finally coming clean -- admitting their lies and deceptions, 'fessing up to their colossal subsidies, mammoth bailouts, armadas of exemptions and flotillas of freebies, along with their long, unending lists of *connivings* and cons...

Why, there they'd be: Some of America's biggest companies, corporate hat in hand, mumbling muffled mea culpas -- weapons makers and warmongers of all kinds, coughing up various

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hairballs and boluses of self-blame and shame, admitting to long shopping lists of schemes and methods used to separate taxpayers from the maximum amount of their bucks.

All of them, finally forced to do the right thing by the courts.

As I say -- *in my dreams*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Another interesting moment occurred when a group of three women and four men arrived at House Speaker John Boehner's office yesterday and stripped to the skin, displaying the words, "AIDS cuts kill" on their bodies.

Capitol Police arrested the three women after they'd put their clothes back on. It appears the four men fled and were free.

Now, here is another creative, albeit considerably chilly, way to draw attention to your cause and message. I applaud their stamina and comfort in and with their own bodies. It seems this tactic is especially well suited (or unsuited) to warmer-weather protests, and perhaps to disputes at health clubs, spas, and pools -- not to mention all the exercise, fitness, and tanning products and services.

(Of course, that's just my practical side talking -- hey, as long as you're stripped down, you might as well get some steam or go for a swim.)

However, not all people take such antics as larks. As you can see from comments left by readers of this story at the New York Daily News, Americans have untapped reservoirs of anger and hostility, it appears, to anyone serving up their messages in the buff.

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The AIDS-portion of the protesters' continued funding plea seems to have complicated things considerably for those who needed to provide a written lambasting to prove the amount of prejudice, bigotry, or plain revulsion they've registered.

A number of people have used the opportunity for feedback and comment, unfortunately, to display the amount of vicious animosity of which humans are capable. While I'm not critiquing the amounts or kinds of empathy people can and cannot muster for this cause or that, it's just a shame to see such garbage and drivel -- and in almost any online conversation. Eventually, it all comes down to insults, not engagement on ideas. Taking a rhetorical switchblade to someone in the comments section of a news article just really misses the point, at the very least.

Not a news flash: A great percentage of Americans are bashful, coy, or just prudes. It may be some years, or even decades, before some people can leave their bathtubs at home without flinching as they pass their bathroom mirrors -- most of them already partially painted over already.

In any event, doing the "naked truth" route is another way to highlight your cause in the clogged and crowded cacophony of media communiques. As the bullfighters say with a flourish and twist, *Ole!* And, score one for the enemies of lethargy and lethal boredom.

(Note to Protesters: Just be careful with those clothing-free tactics in cold weather, or you're going to need a whole lot of Oil of Olay for those chapped... *um*, body parts, 'K?)

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A bailout for the 99%: <http://rollingjubilee.org/>

Strike debt: <http://strikedebt.org/>

Sandwiches at Walmart:

<http://readersupportednews.org/opinion2/279-82/14727-my-thanksgiving-a-turkey-sandwich-at->

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[walmart](#)

Comfortable shoes: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SA9KC8SMu3o>

Admitting deception: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/28/us-usa-tobacco-idUSBRE8AQ18A20121128>

Naked activists at Boehner's place: <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/aids-activists-arrested-nude-protest-boehner-office-article-1.1208955>

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*Taking time out for a couple words of thanks that are due here, as I live in an area that still relies on the Pony Express and stagecoaches coming through for news of the day. ☐ So, with thanks, I first heard about the Rolling Jubilee program via Healin' Hollers, a sponsor to the Mike Malloy Show. ☐ Bravo, and thanks!*

*Meanwhile: ☐ If you believe that Truth is an endangered species in today's blizzard of media manure, you need to find Mike's show -- then listen and support it any way that you can.*

Mike Malloy: <http://www.mikemalloy.com/>

Healin' Hollers: <http://www.healin-hollers.com/>