

Pursuit of Daily Bread - Part 3

Written by Alex Baer
Friday, 09 March 2012 21:12

Ever since I happened onto that chance, overheard encounter of bakers griping about their jobs inside a grocery store, a drama held out on the sales floor as they lobbed their complaints back and forth, I have been mulling over some things, including the realization that unemployment is a death sentence in this country. Let's just say I've had a lot of food for thought, from that one trip to the store, going after that daily bread.

There's no easy way around it: It's a scheme of money on Earth, one we all are stuck using, to satisfy our daily needs and desires. And, unless we are born into or win great wealth, or somehow escape the inevitability of working all our lives in order to live, we are dependent on jobs to keep us alive. It's so simple and brutal a concept, I think we can forget how it actually and really is, lost inside all our attempts at living, it's gone in all our distractions.

So, take a moment, step outside the distractions, and consider, if you please:

No money means no life support -- save for unpilfered savings overlooked by vultures, from selling off possessions, odd jobs, or person-to-person, long-term loans. Withholding life support may be technically passive, but it's as serious as any societal message can get, not counting active and outright attempts by the state to just openly kill you, in any of the forms that executions might take.

It is a hell of a message for any soul to be handed once, let alone be handed out so spritely, issued forth so lightly, day after day, or year after year: *We don't need you, go die.*

Ever so slowly, insidiously, imperceptibly, if you are not on constant guard, if you are unaware or too careless with your thoughts, you will start to do exactly that -- you will start to go away, some part of you will start to go die. You will start to slip and fade and slide in a thousand little or big ways, and so doing, grant Reaper far too much a head start, to be fair. Even Reaper would grimly admit that.

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Reaper and I went around, almost ten years ago: Heart attack, all the usual American reasons of not caring well for oneself, plus I had been working 80 and more hours a week for some months -- and, during times of personal-life crises to boot -- trying, as a mid-level manager to help keep a wounded company afloat. Turned out, the big bosses skimped badly on staff, firing managers while adding on clients in wads and bundles, to help make the bottom line sweeter, to lure in deep-pocketed buyers. The company later sold, made the higher execs a handsome, sweet bundle. I knew then and know now that I dodged a bullet aimed straight at me -- and, I also knew then, and still know now, I nearly died, just so they could do that.

Now, in the military services, you knew you could be asked to do something like that -- you just don't expect it, here, back up on home shores. Well, folks, welcome to New America: Start expecting it, right now, expect it right away -- as of 2000 in fact, since the Insane Greed Machine has had all its governors ripped out by the roots, been supercharged with nitro and super-bug juice, now that it's been aimed straight into the heart of the sun, throttling up, out into heady, dizzying space.

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Irony dogs me -- it begs a pet trick or a show involving a pony. Even with what I thought to have been excellent health insurance, I wrote them a check for saving my life, using for payment all my life's savings -- a bit more than forty thousand dollars.

It is the same kind of irony that establishes the conundrum of too much work: That one's time is simultaneously worth more and less, all at once, when one starts working hours of the damned, anything over 50 hours a week, let's just say. Add in commute time, a nap and a shower, throwing some food at your face, and your shoes are always warm when you put them back on to start a brand new day. On an hourly basis, that OK-seeming salaried check whittles itself down to less than minimum wage pay -- all while you'd do anything for time off, would give almost anything for a whole day away, bars of gold, maybe, for some relief.

Time can be pedantic and pouty, raising the stakes and your ante, while undercutting your bid and giving out free cash to anyone playing cards against you. This is how it feels now in this country, that all bets are off, that the rules our forebears played by have been shredded and stripped, now that *everything's wild*. All that's left is how we'd care to feel about it -- on our own time, of course. Outside of work, if you have any.

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The Jobs Report is up -- no, it looks down. ☐ Hang on -- a bright spot in that rush of jobs off shore -- there will be more minimum wage jobs anticipated in Quarter Four, just in time for this Winter's Holy Fleecing Season!

So, we shouldn't be too worried, watching these fat vultures break companies down, strip them right down to the floorboards, and into the sub-basements, tossing healthcare and pension obligations to government to make good on, just in time to bulldoze the place, bury any wounded survivors, erect a new *Chamberpot* of Commerce on the site.

Probably a financial institution's going up here -- they're the only ones with any money left, prohibitively financed by us, financed without our permission, all of us carted off, lock, stock, and barrel.

So, what are our choices, in a world where money is the agreed-upon scheme of obtaining any satisfaction of our daily wants and needs? There's unemployment, and under-employment, and quasi-full-time employment -- where you're kept just under 40 hours, so no health care will come your way -- and then, there's sell-your-soul-salaried, as positions go. And, the longer businesses sit on their cash, raking in skyrocketing profits from casino banking, waiting for the national fire sale to begin, there's no incentive to create any jobs for mere people -- certainly not while Republicans favor their party over their country. As you know, the GOP is endlessly in favor of keeping millions out of jobs in order to put one man out of work, the one in the White House. Besides, the more unemployed and hungry workers we have out here on the reaches, the more hourly labor costs will plummet, and the more workers will be set off the scent of the bosses, and set onto each other's throats instead.

They've got us in one hell of a bind with this scheme of money we're all born into and have no hope of escaping: We must be ready to take almost any position and at almost any wage as a way of filling that ongoing, perpetuating need for our daily bread. The position we're in -- the only one business keeps offering -- is exceptionally compromising and very alarming.

But, as they say in auto racing and in old, off-color jokes: *Ladies and gentlemen, take your positions.*